

# Chapter 1

I could tell by the whispering coming from the kitchen that something was wrong. I wasn't sure how long they had been in there, but it seemed like forever—an hour, at least. And I knew that the longer it went on, the worse it had to be.

I was trying to listen to them over the TV, but I knew if I turned the volume down any lower, it would be obvious. Eventually, my mom hurried past me through the living room. When she did, I knew my suspicions were correct. While she didn't say a word, the look on her face told me more than I

wanted to know—something was definitely wrong, and it was a pretty big deal.

My dad followed her from the kitchen but couldn't keep up. She was moving back toward their bedroom, and she was moving fast. It was obvious that she wanted to be alone, so he let her go. His breath was coming out as one long sigh after another. And his hands were behind his head, which was looking down toward the floor.

I didn't want to stare at him, but it was hard not to. I could tell he was upset, but I wasn't sure if I was supposed to say anything. So, I just sat there with my head turned toward the TV while my eyes remained turned toward him.

Right when the silence was becoming awkward, he made his way over to the sofa and sat down beside me. I quickly glanced back over to the TV and acted like I hadn't been watching him. Dad didn't say anything at first. He just kept staring down at the

floor, probably thinking about what he was going to say and how he was going to say it. And then, when I wasn't sure I could take it anymore, he broke the silence, saying, "Son, we need to talk."

He didn't raise his head at first, and I could tell by his voice that while we needed to talk, he didn't really want to. While I wasn't certain about what he had to say, I was certain that I didn't want to hear it. But all sorts of bad things were running through my head—and I had to know. So, I looked over at him and said, "Okay, about what?"

"Well, something not too good happened today, Parker. I got some news that's going to affect us all—you, me, your mom, and your sister, too. It's going to mean a lot of changes for us."

Changes? I didn't want any changes. I liked things the way they were. And based on the way my mom just ran past me, I was pretty sure that whatever these changes

JIMMY TIDMORE

were, they weren't good. And no matter how hard my dad tried for the next twenty minutes or so to make them sound good, I eventually got up and ran to my room just like my mom had done.