

**The Caged Voice**

**Written by Anthony Zor**

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

A blank notebook is laying on the desk, the pen making a mark writing "Everything will be fine. I will be ok.." As we hear the strokes of the pen and the anxious breathing, KAI gives a nervous smile as he keeps writing the phrase down.

KAI

Everything will be fine.

Quick shots of a band performing begin to clog his mind. His face worried as his eyes dart to his phone. The writing becomes faster and more intense. His breathing escalates. He crosses off words. His own mind harassing him as the pen freezes right before it touches the paper.

He closes the notebook coming back to reality. He sits on the floor leaning against his bed, trying to calm himself down. Suddenly the phone rings, and his heart stops. He slowly gets up and walks back to his desk. He picks up the phone.

KAI

Hello?

CUT TO TITLE

CUT TO EXT. STUDIO

MAX is talking excitedly on the phone.

MAX

Mhm.. Yes thank you so much! I'm going to tell the others right now.

She starts walking back into the studio as they say their last words. She lets out a quick silent celebration.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The band is mid-practice. DILLON the guitarist and PARKER the drummer are intensely playing Guitar Hero

MAX

Yo guys!

No one seems to hear her over the game.

MAX

GUYS!

With a look of frustration, she goes over and turns off the game system. Parker and Dillon look confused.

PARKER

What the fuck Max?

DILLON

You're such a vibe killer sometimes.

MAX

Well Dillon, maybe if you spent more time playing a real guitar than that plastic one, you'd be playing on an actual stage by now.

INT. BATHROOM

Kai is looking at himself in the mirror, he touches his throat softly. He tries to collect himself as he grabs his water bottle and enters the studio .

INT. STUDIO

DILLON

You'll see, I'll be touring the world soon enough. Besides, we were waiting for Kai. He's been in the bathroom forever.

Kai gives a fake laugh and goes back to drinking water as he sits down. Dillon gives him a weird look.

PARKER

So... what's this good news, Max?

MAX

Ok, remember that guy Josh I was talking to?

DILLON

Oh yea, "talking."

PARKER

She must have paid him extra.

Parker and Dillon start laughing.

MAX

Oh please Parker, the only thing you're ever gonna bang is that drum. And yes, Dillon, we were talking. Talking about how Josh happens to book bands for a little known place called... The Brooklyn Vinylry.

Dillon and Parker's faces light up. Kai starts to look nervous.

DILLON

Holy Shit! Are you serious?

MAX

And get this, one of the headliners canceled and Josh didn't have a replacement so I told

him I might know a band that would love to cover and...

PARKER

No way..

MAX

Yes! We're playing The Brooklyn Vinylry this Friday night!

Dillon's face is engulfed in a huge smile. Kai suddenly chokes on the water and keeps coughing. They all turn around to look at him.

PARKER

Yo Kai, you good?

KAI

Yea, I'm fine. [weakly laughs, begins to cough again]

DILLON

Dude, this means we only have like 5 days to practice.

MAX

Yeah we should get back to work-

KAI

We can't..

DILLON

Why not?

Kai puts his head in his hands, sighing. He rubs his face in despair, trying to figure out what to say. Band members look at each other confused and crowd around him, making him feel even more vulnerable.

Kai first looks up at everyone with teary eyes, looks down again searching for the words to tell them.

MAX

Kai, what is it-

KAI

I'M LOSING MY VOICE!

Silence in the air. Band members are in shock. Max sits next to him

MAX

What does that even mean?

KAI

The doctor called me yesterday, she basically said that my vocal cords are shot.

PARKER

How bad is it?

KAI

At the rate I'm going..

(Beat)

She said I may never be able to sing again.

ALL

What?!

KAI

Well what do you expect? Just this year we recorded and released two albums, we practice almost everyday, we play shows every other weekend, this is not good for my health.

For a few seconds there is silence in the air.

DILLON

Well now what? What about the booking?

PARKER

Bro..

KAI

We should probably tell Josh that we won't be able to-

DILLON

Nuh-uh! No way! That is not happening.

MAX

Guys calm down. We can get through this.

Dillon sighs and turns around in hopelessness. Kai looks at him with a distraught face as tears begin to well up from his eyes. Max puts her hand on his back.

KAI

Thanks Max but... I think I'm gonna go.

He gets up and walks out.

PARKER

Aw come on Kai, don't be like that.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Kai is driving, tears still glued onto his face. His sadness turns into frustration as he hits the steering wheel several times. A car horn suddenly blares in the distance, realizing he was in the middle of the road and immediately swerves back. He stops on the side of a desolate road and gets out. There's too many emotions going on in his head that he tries to let out a big scream. He begins to cough and leans on the hood of his car.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kai is sitting on his bed, listening to his own music while watching videos of his shows. He puts his phone down and lies down, feeling unwanted. His eyes glued to the lights on the ceiling. He begins to drift away from reality.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

He jolts up to the sound of a notification on his phone. He notices that it's morning. He grabs it, squinting, he notices that Dillon posted something on Facebook hours ago. He grabs his computer on his bed and opens it up. We see his face go from tired to puzzled, then to concerned, then to anger. He jumps up, the laptop still sitting on the bed seeing the post "New singer needed."

