

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #117
TIME FRAME: THE MORNING AFTER [#116](#)

TEASER

INT: HOTEL ROOM
MORNING

One sleeping body lay on the bed, his limbs poking out from beneath the sheets and spread all over the surface of the bed. MATT shifts uncomfortably in his sleep with a sound akin to a whinny.

On the couch, meanwhile, blondish-brown hair covers a small throw pillow. The female body is motionless, although SARAH's eyes are wide open. Her gaze is fixed on no particular thing as her mind painfully reviews the events of the previous night.

FLASHBACK

SARAH: Brent and I weren't meant to be together; tonight was proof of that.

She places a hand on his muscular chest.

MATT: You need some time to think about this-

SARAH: No, what I need right now is you.

MATT: Sarah-

She cuts him off with another kiss and begins unbuttoning his shirt. He wiggles away from her.

MATT: Are you sure?

SARAH: Positive.

He wants to fight her, but he can't. Their lips meet again. Within seconds, she has removed his shirt and is caressing his naked chest. They collapse onto the bed together.

She actually did that. Sarah herself can hardly believe it. Here, in this very room, she threw away her marriage with a man she had long ago determined would never be anything more than a friend. The empty whiteness of the walls has been working at her stomach and her mind, and she has been battling queasiness for several hours now. At one point during the night, when she had left the bed and moved to

the couch, she wanted to run away, leave this room and never look back - as if that is possible.

INT: ANDY'S APT. (KITCHEN)
MORNING

ANDY is standing at the coffeepot when a woman in a robe walks in from the spare bedroom. He looks up at his ex-fiancée, MELISSA, and offers her a wave.

ANDY: Good morning.

MELISSA: Same to you. I can't thank you enough for letting me stay here last night.

ANDY: It was no problem, trust me. Besides, I'm glad we can still get along well enough to be in the same apartment for a whole night.

MELISSA: You're sure Danielle wouldn't mind?

ANDY: Not at all. Danielle trusts me.

MELISSA: I'm glad to hear that, Andy. It's nice to know that you're happy.

ANDY: It's nice to be happy. Coffee?

He holds up an empty cup.

MELISSA: Sure.

Andy proceeds to pour her a cup of coffee and then gestures to show her all the possible additives. She opts for a touch of milk as they continue their conversation.

MELISSA: Like you said, I'm just glad the two of us are still able to get along. Not many people are able to recover from a broken engagement like we have.

ANDY: We haven't exactly kept in touch, Melissa.

MELISSA: I know, but at least you weren't repulsed by the sight of me when I showed up here last night.

ANDY: And at least you were able to come here and be honest with me about my mother.

INT: CHASE HOME (KITCHEN)
MORNING

HELEN places the coffeepot down on the counter and carries her full cup of coffee over to the kitchen table. She adjusts her robe as she sits down across from PAULA.

HELEN: I can't thank you enough for coming over. I just needed someone to talk to.

PAULA: I can understand that. You've been through a lot lately.

HELEN: Well, I really appreciate your being here. It's just - I literally feel like I'm losing my mind sometimes.

PAULA: Rough night?

HELEN: The worst in a while. For the life of me, I could not get to sleep, no matter how hard I tried.

PAULA: Maybe you should see a doctor.

HELEN: It's not a medical problem, Paula. We both know that. It's something else entirely.

Paula stares her friend in the face, wanting to open her mouth and utter the single word, but unable to bring herself to say it. Finally Helen does.

HELEN: Don.

ACT ONE

INT: ANDY'S APT. (KITCHEN)
MORNING

MELISSA places her hands on ANDY's shoulders, shaking her head almost mournfully.

MELISSA: I am so sorry I had to be the one to bring you that news - or that anyone had to at all. I know how close you and your mother are-

ANDY: Were.

MELISSA: Are you really going to distance yourself from her now?

ANDY: I have to.

He catches sight of the genuine sadness in her face.

ANDY: It's not as severe as you think. My mother and I - we've been apart for quite awhile now.

MELISSA: Because of Danielle?

ANDY: Mm-hmm. She tried to force Danielle out of my life before, but we wouldn't let her do it.

MELISSA: ... So she went behind your back.

ANDY: Exactly.

MELISSA: Does she really hate Danielle that much? To put her relationship with you on the line?

ANDY: To be truthful, I don't know if my mother is really aware of what she's doing anymore.

MELISSA: What do you mean?

ANDY: It's a control thing. You know as well as I do that when Katherine Fitch wants something, she gets it. You spent enough time around my family to know that. Even my father was powerless to her sometimes.

Melissa nods with understanding.

ANDY: I think that somewhere in my mother's mind, my relationship with Danielle isn't something I'm part of because of love, but rather to spite her. She thinks that this is my way of rebelling, and she's doing what she thinks is necessary to discipline me. It's really quite twisted, in a way.

MELISSA: Don't you feel bad for her at all? I mean, it sounds like she's really just afraid of losing you.

INT: HOTEL ROOM
MORNING

SARAH continues to stare at the wall with her glassy eyes. She still feels absolutely sick to her stomach, but she knows - from several visits to the toilet during the night - that she won't be able to force anything up. Even if she could, what good would it do?

