

Chapter One

Tribb Munday was watching football in his living room. Suddenly, something made him look toward the hall.

Nothing. The hall was empty.

Tribb's wife, Linda, was sitting on the couch against the wall, knitting. Linda worked as a nurse at the local hospital. Lately, whenever she was home, she was knitting.

"Did you see that?" Tribb asked her.

Linda didn't look up. "Was it a good play?" she said.

Tribb shook his head. "I'm not talking about the football game. I thought I saw something in the hall."

In the light coming from the kitchen, Tribb saw the hall carpet and the wall. On the wall hung a framed picture of the Munday family. Tribb, Linda, and Suzy, their daughter. They were standing on the dock of the cottage they'd rented a few summers before. Suzy was eight years old then. That summer, Tribb often thought, was his family's happiest time. But besides the wall, the carpet, and the picture, there was nothing to be seen. Still, Tribb couldn't shake the idea that something else had been there a moment ago. If only he'd looked a second earlier, he'd have seen it.

"I'm sorry, honey," Linda replied. "I'm not really watching the football."

Linda was still focused on her knitting. Every fall she made scarves and mittens and hats to raise money for Suzy's school. This year's sale was at the end of next week, and she had a lot of items to finish. Right now she was working on a powder blue scarf, her long knitting needles clicking in a steady rhythm. Tribb could tell she was not paying any attention to him.

"Linda, it's hard to talk to you when you're not looking at me."

Linda kept knitting. "Okay, then," she said, nodding.

Tribb watched her. "Linda?" he said, and waited. Nothing. "Linda?" he tried again. "Linda? Linda? Linda?"

His wife dropped her hands and the blue scarf into her lap and stared at Tribb with wide eyes. "Tribb, *why* are you *bothering* me? I have all this knitting to do!"

They just looked at each other for a moment.

"Never mind," said Tribb. On the small table beside him sat an old crystal candy dish, a real antique. It held wrapped butterscotch candies, and Tribb tipped the dish to take a few. When he took his hand away, the dish rattled back into place.

"Careful," said Linda. "That dish was my grandmother's. You know it's very precious to me."

Linda paid more attention to the rattle of a dish than to Tribb's own words. He wasn't surprised. That was marriage for you.

"This is looking nice, don't you think?" said Linda.

Out of the corner of his eye, Tribb saw Linda hold up the blue scarf for him to praise. He didn't have to look. He had very good eyesight out of the

corner of his eye. Better than most, he thought. Not that anyone else appreciated it.

“Very nice,” said Tribb, as he shoved a candy in his mouth.