

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #121
TIME FRAME: A FEW DAYS AFTER [#120](#)

TEASER

INT: HOTEL LOBBY
AFTERNOON

DON and SALLY arrive at the glass doors of the hotel at the same time that a throng of out-of-towners hits the entryway. After a moment of confusion, the ex-spouses push their way through the jam and inside the hotel.

SALLY: Talk about crazy walkers!

DON: I know! Jeez, you'd think they could wait two seconds while we came inside. But nooo - it was much easier to cram in there and try to plow us down.

SALLY: People make me wonder sometimes ...

They continue traveling across the lobby, but the voice of the desk clerk halts them en route to the elevator.

DESK CLERK: Mr. Chase!

Don turns around and takes a few steps towards the front desk.

DON: Yes?

DESK CLERK: This man just arrived here for you.

For the first time, Don notices a middle-aged man standing beside the front desk, wearing a dreary expression.

MAN: Are you Don Chase?

DON: Yes ...

MAN: Consider yourself served.

He comes closer and places the long manila envelope in Don's hand.

DON: Thank you ...

His voice is slow, filled with confusion. He walks back to Sally, who is waiting at the place they stopped.

SALLY: What is it?

DON: I don't know ...

He pulls up the prongs that are holding down the flap of the envelope and quickly extracts a set of formal-looking papers. His eyes scan them for only a split-second before the color rushes out of his face.

DON: Oh my God.

SALLY: What? What is it?

DON: I don't believe it ...

Sally silently waits for him to go on, her mouth frozen half-open and her hand petrified in a half-turn as a sign for him to continue. Something within is advising her to be patient, however.

Finally the words stagger out of his mouth.

DON: Divorce papers.

INT: CHASE HOME (KITCHEN)
AFTERNOON

Outrage scrawled all over her face, COURTNEY stares at her mother, HELEN, across the kitchen.

COURTNEY: Divorce papers?

Helen confirms this with a sad nod.

COURTNEY: Are you nuts, Mom? That's like giving up on Dad completely!

The young woman slams the open carton in her hand down on the counter, sending little droplets of juice flying over the tile.

HELEN: Courtney ...

She sighs, her clenched fists raised and ready to pop in frustration.

HELEN: This wasn't exactly an easy decision. It's not like I want to give up on this marriage.

COURTNEY: You coulda fooled me.

HELEN: Courtney!

COURTNEY: No, seriously - You haven't shown any signs of fighting for Dad whatsoever. He's been back in King's Bay for weeks, stuck in that hotel, and you've talked to him what, two times? Doesn't look like much of an effort to me.

HELEN: This is so much more complicated than you can see, Court.

COURTNEY: How? Why? It's not like I don't know what happened.

HELEN: I know, but really ... I feel like I can't trust your father anymore.

COURTNEY: So you're willing to give it all up, just like that? Twenty two-plus years of marriage gone because you're not willing to work on fixing things?

HELEN: Courtney ...

Helen covers her face with her hands, rubbing her sore eyes.

COURTNEY: Don't 'Courtney' me, Mom! I'm warning you, you'd better get over to that hotel fast and talk things out with Dad - or you'll lose him forever.

ACT ONE

INT: KING'S BAY MALL

AFTERNOON

Joined at the hands, DANIELLE and ANDY turn out of a soup-and-sandwich restaurant and begin walking down the densely populated corridor.

They have not walked more than fifty feet when the sight of a familiar face brings the couple to a halt. They exchange friendly smiles with ROBERTA.

ROBERTA: Hey, you two. What are you up to?

DANIELLE: Actually, we just had lunch with the wedding coordinator.

ROBERTA: Oh, really? That's wonderful!

The brightest and most convincing of fake smiles lights up her dark face.

ROBERTA: So, do you guys have a date set yet?

ANDY: We have a range, actually. Early next summer.

ROBERTA: That's terrific!

She breathes an internal sigh of relief. That gives me some time, she notes, maintaining the perkiest exterior possible.

INT: HOTEL LOBBY

AFTERNOON

SALLY lays a comforting hand on DON's shoulder.

SALLY: Helen's divorcing you?

DON: Uh-huh.

His eyes do not move from the document, and his voice sounds as though it will split with tears at any moment.

SALLY: This is unbelievable ...

She mentally completes the sentence: "Unbelievably good news."

DON: Why is she doing this? I mean, I know we have some problems, but I thought she just needed some time to cool off before we really started to work on things together.

