

HELEN

#103 "Dear Departed" STUDIO Draft 7/16/10

11.

CONTINUED:

Start

HELEN SALERNO

I don't know where he was last night.

MEGAN

Weren't you worried?

HELEN SALERNO

Not these days. I figured he was on a case.

SAM

Helen... he wasn't.

Helen lowers herself into a chair.

MEGAN

Had your husband been acting any differently lately?

Helen looks from Megan to Sam. Helen's got something to say. But not in front of a stranger. They all hear a VOICE from down the hall --

BECKY (O.S.)

~~Okay, Annabelle. I'll do another one.~~

MEGAN

Is that your daughter?

HELEN SALERNO

Becky. She doesn't understand what happened. I'm sure she'd love some company.

Megan hesitates. Kids aren't her strong suit. But she knows Helen wants a private moment with Sam. Megan nods and heads out.

SAM

Talk to me, Helen. What's going on?

HELEN SALERNO

I don't know. It's like Joe wasn't Joe. Remember how he used to be?

SAM

(smiles)

It's all I remember. Gentle giant. Good father. Great friend.

(CONTINUED)

HELEN SALERNO

And husband. But then... he seemed tired. I'd ask if he was okay and he'd lose it. Once he even smashed a plate at the dinner table. It scared me. It scared Becky.

SAM

That doesn't sound like him.

HELEN SALERNO

I tried to talk to him. He'd get sullen. Removed. We've barely spoken in the last month.

As Helen tears up, Sam takes her hands --

SAM

We're going to get whoever did this.

STOP

INT. JOE SALERNO'S HOUSE - BECKY'S ROOM - DAY

Megan stands in the doorway as BECKY SALERNO, 8, colors a house light blue. A DOLL sits nearby.

MEGAN

Hi. I'm Megan.

BECKY

(looks up)
I'm Becky.

MEGAN

Do people call you Becks?

BECKY

No.

Strike one. Megan looks around -- crudely colored ORIGAMI BIRDS and FLOWERS dot the room.

MEGAN

These are really neat. Did you make them?

BECKY

It's called origami. Daddy folded the paper. I colored them in. Until he stopped.

(holds up her doll)

So I'm drawing houses for Annabelle. Wanna help?

(CONTINUED)

ETHAN
Goodbye, Detective.

INT. JOE SALERNO'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Helen lets Sam and Megan into the house.

HELEN SALERNO
Thank you for catching my husband's
killer. I just wish I had happier
memories of his last days.

SAM
Helen, Doctor Hunt has something to
tell you.

Megan opens a folder, shows Helen the test results.

MEGAN
Your husband was sick, Mrs.
Salerno. He had Huntington's
disease. ~~It's a degenerative brain
disorder that had gone undiagnosed
for at least a year.~~

HELEN SALERNO
I don't understand. Why didn't I
see it?

MEGAN
You did. Everywhere. His temper
and obsessiveness. His emotional
distance. Loss of manual
dexterity. ~~All of his behavioral
changes were symptoms of
Huntington's.~~ But there's no way
you would have known that.

Sam takes the sheet from the folder. Underneath is a PICTURE
of Jenny Adler, vibrantly alive in her lacrosse uniform.

SAM
His obsession solved her murder.
Joe was a hero, Helen. You should
be very proud.

Helen breaks down. AS Sam hugs her, Megan pushes past to
find Becky in --

INT. JOE SALERNO'S HOUSE - BECKY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Becky looks up, smiles when she sees Megan.