James

Eyes:

James walked by the community gas station, head held high and a smile on his face. His sapphire eyes shone brightly in the golden light of dawn. James tried his best to always be in a good mood. He figured he had spent more than enough days being in a bad mood for a lifetime.

The gas station was worn, the paint on the sign peeling back to expose the rotten wood beneath, but it was always home to James. Literally. His room was located at the back of the shop. Somehow it was in worse condition than the gas station itself, which seemed nearly impossible, but James didn't mind. Not when he was in a good mood. He was always in a good mood.

James slid his back down the wall at the back of the gas station. It was cold. The sun hadn't yet thawed the crumbling bricks. This was where James always ate breakfast before heading to school. He wasn't allowed to be inside once the sun rose. Regardless, James was in a good mood.

People passed by the gas station regularly. Every single time someone saw James, they threw a pitiful glance in his direction, then quickly looked away. At their feet, at the ground, at the graffiti that suddenly caught their interest. Anywhere other than at James. He didn't mind. One day was different though. A girl was passing by. Her eye makeup marred her face in long, dark streaks. She looked like she was in a bad mood. She was holding a single daisy, admiring it as if it were twenty pounds of gold. Then she saw James. And smiled. And approached him.

No one ever approached James. Ever. And yet a girl that looked so fragile she might snap in half was before him. She extended her hand, the one with the flower. James took it gingerly in his hands, knowing how much it meant to the girl, for whatever reason. She didn't say anything and left with a smile stained on her face, more permanent than that of her makeup. A tear slid down James' face. He wished it hadn't. He knew the feeling all too well. All the memories, the trauma came rushing back. No one had done something kind for James in 14 years. 14 years ago, he was born. The nurse gave him a bath. That was the last time someone was kind to James. He looked at the flower, so pure in his dirty hands. For the first time in a while, James minded. He really, really minded.