

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #95
TIME FRAME: A FEW
DAYS AFTER [#94](#)

TEASER

INT: MOTEL ROOM
MIDDAY

ALEX MARSHALL sits on the bed of the low-rent motel room, absentmindedly flipping through television channels. He smacks the outdated remote control against his leg, trying to jump-start it into being functional.

ALEX: Damn this stupid thing!

He tosses it onto the floor and settles into a different position on the bed, deciding to watch whatever sitcom rerun happens to be on.

ALEX: What am I doing here, anyway?

He takes yet another look around the shabby room, privately cursing his mother, Sally, for getting him into this predicament. How could she just disappear like this? He has followed the trail she'd left to King's Bay and the Chase home, but it has now run cold.

The Chases he had found -- Don's wife, Helen, and their daughter, Courtney -- seemed just as surprised to see Alex show up as he had been to learn that his mother was going to visit Don after all these years. Something is nagging Alex; he is oddly certain that his mother is not missing against her own will. No, there is something peculiar going on ... After all, Courtney had recognized the picture of Sally that Alex had brought with him.

ALEX: I've got to figure out what's going on here.

With that, he pulls out his wallet, removes a business card, and picks up the telephone. He begins dialing as he silently says a little prayer.

INT: FISHER HOME (KITCHEN)
MIDDAY

MOLLY is excitedly preparing lunch for herself, a celebratory chicken Caesar salad. She has just gotten off the phone after receiving thrilling news and has decided to indulge a bit for lunch -- or at least, she had planned to. She shrugs, realizing that this is what she gets for raiding the refrigerator of her recently health-crazed parents.

She sits down to eat, wishing someone were home for her to share the good news with, when the doorbell rings. Sighing, she stands.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
MIDDAY -- CONTINUOUS

MOLLY crosses the room and pulls open the door, finding BRENT on the other side.

MOLLY: Brent! What are you doing here?

BRENT: There's something I need to talk to you about.

MOLLY: Okay. Come on in.

As he steps inside the house, he is all too aware of the beaming smile on her face.

BRENT: What's with you?

MOLLY: What do you mean?

BRENT: What are you so happy about?

She prepares to tell him the exciting news she has just recently received.

ACT ONE

INT: MOTEL ROOM
MIDDAY

ALEX waits with the phone to his ear, studying the now-muted television. He has been put on hold by one of his mother's superiors at the airline.

ALEX (THINKING): I hope they know something about my mother at the airline. Maybe she was scheduled to work a flight and decided to take a little vacation on the side ...

He ponders this possibility, simply hoping that whatever he learns, his mother is okay.

A quick click on the other end of the line alerts him that he has been taken off hold. A young WOMAN in the airline's offices sits behind a desk, looking over some notes she jotted down about Sally Marshall.

WOMAN: Are you still there?

ALEX: Yeah ... Were you able to find out anything about my mother?

WOMAN: As a matter of fact, yes.

ALEX: Great! What was the last flight she worked on?

WOMAN: It was nearly a month ago -- a flight from King's Bay to Miami.

ALEX: And she hasn't worked since then?

WOMAN: According to our records, she also worked on a flight headed back to King's Bay a few days later.

ALEX: I see. So that's all you've got?

WOMAN: No, actually, it's not. I found something else that I thought you might find quite useful.

Alex perks up at the mention of a lead.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

An elated MOLLY prepares to tell BRENT what has got her so worked up.

BRENT: So what is it? Come on!

MOLLY: This is big, Brent ...

A smile breaks out on his face; he is amused by her energy.

BRENT: So tell me!

MOLLY: Guess who got a job?

BRENT: Oh, Molly, that's great! Is it the one at the fashion agency you'd applied for?

MOLLY: Not quite ... Still, it's a steady job. I'm now a receptionist at Willis Advertising.

BRENT: That's so cool! You realize what this means?

MOLLY: What?

BRENT: You did it! You overcame everything that has been thrown in your way, from Craig to being fired from your last job to Brian's little games. You were terrified you wouldn't even be able to get a job, remember?

MOLLY: Yeah ... I guess that was kinda stupid, huh?

BRENT: Maybe, but you were genuinely scared. And you worked through all that. That's terrific!

Somewhat instinctively, he pulls her into a hug. Just for a moment, he holds her tight, so proud of this woman who'd had so much thrown in her way. Maybe this could be a new beginning for her -- no, it would. He squeezes her tighter, just as excited about this turn of events as she is.