EXT. DILLON'S HOUSE - DAY

Kai busts open the door and hears someone talking to Dillon. He stomps further into his house and reaches his room. Dillon and JORDAN stop when they notice him

KAI

You posted an ad on Facebook?! [notices Jordan] Who the hell is this?

JORDAN

[With a smug] Wait.. is that the guy?

DILLON

Jordan just hang here i'll be back.

Dillon exits the room with Kai.

KAI

Jordan? Is that who you're replacing me with?



DILLON

No, it was just an audition.

Dillon brings Kai outside.

KAI

So you are replacing me!

DILLON

Jesus, calm down... [collects himself] Look, I know you're going through something, and I'm sorry, but I am not losing this opportunity. We need a singer and we need to figure out our options. Our band has worked too...

KAI

Yea, OUR band. It doesn't seem much like our band when you're kicking me out just like that.

DILLON

I'm not kicking you out, but The Vinylry is in four days and we need someone who can sing. Max, Parker, and I all want you to stay.

KAI

Stay and do what? Sell T-shirts? Run errands for you? I'm still the lead singer!

DILLON

Kai, there are three other people in this band, haven't you noticed? You can't ask us to sacrifice everything because of you.

(Beat)

I'm not going to argue about this anymore.

Dillon starts to walk away back toward the room where they left Jordan.

KAI

This is serious Dillon, but I guess you wouldn't get it. Unlike you, I gave up everything to build this band from the ground up-

Kai is yelling at Dillon's back. Hearing this, Dillon angrily wheels around to confront Kai

DILLON

Unlike you? Are you serious? Are you really taking ownership of this whole thing when I was also here since the beginning? You think because you gave up everything, you're entitled to the band. (Beat)  
You know you're right about one thing though. I didn't give up everything because I had nothing to begin with. I have no plan B. This is it! This band is all I have! I won't see it get ripped away because you can't hold a fucking tune.

Dillon gets closer to Kai.

DILLON

So if you wanna say that this is your band.. fine. But you are not taking my life away.

Kai is lost for words. In a way he kind of takes back what he said and tries to reason with him.

KAI

I-I-

He suddenly starts repeatedly coughing, his knees hit the floor as he struggles to finish his line. Dillon is still

standing next to him, starting to feel some empathy towards Kai's suffering. Jordan comes out of the room.

DILLON

Can you get water?

Kai is breathing heavily, his head down in defeat.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kai is in his bathroom facing the mirror, it is silent. He tries to sing but nothing is coming out. He touches his throat as it's giving him pain. He splashes some water in his face and leans on the sink.

INT. BEDROOM

He walks in his room full of anger. He throws everything off of his desk. He hits the wall and slides down to the floor, heavily breathing. He notices the notebook on the floor as well. He slowly walks to it and sits on his bed. He then turns the pages back and sees all the songs he wrote, all the things that got him where he is today. His emotionless face slowly becomes a small smirk. He gets to the first page and there is a note that falls. He picks it up and opens it. It reads "08/2016 This is where your journey begins.. Let it all out >:)" Kai starts to get emotional, he completely forgot how much writing has made him the man he is today. He flips to a blank page, and starts to think. He is starting to come alive again.

Montage:

- Journal as he is writing in it
- Him playing the guitar
- Using music production software
- Home remedies to help recover his voice
- Kai sitting on the grass listening to music

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Kai is slowly walking down the hallway, he hears the band finish their last song behind the closed door. He stops and collects himself before he enters. Jordan suddenly opens the door revealing Kai standing there. Jordan gives him a quick look before exiting the room. The rest of the band is visibly surprised to see Kai.

MAX

Kai! Where the hell have you been?

She stands up and gives him a hug. Parker joins them. Dillon is feeling uncomfortable not knowing what to do.

KAI

I uh.. Came to drop off something

PARKER

Drop off what..?

He reveals a shoebox he was hiding behind his back. Kai walks over to Dillon and places the bag next to him. Dillon looks at the bag and then looks at Kai. He sighs and grabs it. Everyone is looking at him as he takes out Kai's notebook.

DILLON

Your notebook?

MAX

Why are you giving us that?

KAI

Because I want to give you something that you'll remember me by. It served its purpose for me, but now I want you guys to continue it.

MAX

Kai this is ridiculous you don't have to do that.

KAI

I want to though. I wrote one more song that I really poured my heart into. Please promise you'll play it at the Vinylry tomorrow.

Dillon finds a flash drive in the bag as well. Max and Parker nod their heads.

DILLON

Kai.. you know I didn't mean what I said, right? Time was running out so tensions were pretty high.. I just want you to know that you could still be a part of us no matter what.

Kai hesitates before he speaks. Thinking of how to phrase his response.

KAI

As much as I loved all the memories we created in this space, I feel like these past 5 years have really taken a toll on me. It's best if I take a break from all of this, maybe find a new path.

There is a slight awkward silence. Then Parker starts to get emotional.

PARKER

I'm really gonna miss you man.

They all embrace and hug Kai.

MAX

And just know that you're always welcome to  
come back.. Jordan is a little pitchy anyway

Dillon nods sadly agreeing with Max. They begin to  
laugh.

Kai gets in his car. He goes on his phone and turns on  
one of his songs. He smiles as he backs out onto the  
road. We see him drive away as the screen goes to  
black.

FADE OUT

THE END