

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #122
TIME FRAME: IMMEDIATELY AFTER [#121](#)

TEASER

INT: HOTEL ROOM
AFTERNOON

SALLY has taken a seat beside DON on the bed. She cradles the desperate-looking man's hands in her own, speaking in as soothing a voice as she can conjure up.

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.

Her mouth flies open in shock and her dark blond hair jumps up as she takes in the horrific sight. Within moments, Helen has run off, unseen.

Inside the room, Don pushes Sally away from him.

DON: Sally, please ... Just stop.

She stares into his face, her heart still racing from the kiss. She can't stop now - she's too close. Don is about as good as hers again!

INT: HOTEL CORRIDOR
AFTERNOON

HELEN stabs the "down" button next to the elevator doors with her thumb and then stands with her arms folded in front of her, her body scrunched up and her face pointed down.

Physically ill as the echoing memory of the kiss she just witnessed makes her, it has served to make one

thing very clear to Helen: Her marriage is over for good.

ACT ONE

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

AFTERNOON

The doorbell's chime fills the house. PAULA briskly crosses the living room and pulls the door open to find her daughter, SARAH.

PAULA: Oh my gosh! Sarah!

The older woman wastes no time in wrapping her arms around her recently absent daughter. As she momentarily rests in the embrace, Sarah's face contains a bizarre look of genuine relief.

PAULA: When did you get home?

SARAH: I've been back for a few days-

PAULA: And you're just getting around to visiting now?

Sarah hesitates before answering. This mention of the last few days has clearly made her uneasy.

SARAH: It's just been kinda ... crazy lately. There was a lot of stuff I had to sort out.

And a lot of stuff I still have to sort out, her mind adds.

PAULA: Oh, gosh, it's so nice to see you! So tell me, is this case that kept you away for so long finally over?

SARAH: Yes it is. And let me tell you, it turned out to be one heck of an adventure.

PAULA: I'd love to hear all about it.

SARAH: Oh, you will. Repeatedly, I'm sure.

Sarah forces an uncomfortable laugh, for the thought of actually recounting her recent time with Matt Gray seems utterly painful. This jumpiness is quite apparent to Paula.

PAULA: Is something the matter, dear? You seem troubled.

SARAH: Troubled? No ... I'm just tired, I guess.

PAULA: Are you sure? I mean, is everything really, truly okay? I know things have been ... well, difficult for you and Brent lately. How have things been since you got back?

Something inside Sarah suddenly feels compelled to confess her liaison with Matt to her mother.

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)
AFTERNOON

JASON and COURTNEY are standing near the front door. His hands are firmly gripping her shoulders.

JASON: So tell me again, why exactly do I have to leave?

COURTNEY: Because ... Lauren and I have girl things to do.

Jason raises a playful eyebrow.

JASON: Maybe this is something I should stick around for.

His comment is swiftly rewarded with a mock slap to the arm.

COURTNEY: Get your mind out of the gutter, boy. Now just run along and have a good time, okay?

Promptly, ALEX enters, his jacket zipped up.

ALEX: You ready, Jay?

JASON: Sure, why not?

Alex can sense his reluctance.

ALEX: C'mon, it'll be fun. Now let's go.

He takes Jason by the hand and physically leads him out of the house, but not before Jason squeezes in a last kiss with Courtney.

After the door closes, Courtney listens for the sound of the car starting up. Only once it has driven away does she spring to life.

COURTNEY: Okay, Lauren!

Her cry darts through the house, and in moments Lauren appears on the upstairs balcony.

LAUREN: Are they gone?

COURTNEY: Yep.

LAUREN: Perfect ... Now let's get down to business.

INT: HOTEL ROOM
AFTERNOON

SALLY takes DON's face in her palms.

SALLY: Why, Don? Why not just accept it already?

DON: Accept what?

SALLY: The fact that it's over between you and Helen! Jeez, how many times do we have to go over this?

She speaks in a frenzied pace; her hands shake his head slightly, keeping rhythm with her voice.

DON: That's just the thing, Sally!

He once again breaks free of her grasp.

DON: It's not over between Helen and me!

SALLY: But it is, Don. She wants to divorce you! Doesn't that mean anything at all to you?

DON: No - I mean, it just shows me how much work it's going to take to piece things back together with her. I can't afford to be leading you on, on top of everything else.

A monstrous sigh does little to relieve the frustration welling up inside Sally, and she soon transfers it to her balled-up fists.

SALLY: Why are you doing this to yourself? She doesn't love you! She doesn't deserve you!

DON: But-

SALLY: No 'buts,' Don. Just listen to me, okay? Helen doesn't want you anymore. She's done with you - she's ready to just toss you away! I, on the other hand, have spent the last twenty-three years trying to recreate the fire I had with you. And you know what? I still feel it now. Hey, the choice looks pretty simple to me.

Don is hesitant is responding, and his indecision sparks a glimmer of hope in Sally. At last, he's come to his senses!

ACT TWO

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
AFTERNOON

SARAH's lengthy pause only serves to worry PAULA further.

