

Seeing blood turns into  
bloodshed



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*N.B. Martens*

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## *Right since the start*

This story starts with a perfectly normal boy, with a perfectly normal life, Kaden Porter. For all he knows, that is.

His parents have a secret, a very big secret, one that they've been hiding from him his entire life.

He might not realize it, but his life is complicated, far more complicated than the lives of the people he knows. Without him knowing, his life is in danger, grave danger. And this all because of the people he loves and admires.

You see, his parents don't work for a company that's located miles away, which makes them travel far every day. They're not accountants in the slightest. But that's what Kaden believes, and probably will for a very long time.

These parents of his in question aren't in a normal business, they never have. They have a secret life, one they shield from their loved ones. They've been in the business for a while now, and they don't plan on leaving any time soon. But what they don't know is that they won't be able to choose how long they'll stay.

One day, Kaden and his parents are walking in the forest close to their home, like they do every Saturday.

None of them ever expected what'll happen in thirty minutes from now.

They're talking about Kaden's academic performances, which have always been quite good, not perfect, but still good. His parents are praising him, and Kaden can't help but glow with pride.

Fifteen minutes left.

He has always loved it when his parents gave him recognition for his hard work. He tries to make them proud every day. He

does his best while studying, he pays attention to class and he's always friendly and polite to everyone.

Ten minutes left.

His father had slung his arm around his shoulders, squeezing them every time he made a new comment about Kaden.

His life felt fulfilled, perfect, in a way.

Five minutes left.

His parents were still talking about him, and that made his day.

Everything he does is for his parents, to earn their respect and love.

Three seconds left.

As his parents talked and he beamed in between them, he suddenly heard a bang.

His anxiety immediately spiked up, he looked down at his finger, a single drop of blood on it. So he looked beside him, at his mother and immediately froze. To his horror, she was lying on the ground, blood seeping from her head, her eyes were rolled back into her head, and he saw a gunshot wound right between her eyes.

The moment he was able to move, he knelt down next to her without hesitation. He cradled her limp body in his arms, holding her tightly against his chest. He looked over at his father, who was just watching, his expression one of terror and disbelief, tears prickling in the corners of his eyes.

Kaden himself had started crying a while ago, but he felt a surge of rage rush through him when he saw his father just standing there, frozen and unable to move a limb.

'Do something!' he shouted at his father, his voice a mix of fear and anger.

But his father stayed frozen, not even blinking.

'Dad, do something! Call 911!' he shouted again. But just like last time, his father didn't move a muscle.

He couldn't believe it, his father was doing nothing. Nothing! While his mother was bleeding out under him, the blood in between her eyes already drying. He was losing hope, he needed to do something. Anything.

He gently laid his mother back down and rushed up to his father.

'What the hell are you doing? Go find help! Mom's dying!' But still no response from his father. Kaden's eyes burned with fury as he looked at his father. The man he once loved and adored was just standing there while his mother was dying only a few feet away from him.

'Why aren't you doing anything?!' he yelled at his father. 'Do something!'

His father finally spoke up.

'We have to leave,' his voice leaving no room for argument. Kaden looked at his dad, dumbfounded. How could he say that at a time like this?

'But we can't- mom, she's dying, we have to help or-,' but he got cut off by his father.

'No, Kaden, we have to leave. *Now.*'

So, he complied and left his mom there, his heart feeling heavier with every step he took. But he had to listen to his father, he knew best.

For some reason, even after all of this, he still *wanted* to listen to his dad, he still saw him as a role model.

When they got far enough so they couldn't see his mom anymore, his father stopped walking and turned to him.

'Kaden, I know you're probably confused, and I get it. But right now, we need to get as far away from here as possible, do you understand?'

'But, dad-,' he started, but his father cut him off again.

'No buts. Do you understand?'

He hung his head low and sighed deeply, his heart still racing from the intensity of everything.

'I understand.'

'Good, now follow me. We have to go.'

So he followed his father, without hesitation now. His mind was still running with questions, and it didn't seem to stop any time soon. He tried to ignore it, but he couldn't, the questions still flowing through his mind, they wouldn't disappear, no matter what.

