

# Early Leaving



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A mother wakes one morning to find the police at her door to arrest her only child—a star athlete and honor student—for murder. The Smallwoods are one of those families who project a rosy image, exactly what we all hoped and imagined our lives would be. Peter Smallwood is a patent attorney with the oldest firm in town. Kathryne is president of parents' council at the private high school their son, Early, attends. She is an over-involved mother; Peter is under-involved. She's excessive when she should hold back; he's stingy when fullness is needed. Kathryne is so protective of their son, so overbearing, that the only way out for him is to disappoint her in a profound way. The novel opens the night before his sentencing. It covers the next thirteen months and flashes back to family memories Kathryne has told again and again through the years, trotting them out like scrubbed children—as well as the memories she would just as soon forget. EARLY LEAVING is Kathryne's story. She probes the pieces of the past to see if she should have seen the end coming. Was there any point where she might have come between her son and what lay in wait for him? Or was it just the randomness of fate and its consequences? Was she the cause? All she ever wanted was to keep him safe and happy. Isn't that what every mother wants?

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