PAULA: Sarah? What's wrong?

SARAH: I-nothing. I'm just thinking about what a crazy few weeks I've had.

PAULA: It sure sounds like it.

SARAH: It was unbelievable, Mom. I mean, truly crazy. I never expected some of the twists and turns we ran into.

PAULA: So how was it working on this case without Brent? I know you began it with him ...

SARAH: It was fine. Different, but fine.

Her voice sinks a bit with the next sentence.

SARAH: It seems like he's really enjoying being back on the police force.

PAULA: And I gather you're not too thrilled about that?

SARAH: Well ...

She can't hide her frustration any longer.

SARAH: It's not that I'm not happy for him, but it kind of annoys me that he just went and took this job back without even consulting me about it. We did take the PI jobs together, after all.

PAULA: It seems like the police force is really where his heart is, Sarah. And you're going to learn that there are some things you won't be able to keep Brent away from.

Sarah nods, all too aware of this ...

FLASHBACK

INT: BRENT'S APT.

EVENING

Sarah stands just outside the apartment, her hand raised and about to knock on the front door. What she spies through the full-length glass panel, however, pauses her hand and then causes it to drop entirely.

Inside the apartment, Brent and Molly's lips have locked together.

Sarah shudders at the memory before looking up at her mother again.

SARAH: I'm learning that already, Mom.

INT: CHASE HOME (LIVING ROOM)

AFTERNOON

COURTNEY and LAUREN are seated not five feet apart, with a wide variety of lists spread out before them. Courtney holds a red marker in her right hand as she scans each list.

COURTNEY: Wow.

LAUREN: What?

COURTNEY: It looks like we've actually got everything together.

LAUREN: Now that is good news.

She reaches over to grab a handful of tortilla chips from a nearby bag.

LAUREN: Ugh, if I never plan another party again, it'll be too soon.

COURTNEY: I know the feeling.

She snatches a chip out of Lauren's hand.

COURTNEY: But this is going to be the party to end all parties. Jason will be so surprised!

LAUREN: He'd better be.

COURTNEY: I'm sure everything will go fine.

LAUREN: So do I ...

Courtney immediately catches the whimsical air floating about her friend.

COURTNEY: What's got you so excited?

Lauren allows a few seconds to pass, forming a dramatic pause before she continues.

LAUREN: Let's just say I've got a surprise of my own ready.

INT: HOTEL ROOM
AFTERNOON

DON removes SALLY's hands from his body and pushes himself up off of the bed.

DON: No, Sally.

SALLY: What? Why?

DON: Because - I don't love you! How difficult is that for you to comprehend?

SALLY: Very, because I don't buy it for a second! I know you feel something for me, Don-

DON: Yeah, like extreme annoyance.

SALLY: No, I'm serious. Why else would you have let me come along to Paris with you?

DON: Because I was losing my mind! And if you don't get out now, I just might lose it for good!

Sally knows she can't fight any longer.

SALLY: Fine ...

She opens the door and steps halfway into the hallway before turning back.

SALLY: This isn't over yet, Don.

With that, Sally exits and closes the door behind her. Don's hands immediately move to his face, cupping it. He lets out an agonized moan.

DON: You're right, Sally. This isn't over yet - I'm going to fix things with Helen if it's the last thing I do.

ACT THREE

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

AFTERNOON

PAULA takes SARAH's hands in her own. Her voice comes out softly, a comforting, reassuring sound.

PAULA: I just get so worried about you, dear. I know you have a tendency to - well, act without thinking sometimes. But I want you to know that I really am pulling for you and Brent.

SARAH: We're fine, Mom ... we're fine.

The second "we're fine" takes on a much more forceful tone, as if she is driving to convince not only her mother, but herself, of this fact.

Meanwhile, the sound of footsteps approaching the front door is quite audible.

PAULA: Oh, that must be your father! I'm sure he'll be thrilled to see you!

With a few light steps, Paula is at the front door. She pulls it open and is surprised to see not her husband, but HELEN, looking ragged.

PAULA: Helen? What's wrong?

HELEN: I ... Are you busy?

PAULA: No, no, of course not. Come in, please.

Paula takes her old friend by the arm and leads her inside the house. Only once Paula has directed her to the couch does Helen sit down.

PAULA: Now tell me what's going on, dear.

HELEN: It ... I ...

Sarah finds herself suddenly feeling rather out of place.

SARAH: I'm gonna go get some coffee. Can I get either of you some?

Both women shake their heads "no," and Sarah is soon gone.

PAULA: Now tell me, what happened that got you so upset?

HELEN: Don - he ... I went to the hotel to see him ...

She pauses as a sob squeaks out.

PAULA: Yes?

HELEN: I wanted to tell him not to sign the papers ...

PAULA: Papers?

HELEN: The divorce papers.

PAULA: You sent him divorce papers? Are you crazy?

HELEN: No, I-I thought there was nothing else I could do. But Courtney told me to go see him, so I did. And she was there ...

