

# *Until It Wasn't*

CHAPTER

2

## The Breaking Point

NULLFRAME



*Until  
It Wasn't*

CHAPTER  
**2**

THE  
BREAKING  
POINT



# UNTIL IT WASN'T

A NULLFRAME COMICS story.



## CHAPTER 2: THE BREAKING POINT

For the ones who kept going when they  
shouldn't have had to.

**Story & Art**  
**KEAN PRINSLOO**

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**Published by**



There are moments that don't feel important when they happen. Not because th're small—but but because we don't yet know what they'll cost.

This is the story of what came after of those moments.

THE SMOKE DIDN'T CLEAR; IT JUST SETTLED INTO HIS SKIN. KAI STOOD IN THE WRECKAGE OF HIS OWN REALITY, BREATHING IN THE SCENT OF OZONE AND BURNT PINE, WAITING FOR THE PAIN TO ARRIVE. BUT THE PAIN WAS ABSENT, REPLACED BY A COLD, HUMMING VIBRATION THAT STARTED AT THE BASE OF HIS SKULL AND RADIATED TO HIS FINGERTIPS. HE LOOKED AT HIS HANDS AND SAW THEY WERE STEADY—TOO STEADY FOR A BOY WHO HAD JUST SEEN THE SKY FALL. THE SILENCE OF THE WOODS FELT DIFFERENT NOW; IT WASN'T A PEACEFUL SANCTUARY ANYMORE, BUT A WITNESS TO A CRIME THAT HAD NO NAME. EVERY STEP BACK TOWARD THE TOWN FELT LIKE WALKING THROUGH DEEP WATER. THE LIGHTS OF THE DISTANT HOUSES LOOKED LIKE COLD STARS, UNREACHABLE AND INDIFFERENT. HE CARRIED THE WEIGHT OF THE EXPLOSION INSIDE HIS LUNGS, A SECRET WRITTEN IN FIRE AND FAILURE. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE MILITARY HAD LOST IN THOSE WOODS, BUT HE KNEW THEY WOULD COME LOOKING FOR IT. HE JUST DIDN'T REALIZE THAT THEY WOULDN'T BE LOOKING FOR A CRATE OR A CANISTER. THEY WOULD BE LOOKING FOR HIM. THE TRANSFORMATION HAD BEGUN IN THE DARK, A SLOW-MOTION COLLAPSE OF EVERYTHING HE USED TO BE.