Just as suddenly, Brent returns to reality. He releases Molly, and they simply stare at each other awkwardly.

ACT TWO

INT: MOTEL ROOM
MIDDAY

Anxiously, ALEX listens for the WOMAN on the other end of the line to explain the further information she had uncovered.

WOMAN: We do have some record of your mother's activity after that point.

ALEX: You do? Oh, that's great! What is it?

WOMAN: She used her employee priveleges to buy two airline tickets at a reduced price.

ALEX: Airline tickets -- two of them?

WOMAN: Yes.

ALEX: Where were they to?

WOMAN: Paris, France.

Alex's eyes practically jump out of their sockets. What could his mother be doing in Paris -- and who could she be with?

He muddles his way through the rest of the conversation, asking a follow-up question and then thanking the woman, and finally hangs up the phone, still in shock. He has just made a vital connection ...

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

BRENT and MOLLY are quiet for several seconds, unsure of what to say or do next.

BRENT: I'm proud of you, Molly. Really, I am.

MOLLY: I couldn't have done it without you. You've been so supportive of me in these last few months.

BRENT: You deserve all the credit. You pulled yourself through this.

MOLLY: Thank you. It means a lot to hear someone acknowledge that. But really, without you and Danielle there for me I never would have gotten through all this. You've been terrific friends to me.

Molly is fully aware that she has excluded Sarah from this, and has no intention of including her. Brent catches onto this, though.

BRENT: What about your sister? She's been rooting for you too.

MOLLY: Maybe, but I just don't think she cares sometimes. She's always blowing up at me ... She acts absolutely insane at the most random times. It's weird.

BRENT: She's just been under a lot of pressure with everything.

MOLLY: Including her marriage, right? I still can't believe she ditched you to go off to New York with Matt!

BRENT: She didn't ditch me, Molly. She's doing her job.

MOLLY: Are you sure that's all she's doing, Brent?

ACT THREE

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)

MIDDAY

The ringing doorbell brings COURTNEY into the foyer, followed by JASON. She opens the door to reveal ALEX.

COURTNEY: Alex! Hi. Come on in.

He steps inside the house.

COURTNEY: Oh, Alex Marshall, this is Jason Fisher. Jason, this is Alex.

The two young men wave to each other somewhat awkwardly.

COURTNEY: Have you found out anything more about your mom?

ALEX: Yeah, I have.

He tries to figure out how to approach this subject.

ALEX: I think it's something you and your mother will be really interested in.

Having been told about Alex and Sally by Courtney, Jason is just as up-to-speed on the whole situation as his girlfriend is. They both eagerly await the new information.

ALEX: My mother got two plane tickets from the airline she works for just a weeks ago.

COURTNEY: You said she's a flight attendant, right?

Alex nods.

ALEX: Anyway, the fact that she got two tickets really intrigued me. The thing that really hit me, though, was the destination of the flight.

Again, the other two wait in silence.

ALEX: It was Paris.

Courtney gasps.

JASON: Your dad's in Paris, isn't he?

Now it's Courtney's turn to nod, as she is unsure of what to say.

ALEX: I think we both know that something really weird is going on here ... and I think it's time we started to really sort it all out.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

MOLLY's last comment, dripping with suggestiveness, has taken BRENT by surprise.

BRENT: What are you getting at?

MOLLY: I don't know ... maybe nothing. I just find it really odd, considering how wildly protective and possessive of you Sarah has been, that she just rushed off to New York with a near-stranger.

BRENT: You don't think there's anything ... else going on there, do you?

MOLLY: I don't know what to think, Brent. Like I said, I just find the whole thing particularly weird.

BRENT: If you mean they're having an affair, they can't be. They met in New York -- at the same time I met Matt, I'm sure of that. When would this thing have begun? It wasn't long after that we came back here.

MOLLY: And he immediately followed you back. Remember how Sarah had tried to hide his presence from you at the beginning?

BRENT: She was worried about how I'd react.

MOLLY: To her helping Matt with the case? Or to her having an affair?

BRENT: Molly ... I may be pissed at my wife, but I'm not going to start accusing her of things without any proof.

MOLLY: Fine. I'm sorry.

She mentally reprimands herself for even getting into this, but at the same time finds it to be an unavoidable topic.

MOLLY: Have you spoken to her lately?

BRENT: Yeah, I talked to her on the phone Saturday. I told her about the police commander job ...