PAULA: Who, Sally?

Helen confirms this with a dreary nod.

PAULA: So you didn't talk to him?

HELEN: I couldn't! He-she-they were kissing!

INT: KING'S BAY MALL
AFTERNOON

JASON and ALEX are strolling through the mall, seemingly without much direction. Jason in particular appears far too distracted to pay any attention to shopping.

JASON: So tell me, what's going on? Why did the girls wanna get rid of me so badly?

ALEX: It's nothing! They just wanted to do whatever they do, and they asked me to get you out of the way for a few hours.

JASON: But what are they doing?

ALEX: The stuff they always do together. Nails and TV and food ... you know.

JASON: I get the distinct feeling there's more to it than that.

Alex pretends to zip up his lips and tosses the imaginary key aside.

ALEX: You're not gettin' anything out of me, buddy.

JASON: God, I hate you!

He gives Alex a playfully energetic shove.

JASON: Why can't you just tell me?

ALEX: There's nothing to tell!

Alex is practically cracking up in laughter by this point.

JASON: I swear, I'm gonna find out what you guys are up to!

He laughs again as Alex speeds ahead of him.

ACT FOUR

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
AFTERNOON

PAULA is trying to quiet a weeping HELEN enough so she can finish her story, but has found little success so far.

PAULA: Are you sure? I mean, were they really kissing, or could it have been something else?

HELEN: I don't know where you've been living, but I can pretty much tell a kiss when I see one ... especially one like that.

PAULA: What do you mean?

HELEN: This kiss ... it was a full-blown smooch. They were all over each other!

PAULA: Are you sure?

The sound of the front door opening brings both of their heads up from the intense conversation. BILL enters; his hand freezes mid-wave when he catches sight of the somber situation.

BILL: Hi.

PAULA: Hi. There's someone in the kitchen who you probably want to see.

BILL: Oh, really?

He heads for the kitchen, wasting no time in getting away from the teary scene in the living room. Paula turns back to Helen.

PAULA: Are you sure this kiss was as wild as you say? Are you sure it wasn't just Sally diving on top of Don yet again? It doesn't sound like something I'd put past her.

HELEN: No, Paula, the two of them were kissing ... They were both involved in it.

She grits her teeth, doing little to stifle an angry growl.

HELEN: But maybe it was best that I went there and saw that. Now I know that there's nothing else I can do to save this marriage. Don can just go ahead and sign the divorce papers.

INT: FISHER HOME (KITCHEN)
AFTERNOON

SARAH is quietly preparing a cup of coffee when BILL sneaks up behind her. He slips his hands over her eyes before she can turn to see the source of the footsteps she hears.

BILL: Guess who?

SARAH: Dad!

Immediately he releases her. She turns and hugs him tightly.

SARAH: Oh, it is so great to see you! I missed you so much!

BILL: I missed you too, honey.

They both savor the embrace for a little while longer before finally letting go.

BILL: So are you home for good now?

SARAH: I hope so. I don't see myself taking any out-of-town cases for a good, long time.

BILL: Yeah, I can understand that. It must've really taken a toll on you, huh?

SARAH: You could say that.

BILL: How about you ... you and Brent? How are things between the two of you?

SARAH: They're - fine. Why do you ask?

BILL: Well, last time I saw Brent, he didn't seem too happy about you being away for so long.

SARAH: Well, we're fine.

BILL: I'm glad to hear it. Have you seen Molly yet?

Though her mind quickly snaps back to the night she secretly arrived back in King's Bay, Sarah forces the image of her sister and husband together on the porch out of her head just as swiftly.

SARAH: No, I haven't.

BILL: I think you'd better go see her soon. She got a new job, you know.

SARAH: I know. Brent told me.

BILL: I'm really proud of her. It would've been so easy for her to just give up after everything she went through, but she really fought to put her life back together.

SARAH: It's very ... admirable.

BILL: It is. I tell you, when Molly's determined to get something, she doesn't stop until she gets it.

Sarah's response to this innocent comment comes with a bitter edge.

SARAH: Well, I guess she'll just have to learn that there are some things you can never have - no matter how badly you want them.

INT: CHASE HOME (LIVING ROOM)
AFTERNOON

LAUREN's last statement has intrigued COURTNEY.

COURTNEY: What kind of surprise?

LAUREN: I guess you'll just have to wait and see, won't you?

COURTNEY: Oh, no, no, no. Tell me what's going on. Is it some kind of birthday thing for Jason?

LAUREN: No ...

COURTNEY: Then what is it? Come on!

LAUREN: Alright ... Tonight's the night I make my move.

COURTNEY: Your move?

It takes her a second to realize what Lauren is talking about.

COURTNEY: You mean Alex?

LAUREN: Oh, yes.

COURTNEY: So what're you gonna do?

LAUREN: That, my friend, is confidential. But rest assured, it'll be one hell of a night.

For some reason she can't quite point out, this statement seems particularly wise.

COURTNEY: I have a feeling you're definitely right about that.

END OF EPISODE #122

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