

There's something about the way his eyes light up whenever Kat deigns to look his way. Whenever he utters a single syllable in the boys vicinity.

Every breath, blink or subtle gesture is looked upon with utter pride and admiration.

Kat won't lie and say he doesn't like the attention. He won't mention it at all. It's better that way. He just lets it happen, basking in the feeling of being treasured.

He'll tell Kat that he definitely aced that test last period, or that he's bound to be voted school council leader. Kat will laugh at him and say he doesn't need anyone else to tell him that.

...

There is a cage inside Kat.

It is rusted and old. Been there for who-knows how long. Kat can't remember a time where it wasn't there. Where he didn't feel it's cold bars keeping him locked away.

Inside, he has a secret.

It whispers words of weakness into his soul. The most appealing ideas, that he can't help but lend his ear to.

"Kat!"

The monster rattles in its cage.

"Kat, wait up!" Desperate footsteps from behind him.

Kat turns around, sighing.

Sparkling green eyes latch onto his, and his secret bubbles away, threatening to squeeze out through iron frames.

A breeze is drifting their way. It keeps pushing Kats hair over his face. He doesn't push it back, because the sun has peeked out over the roof of the school and is spreading its glow over the courtyard. It's too bright to look.

(Maybe there's another reason, like not wanting to put a strain on his secret by seeing how the boy looks like in this pretty sunlight.)

He catches that blinding smile through a minuscule gap in his make-shift curtains of hair, and grimaces.

"Kat, you nailed practise today! I was stuck on the bench for ages, but it wasn't boring at all cause you were on fire! That guy really had it coming when he tried that hook shot and you can swooping in with.."

The boy prattles on.

The secret gnaws at its bars. The fire in Kats chest grows fiercer.

"Kat? Are you alright?"

The softness of the voice is unbearable. The words are spoken in such a way that it almost brings tears to his eyes. How dare he? How dare he talk like everything is sunshine and rainbows, like he doesn't have to try?

Suddenly, his curtains are gone. His secret thuds and booms and rakes its claws against its prison, as gentle hands brush his hair back and behind his ear carefully. Like he's some sort of animal that might get startled by swift and jerky movements.

"There you are."

His smile is even more beautiful in the sunlight, whispers the secret, grabbing a hold of him and pushing the words into his mind.

Kat lets it for a brief moment. He allows it that small triumph.

Then he yanks it away, with a push at the gentle, loving hand.

"Don't touch me."

The boy flinches, and his wonderfully soft smile falters.

"I'm sorry."

It's said immediately. No hesitation.

"I didn't think that-"

"Yeah, You didn't think." Kat hisses, ignoring the tingle where the other had brushed his skin.

"Ok then." That's the response Kat gets, and his blood boils upon hearing it.

No argument. None at All. Just calm, and a content face.

The secret bounces around and jabbars excitedly, pleading for so many things at once.

"I'm.. I-.."

Kat stutters. Maybe for the first time in his life, his words don't come out with the air of confidence and superiority he presents himself with.

There's something more vulnerable in them.

"..sorry."

A blink of surprise. The boy in front of him is frozen.

"Oh! Uh.. I-It's fine? I'm not quite sure what you apologising for-"He giggles nervously.

Kat huffs, a little shook at his own rare display of emotion.

His secret tosses and turns and tumbles inside of him. As he watches the boys face, squints in the sun to soak in every detail, he decides that for once in his life he's going to give it a little more.

He looks away, and his hand stretches out behind him before he can think about it.

There's only a slight gasp, before he feels the warmth of another tangling with his.

They walk. It doesn't take long for the other to start rambling on again.

Kat is content to listen.

His secret humming gently in the air around them.