MOLLY: ... and she went nuts, right?

BRENT: Kinda ... yeah. But I held my ground. She's gonna have to deal with it, right?

MOLLY: Exactly. So you're definitely taking the job?

BRENT: Yeah. And as a matter of fact, that's what I came over here to talk to you about.

ACT FOUR

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)

MIDDAY

Both COURTNEY and JASON have been stunned by ALEX's news.

ALEX: The question is, what do we do now?

JASON: You should probably tell your mom, Court.

COURTNEY: Yeah, I know. She's upstairs ... oh, boy.

JASON: Do you want me to go? It would probably be better if this were just a family thing.

COURTNEY: Yeah, I guess you should ...

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

COURTNEY: I'll call you tomorrow, okay?

Jason nods, waves goodbye to both of them, and leaves. There is a certain finality in the sound of the door shutting that suggests there is no turning back now. They have simply uncovered too many bits and pieces of information to just let it all fall by the wayside.

ALEX: Do you wanna go get her?

COURTNEY: Yeah, I should ...

ALEX: You're really dreading this, aren't you?

COURTNEY: More than you can imagine. Listen, I'm sorry I was such a brat when you were over here the first time. I let myself get out of control ... I guess I was just so shocked to find out that my dad had been married before.

ALEX: I understand, don't worry. I guess I've kinda gotten desensitized to stuff like that after spending twenty-three years with my mother.

COURTNEY: It's amazing ... My dad was your stepfather. In some weird way, you were almost my sibling, and I never even knew about it.

ALEX: Everything was so messy. I don't blame Don for keeping it quiet.

COURTNEY: I always knew that my parents had had a little bit of a whirlwind courtship, but I never guessed just how quick it was. My dad must've met my mom right after he broke up with your mom.

ALEX: How old are you?

COURTNEY: I just turned twenty-one.

ALEX: Wow ... speak of fast.

COURTNEY: But the one thing I've always been able to hold true was that they had this undying love, a bond that couldn't possibly be broken or replaced.

Her eyes droop, scanning the carpet on the stairs.

COURTNEY: And now even that's in jeopardy.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
MIDDAY

BRENT is uncertain of how he should say what he has come to say to MOLLY, but decides to just ease

into it.

BRENT: First of all, Sarah told me she expects to be in New York for at least a little while longer.

MOLLY: No big surprise.

BRENT: I guess not ... but it leaves me with a little bit of a problem.

MOLLY: I presume that's what you need to talk to me about?

BRENT: Yeah. Look, Molly: I've got a proposition for you.

ACT FIVE

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)

MIDDAY

ALEX is quite aware of the heartache COURTNEY is experiencing as she stands in the middle of the staircase.

ALEX: Are you sure you wanna do this now? Maybe you should give it time to sink in ...

COURTNEY: No, I'd rather just get this over with. Once my mom knows about it, we can work on getting to the bottom of things. And the sooner we do that, the sooner we'll have a resolution of some kind.

HELEN: Once I know about what?

She has emerged from her bedroom, unable to nap despite her own weariness. Having overheard Courtney's last statement, her interest has been piqued.

Alex watches, feeling Courtney's pain as she prepares to quite possibly tear apart not only her mother's life, but her own as well.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

MOLLY's mind is racing, trying to guess what BRENT is going to ask of her. Could he actually be thinking of ending his marriage and beginning a new life with her? Molly's mind begins to drift ... but

she is grounded just as quickly by the sound of Brent's voice.

BRENT: I need your help with something.

MOLLY: Go ahead.

BRENT: There's this police charity dinner next week, and they're going to officially announce me as the commander.

MOLLY: Oh ...

BRENT: Would you please go with me, Molly? If I can't have my wife by my side, I'd love to have a friend.

MOLLY: Of course I'll go!

BRENT: Really?

She nods.

BRENT: Thank you! I hate going to those things alone ...

MOLLY: It's no problem.

BRENT: Ah, you're a life-saver.

MOLLY: Hey, I owe you.

This time, she pulls him into an embrace.

MOLLY: You have helped me through so much, Brent. The least I can do is try to help you get through this rough spot.

Just then, JASON has stepped up onto the porch. The heavy door is still open, but the screen door is closed. He watches in confusion, observing the closeness between his sister and their brother-in-law. From what he can tell, something is definitely amiss here ...

END OF EPISODE #95

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