



Proudly Presents

UNSIGNED PAINTINGS

WRITTEN BY JOSEPH REED

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Characters:

Mark Stern, the owner of Stern's Funeral Home

Jenna Stern, his wife

Setting:

The preparation room of Stern's Funeral Home

Jenna: So...you're still working?

Mark: Yes. This is taking longer than I expected.

Jenna: I see that. It's getting late.

Mark: You know what they say, "You can't rush a masterpiece."

Jenna: It's not like people will see your work for very long.

Mark: (*Slightly insulted*) Thanks.

Jenna: I mean, how long does a viewing or funeral last anyway?

Mark: It's important that this be as perfect as I can make it.

Jenna: She...she looks good.

Mark: Thanks.

Jenna: How did she...? What did they say was the cause of death?

Mark: Fracture of the skull...from a fall—internal bleeding and brain hemorrhaging.

Jenna: (*Suddenly realizing*) She's the one, isn't she? She's the one they've been talking about on the news. They think she might have been pushed down a flight of stairs or something. Aren't they investigating her husband?

Mark: They've questioned him—yes. They haven't pressed any charges or anything.

Jenna: So, he'll be there? For the funeral, I mean.

Mark: I don't think it would bode well for him if he *didn't* show up.

Jenna: No, I mean—I'll get to see him. See if he looks like the type that would...

Mark: You know, you don't have to go to every funeral with me.

Jenna: No. I want to go. It's important that I be there. You know that.

Mark: I do.

Jenna: So, I'm going.

Mark: Okay... You're not going to make a scene are you?

Jenna: Of course not. Have I ever made a scene at a funeral?

Mark: Yes.

Jenna: When?

Mark: Remember the time when they were about to conclude the graveside service and that woman began to sing her hymn?

Jenna: (*Laughing*) I'd totally forgotten about that.

Mark: She started singing, "Jesus Is Calling," and just as she said those very words—your cell phone started ringing.

Jenna: Well, the real irony is that it was Jesus. He wanted to know if we wanted our hedges trimmed the next time he and his crew mowed the lawn.

Mark: (*Laughing*) It may have been the only service where technology served a higher purpose and made a few of the mourners born-again believers.

Jenna: I wonder how he'll act.

Mark: Who?

Jenna: Her husband. If he *did* do it, I want to know how he'll react at the service. Will he be remorseful and cry the whole time—wishing he could undo the crime? Or will he be reverent and try to act strong—all the while thinking deep down inside—that he can't wait until this funeral is over so he can take all of the life insurance money and hightail it to some exotic island?

Mark: What? You've already sentenced the guy? He's guilty—no trial or anything?

Jenna: They usually *are* guilty, you know...

Mark: You've been watching way too much television.

Jenna: Yes, I have! And that's exactly *why* I'll be able to tell if he's guilty or innocent when I watch him during the service!

Mark: That's it. You're not going.

Jenna: You'd be surprised at how much I've learned from some of the detective shows on television today. *CSI*, *Law and Order*—even the old reruns of *Murder, She Wrote*—they're all very educational. You know, most of those shows are based on real cases.

Mark: Says who?

Jenna: *TV Guide!*