UNTIL IT WASN'T

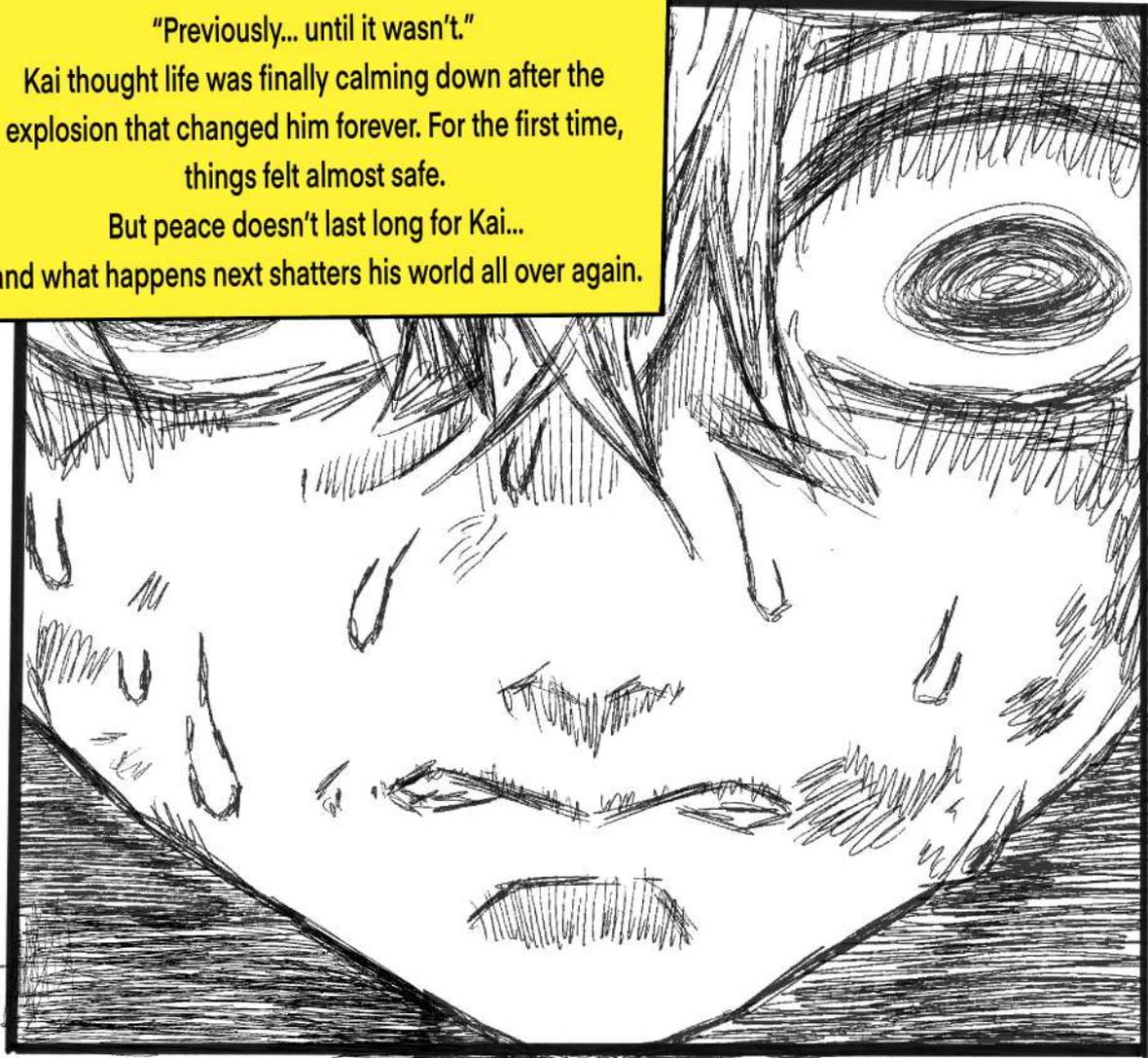
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"Previously... until it wasn't."

Kai thought life was finally calming down after the explosion that changed him forever. For the first time, things felt almost safe.

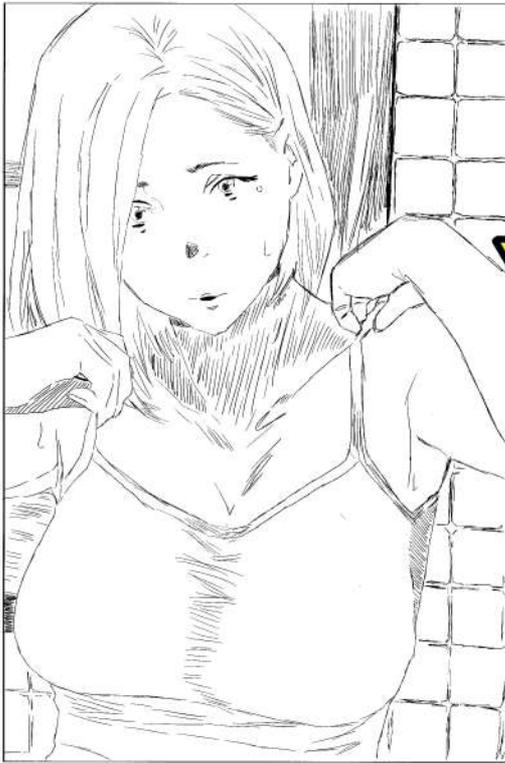
But peace doesn't last long for Kai... and what happens next shatters his world all over again.



"What's happening to me?"



