

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #80
TIME FRAME: IMMEDIATELY
AFTER [#79](#)

TEASER

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)
EVENING

A tuxedoed DON waits at the bottom of the stairs as his wife, HELEN, descends in full evening attire.

DON: Ah, here comes the lovely lady now.

HELEN: (blushing) Oh, Don ...

She reaches her husband and they join hands.

DON: It's been far too long since we did something like this, Helen.

She smiles warmly.

HELEN: I know.

COURTNEY enters, a pint of Cherry Garcia ice cream and a spoon in hand.

COURTNEY: What are you two up to?

DON: (grinning) Your mom and I are going to spend a night out on the town.

COURTNEY: (unenthusiastically) That's nice.

HELEN: Courtney, are you sure you'll be okay home all by yourself?

COURTNEY: Yeah, I'll be fine. (pause) I've got everything I need right here.

DON: Ice cream?

COURTNEY: Hey, would you rather I drink to take my mind off my problems?

DON: Have fun with your ice cream.

He checks his watch.

DON (CONT'D): We should get going. The reservation is for 6:00.

HELEN: All right. Courtney, try to relax. Why don't you give Jason a call?

COURTNEY: (firmly) No.

HELEN: Okay, okay. We'll see you later.

COURTNEY: Okay. Have fun, guys.

HELEN: We love you.

COURTNEY: I love you too.

Don and Helen bustle out the door. Courtney digs the spoon into the ice cream and takes another bite as she heads off towards the living room, brooding.

INT: PUBLISHING (DIANE'S OFFICE)
EVENING

DIANE and BRIAN are in the midst of sharing heartfelt words about their upcoming separation.

DIANE: You've been a terrific friend to me, Brian.

BRIAN: It was my pleasure -- and I'd do it again.

DIANE: I can't believe someone is still able to say that to me after all the horrible things I've done.

BRIAN: Hey, I'm hardly one to preach about good behavior. (pause) I can't thank you enough for taking the fall for me with Tim and Claire.

DIANE: Believe me, how badly can one lie on top of all my other crimes hurt?

BRIAN: I guess so, but I still feel bad.

DIANE: Don't worry about it, really.

BRIAN: I'm just so grateful that we got to Tim and Claire before they got to Molly and told her about how I helped you try to break them up.

Diane nods.

In the background, a stunned MOLLY stands outside the half-open door, looking as if she's suddenly about to vomit.

DIANE: I know how much she means to you.

BRIAN: If she found out, I don't know what I'd do ...

MOLLY: Well, you better figure it out fast, Brian.

Both Brian and Diane turn to see Molly in the doorway, looks of shock on their faces.

Out on Molly's quivering face, as she is unable to believe she actually just made her presence known.

ACT ONE

**EXT: CHASE HOME
EVENING**

DON and **HELEN** are climbing into their car. From afar, **SALLY** watches them, hidden in her own vehicle.

SALLY: Very interesting ... Where could the two of them be going all dressed up like that? (pause) I was hoping Don would be home alone tonight, but oh well ...

She lowers her head, disappointed, but it pops up just as quickly as an idea strikes her.

SALLY (CONT'D): Yes ... I wonder where they're going.

A devious grin appears on her face.

SALLY (CONT'D): I guess there's only one way to find out.

INT: PUBLISHING (DIANE'S OFFICE)

EVENING

Having overcome the initial shock of being confronted by MOLLY, BRIAN and DIANE quickly shift into panic mode.

BRIAN: Molly! Wh-what are you doing here?

MOLLY: (uncertainly) I ... I just came by to see you.

Her face suddenly hardens as she pushes her fears aside.

MOLLY (CONT'D): I don't think that's the burning question here, Brian.

BRIAN: What are you talking about?

MOLLY: You know damn well what I'm talking about. I just overheard what you said to Diane.

BRIAN: What do you mean?

MOLLY: I heard you say-

Diane throws her hands up, interrupting. She is far calmer than Brian as she does this, being a seasoned veteran at deception.

DIANE: I can explain, Molly. I don't think you heard enough of the conversation to know what we were talking about.

MOLLY: Well, I heard Brian say pretty clearly that he couldn't let me find out that he'd helped you try to break up Tim and Claire. I don't know how much more obvious it gets.

BRIAN: Molly, we can explain-

MOLLY: This had better be good, Brian.

She stares him down, unwilling to let another man pull the wool over her eyes simply because of her insecurities.