Finally, he had enough and spoke up.

'Dad, why did we have to leave mom there?' he asked, his voice cracking with guilt and sadness.

'I'll tell you when we get to the shelter,' his father said curtly.

The word 'shelter' didn't leave his mind for a second. He wondered where this alleged 'shelter' was, and how his father knew where it was.

They kept walking in silence, and all the pride and confidence Kaden had felt before had disappeared within seconds. He felt a growing sense of guilt for leaving his mother behind, he felt anxious for the future, for what would happen next and an overwhelming amount of sadness about the loss of his own mother.

Memories replayed of times she had comforted him when he was scared or when he felt bad. How she'd made him smile and laugh countless times. Every time she'd hug him or kiss his forehead before bed. Even when he acted like a total jerk to her, she'd been nothing but kind and caring to him.

He also remembered the bad times. The ones when he yelled at her about something so insignificant compared to what had just happened and she cried. When he had unintentionally said he hated her.

He wanted to take it all back, to tell her he was sorry about everything. But it was too late now.

Funny isn't it? How you feel guilty for everything that happened long after you can't apologize anymore. It's like we don't realize the consequences of our actions when it

happens, but we do when the opportunity to say sorry has passed.

Eventually Kaden and his dad got to a cave, Kaden didn't know why they went there, but he kept following his father.

His father pushed a rock, and then suddenly, a door appeared. His father got out a key and opened the door.

As he walked inside, he saw a normal room. A tv, a couch, a kitchen. It didn't look out of the ordinary at all, but the fact that it was inside a cave didn't escape his mind.

He turned to his father, who had just sat down on the couch, his expression revealing nothing.

'Dad? What is this place?'

'Come sit down,' his father told him, patting the seat next to him on the couch.

So, Kaden walked over to his father and sat down next to him.

His father turned to him, his expression serious.

'There's something I need to tell you.'

'What is it?' he asked, his voice laced with confusion.

'Your mother and I, we've been keeping a secret from you,' he started. He paused for a few seconds, giving Kaden the time to process his words. 'It's about our work.'

He looked at his father, confusion written all over his face.

'What about it?'

'Well, we're not accounts, we're in a different line of work.'

He was still confused. For all he knew, his parents had always been accounts, and nothing else. But he kept quiet, letting his father speak.

'You see, son, we're- well, it's not normal, to say the least,' his father was clearly still hesitating, he could see it in his eyes.

'I'll just come out and say it. Your mother and I, we're in the mafia.'

At first he thought it was just some joke, but then he saw the serious expression on his father's face, he wasn't lying to him. He felt his world shatter around him. Finding out that his

parents were in such a dangerous line of work made his stomach ache. His mind raced with questions, but he kept quiet, too shocked to say anything. His life turned upside down with just a few words his father spoke.

Finally, he found his voice again.

'You're- you're not joking, are you?' he asked.

'I'm not, no.'

He kept quiet for a few seconds, processing what he'd just found out about his parents.

'Why?' he managed to get out.

'It pays well, Kaden. And frankly, we got used to it. It became a constant in our life, we enjoyed it,' his father explained.

'Enjoyed it?' he repeated. 'How can you enjoy that? You're taking innocent people's lives, you shouldn't enjoy that.'

His father tried to defend himself, but Kaden cut him off.

'No, dad, let me talk for a second. The person who shot mom, it's because of your job, isn't it? Your choices got mom killed. And don't even try to deny it, you should've known. You should've thought about everything before you actually went through with it.'

His father's expression changed, it wasn't one of hesitation anymore, it was one of anger, frustration.

'Don't say that, I didn't get your mother killed, she wanted to work for them as much as I did.'

Kaden rolled his eyes, he couldn't believe his father was blaming his mother for her own death.

'So you're putting the blame on her? You're telling me mom caused her own death? That it's her fault?'

'No, Kaden, that's not what I'm saying. But you have to understand, I wasn't the only one working for them, she was too. I tried to talk her out of it, really, I did, but she wouldn't budge. Please, you have to believe me.'