SALLY: Come on ... Why don't we go up to your room so we can talk about this in privacy?

He gives a slight nod and mechanically follows her lead to the elevator.

ACT TWO

INT: KING'S BAY MALL
AFTERNOON

ROBERTA continues to smile at ANDY and DANIELLE as she changes the subject.

ROBERTA: So how's everything going with the tour? I haven't really been keeping up with, I'm afraid.

DANIELLE: Everything's working really well. It's ... it's exhausting, but I'll live.

ROBERTA: Hey, look at the bright side. Your album is already a hit.

DANIELLE: I know. I can barely believe it.

ROBERTA: Well, you deserve some congratulations. You're well on your way to becoming a star.

DANIELLE: Let's not get ahead of ourselves here ...

ROBERTA: No, seriously, I can see there are big things ahead for you, Danielle. I just hope you'll have time for us little people when fame and fortune really settle in.

She raises her eyebrows at Andy jokingly, although Roberta herself considers this no joke. Much to her pleasure, Danielle appears heavily burdened.

INT: CHASE HOME (KITCHEN)
AFTERNOON

COURTNEY moves closer to her mother, taking HELEN by the shoulders.

COURTNEY: Mom, here's the bottom line: Do you or do you not want to be with Dad?

HELEN: Of course I do, Courtney!

She shakes free of her daughter's grasp.

HELEN: But as I've told you, it's not that simple. I feel like ... like I can't trust your father anymore.

The fire fades from Courtney as she drops her chin. Finally she speaks again, her voice softer but just as insistent.

COURTNEY: Look, I know Dad hurt you by going to Paris with Sally. But you don't really believe they had an affair, do you?

HELEN's eyes shift around behind her glasses for a moment.

HELEN: Well ... no. But still - he lied to me about her being there! Doesn't that indicate anything at all?

COURTNEY: I'll admit that I'm disappointed that Dad had to lie to you about that. But Sally even told Alex, nothing happened between the two of them while they were there.

HELEN: I don't trust that woman, Courtney.

COURTNEY: Neither do I. But I do know that she wants Dad, and if something had happened, she most definitely would be using it to her advantage.

HELEN: That's a good point ...

She sighs, an enraged gust of hot air being forced out of her body. Unfortunately, this provides no release whatsoever from the tension she's feeling.

COURTNEY: And think of Dad's health. He was having all those weird headaches and stuff right before he went to Europe, right?

HELEN: That's true.

COURTNEY: So maybe he wasn't even thinking like himself?

HELEN: That's hardly an excuse for running out on us, Courtney. Besides, the doctor told him that those were caused by stress.

COURTNEY: Stress that resulted from Sally coming back into his life! Mom, he may have lied about her being in Paris with him, but he had only the best of intentions. I have no doubt in my mind at all that Dad was completely and totally faithful to you - and always has been!

HELEN: Maybe you're right.

Her words send a jolt of thrilled surprise through Courtney.

COURTNEY: You really think so?

HELEN: I don't know ... but you're right - I have to talk to your father before he signs those divorce papers.

It is now Courtney's turn to sigh, though this one is one of much relief. In a whirlwind, Helen has left the house. The door slams shut as she rushes away.

Courtney bows her head, folding her hands into a tight bundle.

COURTNEY: God, please let my parents work things out. Please don't let it be too late for them ...

ACT THREE

INT: HOTEL ROOM

AFTERNOON

DON is seated on the edge of the bed, continually skimming over the first few lines of text on the divorce papers. SALLY stands nearby, watching this pitiful scene.

DON: Why is she doing this? I knew things were bad - but this?!?

He smacks the stack of papers on the edge of the bed and then drops them to the floor.

DON: We were supposed to work things out. It wasn't supposed to end like this ...

SALLY: Maybe it is.

He turns to her, looking positively sickened.

DON: What?

SALLY: Maybe you and Helen aren't supposed to be together anymore. You had a great marriage, it sounds like - and you got a wonderful daughter out of it. But maybe that's run its course.

DON: Sally ...

SALLY: No, seriously. Maybe it's time for both of you to move on with your lives.

DON: Don't say that.

He stands and begins pacing the room.

SALLY: I'm just trying to be realistic, Don. Obviously Helen doesn't want to work things out. You're going to have to accept the fact that it's over.

He suddenly whips around, fury visible in his throbbing face.

DON: It's not over!