ACT TWO

INT: RESTAURANT
EVENING

DON and HELEN have just been seated at their table. Helen begins perusing the menu, but Don snatches up the wine list.

DON: I think a special occasion like this calls for a very special drink, don't you think?

HELEN: I think that's a great idea.

She rests her chin in the palm of her hand, admiring her husband.

HELEN (CONT'D): You know, you seem to have calmed down from before. I thought you were going to start bouncing off the walls for a while there.

DON: I really don't know what got into me. But whatever it was, it inspired me to spend a beautiful evening with my even more beautiful wife, so I can't complain.

Across the restaurant, SALLY is led to a small table by herself. She quickly shuffles into her seat and picks up the menu almost immediately to hide her face behind.

SALLY: (to herself) This was a genius idea. Don is in for the surprise of his life.

Meanwhile, Don and Helen have ordered their wine. As the waiter heads off, they resume their conversation.

HELEN: I just hope Courtney is okay. Apparently she and Jason had a pretty bad fight earlier.

DON: And this was because he doesn't believe Shannon is trying to get revenge on Courtney?

HELEN: Yeah ... but I have to admit, I'm to blame. I was the one who brought it up.

DON: Don't blame yourself. This is between Jason and Courtney.

HELEN: I can't help but feel responsible. If only I hadn't gotten Jason started ...

DON: So you really don't think Shannon has anything to do with this?

HELEN: I just don't see how it's possible.

She notices the objection welling up in Don's face.

HELEN (CONT'D): You think she does?

DON: Somehow, she has to. The more I think about it, the more I remember about my fall from the ladder, it seems like I had to have been pushed.

HELEN: I truly hope you're wrong. (pause) If Shannon went to such lengths and nearly killed you just to scare Courtney, I shudder to think what she might do to Courtney herself.

Don nods, fully aware of the danger his daughter might be facing. Suddenly his eye is caught by something past Helen, something he can see over her shoulder.

DON (THINKING): Oh no ...

Peeking out from behind her menu momentarily, Sally waves whimsically at Don.

INT: PUBLISHING (DIANE'S OFFICE)
EVENING

With anger bubbling in her eyes, MOLLY stares at BRIAN intensely. He covers slightly, struggling to cover his blunders, while DIANE looks on with powerless concern.

MOLLY: Start talking ...

BRIAN: Molly, I didn't mean that I helped Diane when she was trying to break up Tim and Claire--

MOLLY: Then why did I hear you say those exact words?

DIANE: Because Brian was offering to cover for someone else.

MOLLY: What?!? This is getting stupider and stupider by the minute.

DIANE: No, hang on. It'll all make sense if you just let me explain.

MOLLY: All right. Let me hear it.

DIANE: Someone else helped me out when I was trying to break up your brother and Claire. But ... that person can't afford to have something like that come out. Someone found out that I had assistance, and Brian offered to take the fall for them.

MOLLY: Is that true, Brian?

He nods, a sudden look of relief spreading over not only his face, but his entire body. His muscles loosen up and his posture relaxes slightly.

MOLLY (CONT'D): That's odd ... because I have quite a few bones to pick with your story.

Diane is caught off-guard by this, and her dumbfounded expression reveals as much.

ACT THREE

INT: RESTAURANT
EVENING

HELEN notices the worry in her husband's face as DON quickly looks away from SALLY, who sits quietly at her own table in the background.

HELEN: Honey, is something wrong?

DON: No, nothing at all.

Helen looks around, but sees nothing out of the ordinary.

Don stutters for a moment as he begins to speak somewhat aimlessly in an effort to change the subject. Finally he is able to gather his thoughts and returns the conversation to its previous focus.

DON: I just worry about Courtney. She's obviously getting frustrated that no one seems to believe her about Shannon.

HELEN: Honestly, I don't. (pause) Haven't you told her that you think she's right?

DON: Kinda.

Seeing the slight confusion in his wife's face, he continues.

DON (CONT'D): I tried to let her know that I'm standing behind her on this, but still, I didn't want to work her up into a frenzy. I basically told her to be careful -- and that she's not going crazy.

HELEN: How sure of that can we be? She's been getting into such fits whenever Shannon is mentioned.

DON: She's not crazy, Helen. I understand that you and Jason are worried about her -- so am I. (pause) Although frankly, I'm not sure that she cares what Jason thinks at this point. He really hurt her by taking

your side, it seemed.