She gradually becomes aware of the low sounds emanating from MATT. Despite the faint hope in the back of her brain that perhaps, even she doesn't sit up or look at him or say anything, this will all just fade away, she brings herself to a sitting position.

Matt groggily turns over on the bed once more before his eyes peel open. He rubs them in a futile effort to erase the burning sensation, which indicates that he, too, has had a nearly sleepless night. Finally he rises as well, propping himself up against the headboard of the bed. Only then does he see the glazed pair of eyes looking at him.

His eyes lock with Sarah's.

ACT TWO

INT: CHASE HOME (KITCHEN)
MORNING

PAULA rests her hands on top of one of HELEN's.

PAULA: Have you made any decisions about what you're going to do yet?

HELEN: I'd like to say I have ... But every time I get close to something, I waver. I just can't bring myself to file for divorce.

PAULA: Then maybe you shouldn't.

HELEN: Why not? Paula, I can't trust him anymore.

PAULA: Helen, you have been married to Don for twenty-two years. From what I gather, you've fought far less than Bill and I have during our marriage!

HELEN: I think this qualifies as more than just an argument-

PAULA: Just hear me out. This really is Don's first major indiscretion, right?

Helen must admit at least this much.

PAULA: And look at the circumstances - He hasn't been healthy, first of all.

HELEN: I know. Still, he lied to me. I mean, this wasn't exactly "I didn't drop the dish, honey, it broke in the dishwasher" or something like that. He ran off to Europe with another woman!

Paula's lips part with words in defense of Don, but Helen cuts her off.

HELEN: On a trip that he and I were supposed to take together!

PAULA: I understand how much you're hurting. But look at all the good times you've had ... Look at all you've made it through ...

A tear pops out of the corner of Helen's eyes and rushes down her cheek.

HELEN: That makes it hurt so much worse.

INT: CHASE HOME (COURTNEY'S ROOM)

MORNING

The evidence of COURTNEY and LAUREN's camp-out from the previous night is apparent: sleeping bags, cosmetics, and magazines are scattered all over the room. Now, however, there is one addition to the scene - ALEX. The three are sprawled on the floor, their heads coming together in a circle.

COURTNEY: So your house is definitely on, right, Lauren?

LAUREN: Totally. My mom and my brother will be both be gone for at least three days.

COURTNEY: Perfect.

ALEX: Won't your mother get a little upset if she comes home and finds out you threw Jason a wild twenty-first birthday party in her house?

LAUREN: Not if she doesn't find out!

She bops him on the head playfully.

LAUREN: Jeez, didn't you get any "wild party" experience during high school?

ALEX: Actually ...

LAUREN: What?

Alex is suddenly a bit more quiet and withdrawn.

ALEX: No, I didn't. I really didn't go to any parties or anything during high school.

LAUREN: Why not?

ALEX: If you must know, I was a huge dork.

He can't help but smile as he says this. The sight of his upturned mouth brings a smile to Lauren's face as well.

LAUREN: Well, we'll give you a little initiation, you poor baby.

She impishly tousles his hair.

COURTNEY: Hey, you two, back on task! We've got an entire party to plan and only a couple more days to do it! We've gotta get crackin'!

INT: HOTEL ROOM
MORNING

SARAH and MATT remain at their separate sleeping areas, only staring at each other for several seconds. Finally, the shock lifts and an awkward silence settles over the room. This continues for such a time that, in most social situations, Matt and Sarah would feel absolutely idiotic by now - but not here and now. Somehow, the silence almost seems fitting.

At last Matt speaks.

MATT: Sarah, I am so sorry.

SARAH: You're sorry? How do you think I feel?

The edge in her voice frightens Matt into further silence. Sarah's face finally softens.

SARAH: I didn't mean to snap at you like that. This wasn't your fault.

MATT: Yes, it was. I never should have let it get as far as it did.

SARAH: But you couldn't stop me - I wouldn't let you! Matt, please don't blame yourself.

MATT: I can't help it.

SARAH: Well, try not to. I'm the one who made vows in front of my family and my friends - and God!

Her voice shrinks to almost a whisper, strained with agony.

SARAH: And I'm the one who broke those vows.

ACT THREE

INT: ANDY'S APT. (KITCHEN)

MORNING

MELISSA's question has made ANDY uncomfortable.

MELISSA: Don't you feel bad for her - just a little, even?

ANDY: You know, I probably should. But I don't. I'm beyond that where my mother is concerned.

MELISSA: So what are going to do? Forget she exists?

ANDY: Until she can accept that Danielle and I are going to be together, what else can I do?

INT: CHASE HOME (COURTNEY'S ROOM)

MORNING

COURTNEY, LAUREN, and ALEX have made at least a little bit of progress in planning Jason's party.

COURTNEY: Okay, booze ... Alex, you're in charge of that.

ALEX: What? Why me?

COURTNEY: Because first of all, you're living in a hotel at the moment. I doubt your mother would find it there.