SALLY: Calm down, Don! I'm just trying to-

He cuts her off mid-sentence, his voice a disgusted rumble.

DON: I know exactly what you're trying to do! This is all just part of your game, isn't it, Sally?

SALLY: Don, I don't-

DON: Don't you dare lie to me. You've been after me from day one. Finally I start to trust you and let you in as a friend, and what do you do? Not support me! Oh, no - you go right ahead and try to use my misery to your advantage!

SALLY: I'm not-

DON: Shut up! Shut up!

His widened eyes glare at her with furor, the pupils burning into Sally's. She cowers guiltily, waiting for him to further condemn her.

No such thing happens, however. The next thing Sally knows, Don is clutching his head with both hands and has dropped to his knees in agony.

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)
AFTERNOON

COURTNEY pulls the front door open, already knowing who to expect on the other side. Sure enough, there stands JASON.

JASON: Hey.

He gives her a tiny kiss before stepping inside the house.

COURTNEY: Hi.

JASON: You don't sound so good.

COURTNEY: I'm not so good.

JASON: Lemme guess ... Your parents?

COURTNEY: Bingo. Guess what my mother just did?

JASON: What?

COURTNEY: She had my dad served with divorce papers!

Jason's eyes bulge.

JASON: What?

COURTNEY: I know. It's terrible.

She steps into his arms, resting her head on his shoulder.

COURTNEY: I just wish things would get back to normal.

JASON: Maybe they can still work things out.

COURTNEY: That's what I'm hoping. I sent my mom over to the hotel to see him ...

JASON: Well, that's a good first step.

COURTNEY: Yeah. I just hope it's not too late.

JASON: Why would it be?

Courtney stands up straight, biting her lower lip as she looks him in the face.

COURTNEY: Alex and I went to see my dad the other day ...

JASON: Uh-oh.

COURTNEY: You're right about that.

JASON: So what happened? Was he with Sally?

COURTNEY: No, everything was fine. But I did something really dumb.

Jason prods her on with an impatient turn of his hand.

COURTNEY: We told him that maybe it's not such a bad idea if he and Sally get to be good friends again.

JASON: Why?

COURTNEY: Well, Alex feels bad for his mom, because she really doesn't have anyone besides him. And I ... I was thinking it might make my mom jealous and push her into patching things up with him.

JASON: Courtney Chase, you are just a little troublemaker, aren't you?

COURTNEY: You can say that again.

She shakes her head, as though reprimanding herself.

COURTNEY: I just hope my parents are able to fight through this whole mess ...

ACT FOUR

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)

AFTERNOON

KATHERINE turns at the sound of footsteps, and she sees WALTER, the butler, leading ROBERTA into the room.

WALTER: Ms. Owens is here to see you, Mrs. Fitch.

KATHERINE: Thank you, Walter.

The two women move within feet of each other, but they wait until Walter has departed before speaking.

KATHERINE: So what brings you here, Roberta?

ROBERTA: We've got trouble.

KATHERINE: What's new?

Roberta is clearly bothered by Katherine's skepticism.

ROBERTA: Hey, it's not my fault that things are constantly getting screwed up. Don't forget, I'm the only thing you've got going for you right now, lady. Without my help, you can kiss your precious Andrew goodbye.

KATHERINE: Don't be so sure of that, dearie.

ROBERTA: That's it! I've had it with you!

She spins around, about to make a beeline for the door, when Katherine stops her by securing a surprisingly firm grip on Roberta's shoulder.

KATHERINE: Don't you dare walk out on me like this!

ROBERTA: Why don't you try showing me a little respect, Katherine?

She spits out the older woman's first name slowly, relishing each syllable in place of the formal 'Mrs. Fitch.'

KATHERINE: Oh, grow up, Roberta!

ROBERTA: No, I think it's about time you learned your lesson. What say I head right on over to Andy's place and tell him all about how you've been paying me to do your dirty work these past few months?

INT: HOTEL ROOM

AFTERNOON

SALLY helps DON up off the floor and back onto the bed, where he continues to grasp his head in a vain effort to cease the hammering.

SALLY: Don - are you okay?

DON: It's just ... It's one of those damn headaches again. I ...

He trails off, unable to focus on what he is saying.

SALLY: Just sit here. Try to breathe.

She attempts to lead him through some slow, calming breathing, but it doesn't appear to be doing any good.

SALLY: In ... out ...

DON: I'm not in labor! I just have a headache!

SALLY: Jeez, I'm just trying to help.