HELEN: Maybe, but you know how she is when she's really mad. She's totally unwilling to compromise. It'll just take her a few days to calm down and then she'll be over it. (pause) Besides, this isn't about taking sides. It's pretty clear that our daughter's in some kind of danger -- the question is, who's responsible?

Don just shakes his hand, a concerned look on his face. He does not want to disrupt their evening by arguing over Shannon Parish.

DON: Where is that wine, anyway?

HELEN: I'm sure it's on the way. You know, I'm going to go freshen up.

Don playfully examines her face, looking at it from different angles.

DON: Nope, I don't see any need for that.

HELEN: Yes, well, I'm going to do it anyway.

Don gives her a "Why?" look.

HELEN (CONT'D): Because -- just because.

She smiles at him as she stands.

HELEN (CONT'D): I'll be right back.

He watches her walk off. Moments later, Sally approaches the table.

SALLY: Well, hello, hello. How are you tonight?

Don's eyes widen with annoyance as he stares at her in silence.

INT: PUBLISHING (DIANE'S OFFICE)
EVENING

DIANE swallows, trying to regain her composure as she prepares to address MOLLY. Now it is BRIAN's turn to watch in horror.

DIANE: Like what?

MOLLY: First of all, why in the world would Brian be willing to risk his reputation just to save somebody else's butt?

DIANE: Because he's a great guy, maybe? (pause) You know, in addition to what you said you heard, you must have also heard Brian admit how much you mean to him. Why would he have done something to hurt your family so much?

MOLLY: An even better question is, why would he be willing to risk his reputation and his relationship with me just to cover for someone else?

BRIAN: Molly, you just have to trust me--

She throws up a hand to silence him and he does just this.

MOLLY: I did, Brian. Emphasis on "did." (pause) Don't think for a minute that I'm buying any of this garbage.

TIM and CLAIRE suddenly step inside the office.

CLAIRE: We heard you guys arguing as we were walking by. What's going on?

DIANE: Please, just butt out! This is none of your business!

TIM: I think that's my sister's call. Molly, do you wanna tell us what's going on, or do you just want us to go?

MOLLY: No, as a matter of fact, I think this does involve you. (pause) There's someone we've all been trusting who, as it turns out, isn't so trustworthy.

CLAIRE: Are we talking about good old Diane again?

MOLLY: Actually, it's Brian this time.

TIM: What do you mean?

MOLLY: It turns out that my, uh, knight in shining armor isn't so noble after all. I just heard him tell Diane that I can't find out about his part in her schemes to break the two of you up.

Tim and Claire look at each other, recalling past suspicions.

MOLLY: What? What is it?

Neither Tim nor Claire answers.

MOLLY (CONT'D): Do you guys know something about this?

ACT FOUR

INT: RESTAURANT
EVENING

SALLY leans over the table to speak with DON, who darts his eyes around anxiously.

SALLY: So how are you doin'?

DON: Sally, please -- just go sit down. I'm here with my wife.

SALLY: So I noticed. (pause) Sounds like someone's a little nervous about something.

DON: Yes, I am. You do realize what a mess it would be if Helen found you here?

SALLY: (feigning surprise) A mess? Whatever do you mean?

DON: I think it might startle her a little to find me here with my ex-wife on what's supposed to be a night just for the two of us.

SALLY: She doesn't know about me?

DON: All she knows is that I was married before, at a very young age, and that it didn't work out. I didn't see it necessary to go into any of the dirty details with her.

SALLY: Well, well, it looks as if I'm not wanted here.

DON: My point exactly! Just go back to your table!

SALLY: Fine, Don -- maybe I'll go do just that.

She turns, flipping her head around.

SALLY (CONT'D): But don't think you're going to get rid of me that easily.

Suddenly, HELEN approaches the table, speeding up when she sees Sally standing by the table engaged in conversation with Don.

HELEN: Don, who's this?

INT: PUBLISHING (DIANE'S OFFICE)
EVENING

TIM and CLAIRE appear stunned as MOLLY awaits an answer from them. DIANE and BRIAN exchange frenzied glances, silently praying for some saving grace.

TIM: Now that you mention it, Mol, yes. We did know about this.

MOLLY: You what?!?

TIM: At least, we thought we did. You see, after the custody hearing, Diane slipped up and revealed that Brian had been involved in everything. They managed to talk their way out of it, though.

MOLLY: I hope they used a better story than what they're giving me now.

CLAIRE: Diane told us she had lied about the whole thing but was coming clean for Brian's sake. We bought it -- hook, line, and sinker.