Ahh...



KAI!? Can you help real quick



Yeah mom?



We were used to silence, the heavy, exhausted quiet that comes after a long, desperate day. Mom was already on her feet, trying to clean away the cost of our latest move, but the city we landed in didn't care about quiet. It didn't care about exhausted single mothers, either. All it ever sent was trouble, and tonight, trouble finally kicked down the door.



Give me a sec I'll be there in a minute...



Boss I think I have the house I'm going in

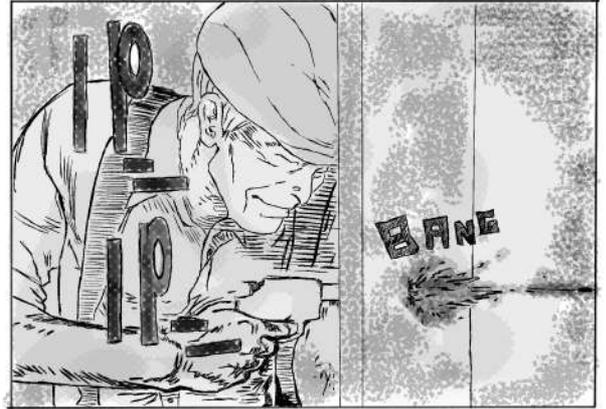
Robber enters house

She saw him standing there—her lonely boy. She hated that all this stress had pushed him away, made him hide in his room, convinced he was the reason they kept running. If I could just tell him I'm sorry... That thought, that single, crucial apology, was already too late. It was stolen by the sound of wood shattering a thousand yards away.



Kai I'm so s...s...s.....

Mom?



WTF!

NOOO MOM!





I love you son.



HE NEVER EVEN SAW HER FACE.  
SHE WAS JUST IN THE  
WRONG PLACE... AT THE  
WRONG MOMENT.



SHE WASN'T THE  
TARGET.

THE ROBBER PANICS AND RUNS... HE  
NEVER EVEN SAW HER FACE, AS HE  
SHOOTS THE WRONG PERSON... WRONG  
TARGET



No — no —  
no —  
please  
mom



In one second, the only  
person he had left was gone.  
The house felt smaller.  
Colder.  
Empty.



## A FEW DAYS LATER

KAI STOOD IN FRONT OF HER GRAVE LONGER THAN HE MEANT TO.  
HE DIDN'T HAVE THE RIGHT WORDS.  
HE NEVER DID.

THE FUNERAL HAD BEEN QUIET.  
TOO QUIET.  
NO FAMILY. NO FAMILIAR FACES.  
JUST HIM.