DON: I don't want your help!

The words explode out of him before he falls back onto the bed. He doesn't move for several seconds, which stretch out menacingly before Sally ... but finally, he removes his hands from his head and moans.

SALLY: Don?

DON: What's going on?

The angry edge has vanished from his voice and has been replaced by a weary creakiness.

SALLY: You just had another one of those headaches. Come here, put your head up.

She pulls him back to the head of the bed, where she has stacked up several pillows.

Don can hear his own incensed voice echoing in his head. He turns to Sally apologetically.

DON: I'm sorry I just blew up at you like that. I don't know what happened to me.

SALLY: It was the stress of getting the divorce papers. It must've driven you to another one of those mood swings.

DON: God, Sally ... When am I going to be able to just live a normal life again?

ACT FIVE

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)

AFTERNOON

KATHERINE maintains a steady stare directly into ROBERTA's face, doing an excellent job of masking her fear at Roberta's threat.

ROBERTA: I think that's exactly what I need to do, don't you think?

KATHERINE: You wouldn't.

She cocks her head to the side.

ROBERTA: Is that so?

KATHERINE: It is indeed. Do you really expect me to believe you'd throw your entire reputation and career down the tubes just because you're angry with me? I don't think so.

Roberta is quiet for a long moment. She contemplatively places her dark forefinger in-between her teeth before answering.

ROBERTA: Fine. But I'm telling you, you'd better start showing me some respect. Don't forget, without me you've got no way of separating your son and Danielle.

KATHERINE: Oh, I've got a little something else planned.

The very thought of her latest scheme brings a treacherous smile to Katherine's visage.

INT: KING'S BAY MALL
AFTERNOON

DANIELLE lets go of ANDY as they near the cash machine. She leans against the wall and they continue speaking as he removes his ATM card from his wallet.

DANIELLE: I'm just glad we're giving ourselves plenty of time. This wedding looks like it could turn out to be out a circus.

ANDY: I promise you, it'll be the best wedding this town has ever seen.

DANIELLE: I just hope it's better than my brother's.

ANDY: Didn't he and Sarah elope?

He punches his code in on the machine's key panel.

DANIELLE: Yeah ... but they renewed their vows in this big ceremony and all. That's when my dad, my brother, and I all came here.

ANDY: What happened that made it such a disaster?

DANIELLE: First of all, the bride and groom were late. They'd been off on some major adventure helping Tim and Claire. And then, at the reception, two people passed out.

ANDY: From what? The food?

DANIELLE: No, just general craziness. I swear, there's something about this town sometimes ...

ANDY: I don't know about the town, but there's definitely something wrong with this machine.

DANIELLE: Why, what's wrong?

ANDY: It's telling me there's no money in either of the joint accounts.

DANIELLE: That's strange.

ANDY: Yes, it is ... and what's even stranger is that my mother is the other name on both of those accounts. Funny little coincidence, huh?

INT: HOTEL ROOM

AFTERNOON

SALLY pulls the door open, looking both ways down the hallway. She sees no sign of room service anywhere. Leaving the door slightly open, she turns to DON, dropping her hands to her sides in annoyance.

SALLY: Jeez, we just asked for some Advil. You'd think they could get it up here in less than fifteen minutes.

DON: It's only been fifteen minutes? Feels like a freakin' hour already ...

She kneels beside the bed, upon which he is outstretched.

SALLY: I hate seeing you like this.

DON: Like the doctor said, it's nothing that eliminating stress won't get rid of.

SALLY: That's the problem, Don! You just keep getting more and more stressed out!

DON: Can you blame me?

SALLY: No, not at all.

She runs a comforting hand over his head, holding a distant hope that it just might soothe the pounding on his brain.

SALLY: But it's so obvious how you could get rid of it all.

Don's eyes roll up to look at her.

SALLY: Just let go of Helen.

DON: I can't. It's not supposed to end this way - I won't let it.

His determination shines through, despite the low groan that his voice has become.

SALLY: Don, you can't do this to yourself anymore. Just let her go - forget about her. All Helen has brought you in the past few months is misery.

His lips part with the intent to protest, but the words don't come. How can he argue with that?

SALLY: Please, just save yourself ... Let go of Helen.

Before he can say anything more, she plants her lips softly upon his.

As if on cue, HELEN appears in the open doorway. Her sight immediately locks upon the kiss being shared by her husband and his ex-wife.

END OF EPISODE #121

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