ALEX: It's not like it's illegal for you guys to buy it.

COURTNEY: That doesn't make any difference to my parents. They believe that everyone but me should be able to drink when they're twenty-one.

ALEX: I don't know the first thing about what to buy-

COURTNEY: Like we do!

LAUREN: Alex, we'll make an adventure out of it, okay? I'll help you.

ALEX: Fine.

COURTNEY: Why don't we make a list of what we'll need?

She stands and scours the desktop for paper, but finds none. The drawers produce similar findings.

COURTNEY: I've gotta go downstairs and get some paper.

She exits.

INT: CHASE HOME (KITCHEN)
MORNING

HELEN wipes the single tear off of her cheek and manages to keep the rest hidden in her eyes. PAULA, though by no means oblivious to the tears, makes no mention of them and continues speaking in her soothing voice.

PAULA: Why don't you just go to Don and let him know how you feel? Tell him that you love him, but you feel like you can't trust him right now.

HELEN: I've told him that a thousand times.

PAULA: Yeah, but it probably sounded like an attack on him. Am I right?

Helen recalls the handful of encounters she and Don have had, in which he begged for forgiveness and she refused.

HELEN: Yes, you are.

PAULA: So then go and tell him all that.

HELEN: Maybe you're right ...

PAULA: Of course I am.

This forces a tiny smile out of Helen.

HELEN: ... but I'm not ready to do it just yet.

PAULA: So then give it a little time. Don will be waiting for you, I know that.

HELEN: Mm-hmm. I don't have to make a move until I'm really ready to do it.

Just outside the kitchen, Courtney has forgotten all about her quest for paper as she listens to this snippet of her mother's conversation.

ACT FIVE

INT: ANDY'S APT. (KITCHEN)
MORNING

Despite his assertion that he feels no pity for his mother, ANDY is wrestling with himself about the issue - something that is not lost on MELISSA.

MELISSA: You do feel bad for her, don't you?

ANDY: No.

She raises an eyebrow, knocking down his defenses.

ANDY: Fine. Maybe a little bit.

MELISSA: Andy, you can't let things go on like this. You have to try to fix-

ANDY: I can't. Melissa, even if I do sort of understand where she's coming from, my mother has handled this entire situation like a lunatic. I'm not going to do anything that might suggest I'm condoning her behavior. The first move has to be hers.

MELISSA: I can understand that.

Andy continues as though she never spoke.

ANDY: It comes down to the fact that she still thinks I'm ten years old. She has no respect for me or my decisions as an adult.

Melissa responds with a nod.

ANDY: So until my mother can find it in her heart to put all this aside ... I guess things are just going to stay the way they are.

INT: CHASE HOME (COURTNEY'S ROOM)
MORNING

LAUREN and ALEX are in the midst of a heated debate.

LAUREN: You are sooo wrong! The first Billie was so much better!

ALEX: This one is good! She's a different character now, and this actress is much better for that-

LAUREN: Sure, whatever ...

COURTNEY comes back into the room and finds them arguing with large grins on their faces.

COURTNEY: What's all the ruckus about in here?

LAUREN: "Days of Our Lives."

ALEX: She thinks the first Billie was better-

LAUREN: She was!

ALEX: Yeah, whatever.

He dismisses her with a facetious wave of the hand and she, in turn, tackles him.

COURTNEY: If the two of you would calm down for a minute, I've got something important to discuss.

Lauren jumps up to a straight sitting position and salutes Courtney.

LAUREN: Yes, drill sergeant!

Courtney sticks out her tongue at her friend before continuing.

COURTNEY: Lauren, I'm afraid you've got to go home now.

LAUREN: Why?

COURTNEY: Because Alex and I need to go see my dad about something important.

INT: HOTEL ROOM
MORNING

MATT resists the urge to leave the bed and comfort SARAH by wrapping his arms around her.

MATT: Don't beat yourself up over this too much, Sarah. Brent wasn't exactly being faithful last night, either.

This sends Sarah's mind back to the previous night.

FLASHBACK

EXT: SARAH & BRENT'S APT.
EVENING

The summer sun still rides high in the evening sky as BRENT and MOLLY share a dinner on the patio.

BRENT: Maybe it's time I just accepted the fact that my marriage to Sarah is over.

Just inside the screen door of the apartment, an ashen color spreads through Sarah's face. She backs away from the door uncertainly, as if she is being pushed. Then, without ever announcing her arrival, she rushes out of the apartment - taking care not to make noise with the front door.

SARAH: But he didn't cheat on me, Matt!

MATT: This was more than cheating, Sarah. You didn't just sleep with me to get back at Brent.

Sarah fumbles for her next words.

SARAH: But- I- No matter what I want to think, that was exactly why I did it.

Her words seem to stab into Matt, who suddenly feels nausea set in.

SARAH: And now there's only one thing I can do.

Matt looks up hopefully.

MATT: What?

SARAH: I have to go to Brent and tell him he was right - Our marriage really is over.

Much to Matt's disappointment, the expression of Sarah's face makes it clear that this is the last thing she wants to be doing.

END OF EPISODE #117

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