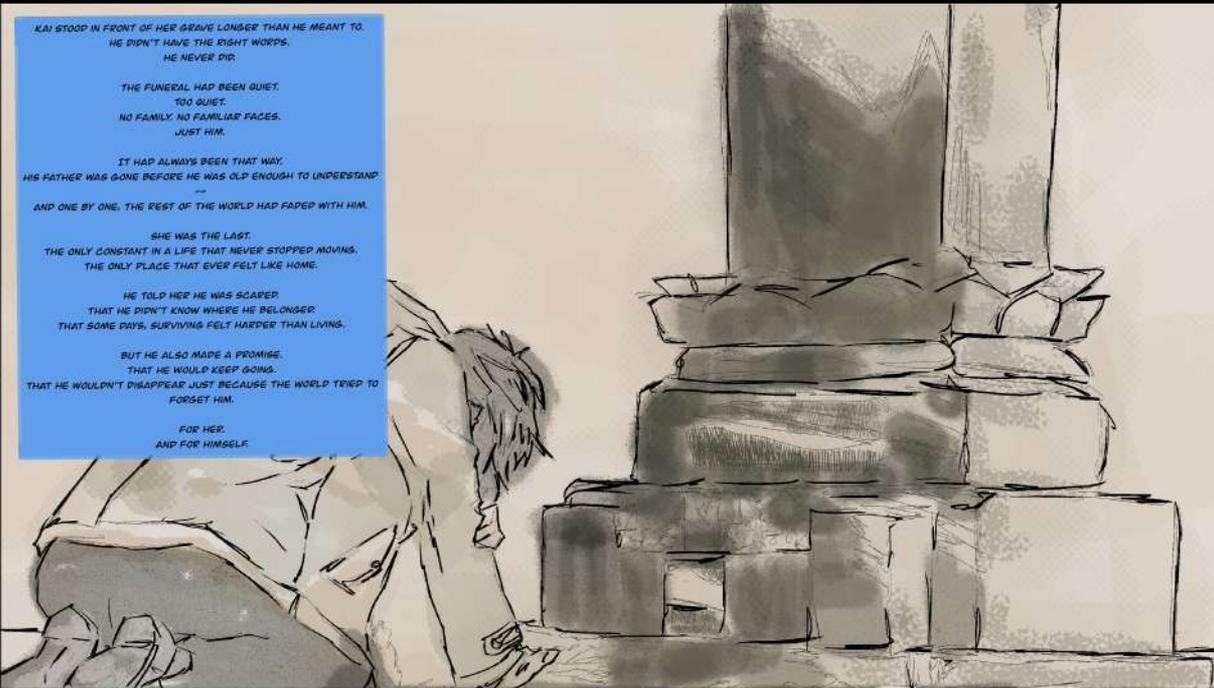
IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY.  
HIS FATHER WAS GONE BEFORE HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND  
—  
AND ONE BY ONE, THE REST OF THE WORLD HAD FADED WITH HIM.

SHE WAS THE LAST.  
THE ONLY CONSTANT IN A LIFE THAT NEVER STOPPED MOVING.  
THE ONLY PLACE THAT EVER FELT LIKE HOME.

HE TOLD HER HE WAS SCARED.  
THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE HE BELONGED.  
THAT SOME DAYS, SURVIVING FELT HARDER THAN LIVING.

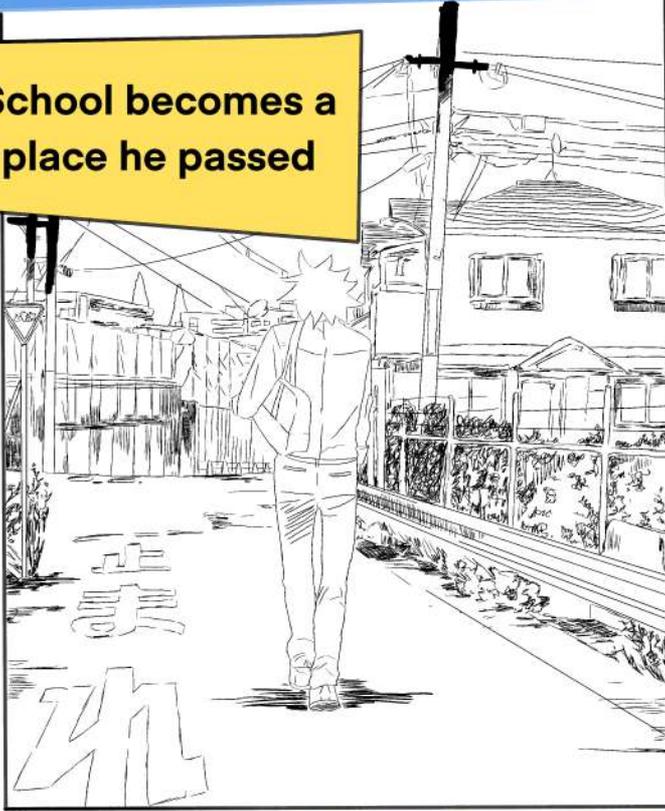
BUT HE ALSO MADE A PROMISE.  
THAT HE WOULD KEEP GOING.  
THAT HE WOULDN'T DISAPPEAR JUST BECAUSE THE WORLD TRIED TO  
FORGET HIM.

FOR HER.  
AND FOR HIMSELF.