MOLLY: And you didn't even say anything to me?

TIM: We tried to, but we kept getting interrupted. When we finally found out the truth -- or what we thought was the truth -- we thought it was best to not mention it to you, because of everything you'd already been through.

CLAIRE: We just thought there was no reason to hurt your faith in Brian if there wasn't an actual reason not to trust him.

TIM: We're sorry ... They totally duped us.

MOLLY: Yeah, well, he did it to me, too. (pause) I cannot believe this.

Diane and Brian remain speechless.

MOLLY (CONT'D): Just answer me one question, Brian: Did you or did you not help Diane while she was trying to break up Tim and Claire?

ACT FIVE

HELEN stands before DON and SALLY, who nervously look to one another in search of an explanation.

HELEN: Who is this, Don?

DON: Oh, uh, this is an old friend -- someone I knew from school years ago.

HELEN: Oh, really?

She extends a hand.

HELEN (CONT'D): I'm Helen Chase.

Sally shakes her hand.

SALLY: I'm Sally Marshall.

Don's jaw drops. He cannot believe that Sally told Helen her actual name.

HELEN: Pleased to meet you.

SALLY: Well, if you don't mind, I'm going to finish my dinner. I'll see you around, okay, Don?

Don nods. He watches her return to her table.

HELEN: She was a little jumpy. What was that all about?

DON: As I remember, she always was a little weird.

HELEN: Seems nice enough, though.

DON: Oh, yeah ... of course.

HELEN: So how long has it been since you last saw her?

Don mentally notes Sally's recent visits to him in the hospital and at his home.

DON: Years -- years and years.

HELEN: What was her name, Sally Marshall?

She pauses, thinking.

HELEN (CONT'D): Sounds familiar, but I can't place it.

Don takes several deep breaths and rubs his forehead.

HELEN: Is something wrong?

DON: I--I don't know. Suddenly I'm amazingly tired.

HELEN: Are you feeling all right? Just a few hours ago you were giddy as a child. Now you look as though you could sleep for days.

DON: It just hit me, all of a sudden.

He massages his temples with his fingertips.

HELEN: Is your head hurting again?

DON: Yeah. I just have a minor little headache.

HELEN: Do you want to go home?

DON: No, of course not. We came for a wonderful evening, and that's exactly what we're going to have!

HELEN: Are you sure?

DON: Positive.

HELEN: Okay.

She again begins looking over her menu. Don grabs his, his eyes absently scanning over it as he thinks.

DON (THINKING): I have got to keep Sally away from everyone. She's just too big a threat to the life I've built in all the years we've been apart.

He looks up and smiles uncomfortably at Helen, unable to share the tremendous stress he is feeling with the woman he's hardly ever kept a secret from.

INT: PUBLISHING (DIANE'S OFFICE)
EVENING

TIM and CLAIRE stand behind MOLLY, watching as she tries to pry the truth out of BRIAN. Tim keeps an eye on DIANE, silently warning her not to get in the way.

BRIAN: Really, Molly, this is all--

MOLLY: Just answer the damn question: Yes or no?

Brian's eyes drop to the floor.

BRIAN: Yes.

Having had confirmed what she's suspected throughout the entire conversation, Molly grabs her head with both hands.

MOLLY: How could you do this?

BRIAN: I never meant to hurt you, Molly. But I made a stupid mistake ...

MOLLY: Stupid is right! (pause) Why didn't you just tell me the truth? We all have done things in the past we're not proud of. I would've found some way to forgive you.

BRIAN: I couldn't, Molly.

MOLLY: Because you were scared of how I'd react? Let me tell you, at least if you were honest then we would still have a relationship!

BRIAN: It's not that.

He continues to look down, unable to make eye contact with her.

BRIAN (CONT'D): It wasn't all in the past.

MOLLY: What?!? This was going on after we were together?

DIANE: How the hell do you think I almost succeeded in breaking them up even after Samantha was born?

Molly fumbles for the right words to express her fury, but she cannot find them.

MOLLY: You know what? I've had it! As of this moment, Brian, just forget all about me, all right?

With tears beginning to well up in her eyes, Molly hurries out of the office.

Both Tim and Claire look at Brian in disgust, overwhelmed at having been conned by someone they thought was trustworthy, and feeling Molly's utter disillusionment at having yet again been duped. Brian and Diane make no eye contact with them, their eyes shifting around uncomfortably throughout the totally silent office.

END OF EPISODE #80

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