**A FEW MONTHS LATER**

**School becomes a place he passed**



**HE LEARNED HOW TO DISAPPEAR.**

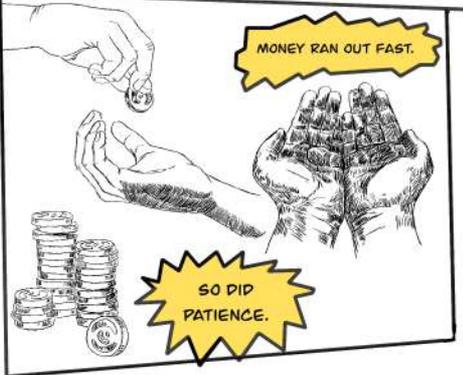


**KAI SLEEPING IN A QUIET, PUBLIC PLACE.**

...not a place where he belonged.



**MONEY RAN OUT FAST.**



**SO DID PATIENCE.**

ALONE...



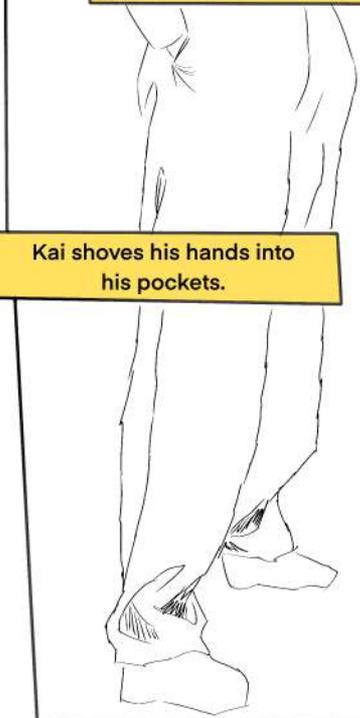
Close-up of Kai's hands, faint energy under the skin



The power never -  
left.

He just stopped listening  
to it.

Kai shoves his hands into  
his pockets.



Crowded street. People passing by.



YOU DON'T  
REMEMBER ME...  
BUT I KNOW YOU  
BASTARD .



SH  
GET LOST KID OR  
YOU'LL GET HURT

YOU KILLED  
MY MOM

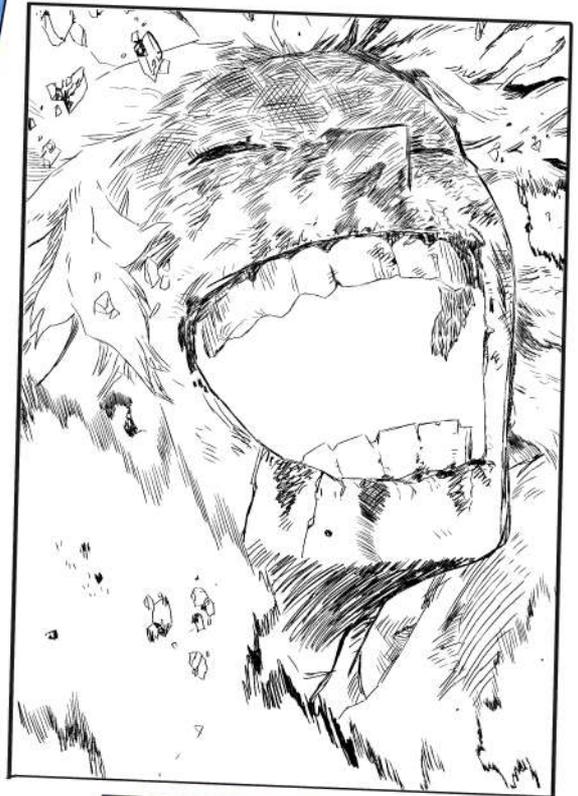


YOU...



YOU DESERVE THIS  
EVEN THOUGH DEATH  
DOESN'T FIX WHAT YOU  
HAVE DONE...

**Anger doesn't fade.**

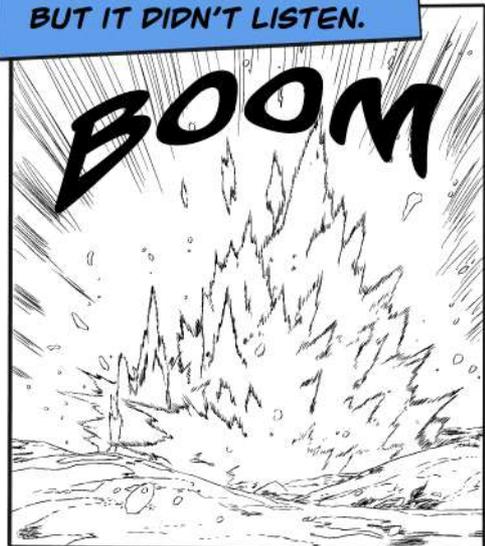


WHAT THE  
HELL IS  
THAT?!

WHOA...



**THE POWER ANSWERED.  
BUT IT DIDN'T LISTEN.**



**KRRRRSSHHHH**



**TO BE CONTINUED...**

IT HAPPENED IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, WHILE THE REST OF THE WORLD SLEPT IN THE COMFORT OF THEIR IGNORANCE. THE HUMMING IN KAI'S BONES GREW INTO A ROAR, A SURGE OF ENERGY THAT FELT LIKE LIGHTNING TRAPPED IN A GLASS JAR. HE STOOD BEFORE THE MIRROR, WATCHING AS THE SHADOWS IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM SEEMED TO BEND TOWARD HIM, DRAWN TO THE HEAT RADIATING FROM HIS SKIN. THE SERUM WASN'T JUST STABILIZING; IT WAS COLONIZING. IT WAS REWRITING THE CODE OF HIS EXISTENCE, STITCH BY AGONIZING STITCH, TURNING HIS FEAR INTO SOMETHING SHARP AND METALLIC.

HE REALIZED THEN THAT THE "OUTSIDER" HE HAD BEEN AT SCHOOL WAS GONE. THAT BOY HAD DIED IN THE FIRE. IN HIS PLACE WAS A WEAPON WITH A HEARTBEAT, A VARIABLE THAT THE MILITARY BASE COULD NEVER HAVE PREDICTED. HE COULD HEAR THE DISTANT SOUND OF TIRES ON GRAVEL—THE SEARCH PARTIES, THE MEN IN SUITS, THE PREDATORS HUNTING THEIR LOST PROPERTY. THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE COMING TO CLEAN UP A MESS. THEY DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE WALKING INTO THE RADIUS OF A DISASTER THAT WAS ONLY JUST BEGINNING TO WAKE UP. THE SILENCE WAS FINALLY OVER. THE STORM HAD ARRIVED.

**TO BE CONTINUED...**

**UNTIL IT WASN'T**

A NULLFRAME COMICS story.



# Until It Wasn't

## CHAPTER 2 -- THE BREAKING POINT

KAI THOUGHT THE WORST THING IN HIS LIFE HAD ALREADY HAPPENED.

HE WAS WRONG.

AFTER SURVIVING THE EXPLOSION THAT SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM, KAI IS STRUGGLING TO UNDERSTAND THE STRANGE POWER GROWING INSIDE HIM. HE HASN'T TOLD HIS MOTHER. HE HASN'T TOLD ANYONE.

BUT BEFORE HE CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT HE'S BECOMING... EVERYTHING FALLS APART.

A SINGLE GUNSHOT.

A SINGLE MISTAKE.

A SINGLE MOMENT THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

WITH NO MOTHER, NO FAMILY, AND NOW NO HOME, KAI IS FORCED INTO A WORLD THAT DOESN'T CARE IF HE SURVIVES.

GRIEF TURNS INTO ANGER.

ANGER TURNS INTO POWER.

AND POWER DOESN'T ALWAYS KNOW WHEN TO STOP.

SOME PEOPLE BREAK.

OTHERS EXPLODE.

