

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #130
TIME FRAME: IMMEDIATELY AFTER [#129](#)

TEASER

INT: FISHER HOME (UPSTAIRS HALLWAY)

NIGHT

Tim presses ever closer to the door of the master bedroom, trying to piece together the miscellaneous bits of conversation he has overheard thus far. Inside, he can hear his mother, Paula, speaking through tears - unfortunately, it's become almost impossible to discern what it is she's actually saying.

BILL: Paula, calm down. There's-

Tim hears his father's voice, solid even through the heavy wood of the door, pause.

BILL: -there's nothing you can do about it now.

TIM (THINKING): Do about what?

Another sentence of sobs comes out of Paula - quick, just a few syllables. Tim thinks he heard it correctly, and his suspicions are confirmed when Paula asks the question again, more firmly, as she waits for a silent Bill to answer.

PAULA: But there is!

INT: FISHER HOME (DINING ROOM)

NIGHT

The tip of a finger bounces lightly off Claire's shoulder, catching her attention. She swings around, pulling herself away from the family portraits she's been examining, to find Courtney behind her.

CLAIREE: Oh, hi.

COURTNEY: Hey.

She shifts her weight from her right foot to her left and then back again, her left hand moving back through her long, dark hair the whole time.

COURTNEY: Look, I was wondering ...

The air catches hold of her words, and for a minute they hesitate, floating about uncertainly.

CLAIRE: Yeah?

COURTNEY: I hope you don't mind me getting involved in this, but ... Tim seems really upset.

CLAIRE: I've noticed.

She brings the wine glass back to her lips. It rests there momentarily, and finally tips enough to allow just a delicate stream of the deep burgundy liquid to slide over her lower lip.

COURTNEY: Now, he didn't tell me much at all about this whole thing, but I've gathered that there's someone he doesn't want you having contact with, right?

Claire nods slowly.

COURTNEY: Why is it so important that you keep seeing this person, Claire? Is it really worth Tim's trust?

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

NIGHT

Molly narrows her eyes at her sister, whose own eyes have opened just a little bit wider, albeit involuntarily. Sarah just realized how close she came to spitting out an explanation of her liaison with Matt.

MOLLY: You almost blew things when?

SARAH: I-

Enough time - just a few seconds, really, though it seems to Sarah to have been an excruciatingly lengthy period - has passed to let Sarah pull herself together. She speaks again, much more composed.

SARAH: The whole time I was in New York. I got so wrapped up in the case that I totally disregarded the fact that Brent needed me just as badly as Matt did.

In a flash of an instant, Molly finds that the whispering voice that usually keeps her in line, keeps her from saying whatever pops into her brain, has been bound and gagged.

MOLLY: Or maybe you just decided somewhere along the line that Matt was a higher priority than Brent.

INT: ANDY'S APT. (LIVING ROOM)

NIGHT

Roberta has climbed halfway on top of Andy. Their fiery union at the lips has been intensified by her roving hands, which have found their way to his chest. After a few moments, she grabs hold of his hair - but before she can really get her hands into it, Roberta finds she has been pushed back onto her seat.

ROBERTA: What are you doing?

ANDY: What am I doing? What am I doing?!?

He gapes at her in open-mouthed disbelief.

ANDY: Where did that come from?

She can do nothing but stare in confusion. His ruffled hair-his disordered shirt-the lipstick now adorning his own mouth ... That wasn't all her doing. Oh, no - Andy had just as great a role in all of it as she did. Her eyebrow rises, hooked upward, and her head cocks to the side.

ROBERTA: I'm not sure ... But you didn't seem to care a minute ago.

Andy is speechless.

ACT ONE

INT: RESTAURANT

NIGHT

Alex and Sally sit at a small table, just one in the sea of tables - most empty by now - covering the floor of the darkened dining room. The plates in front of them bear little actual food, so there is evidence that quite a good deal of it once rested upon them.

ALEX: I never thought we'd be spending Thanksgiving in a restaurant. I expected I'd fly home from

school-

SALLY: That could be a problem, considering you're not in school right now.

He can't take it anymore.

ALEX: What is the problem, Mom? All night you've been throwing out these snippy little comments. So let me hear it - What's got you all bent out of shape this time?

SALLY: Alex, it's not-

She stops, feeling a tremendous urge to just get it out already.

SALLY: Like you said, I just never pictured things like this. I mean, I wanted to have a home for you to come to on breaks for school - but here we are, living in hotels ... I just want to get out of this stupid town already.

ALEX: Actually, I was thinking that I'd like to stay.

SALLY: What?

ALEX: Yeah, I mean ... Look, I have friends, I can enroll at King's Bay U-

SALLY: You want to go to school here?

There is something offensive to him about her disbelief.

ALEX: What?

SALLY: I just mean-well, it's not exactly the greatest school. Especially not considering how bright you are.

Alex just flashes his mother a look of disgust.

ALEX: You know what, Mom? Just because you're not happy here doesn't give you permission to be upset that I am!

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
NIGHT

Sarah raises a hand in annoyance, pulling it back ...

SARAH: How dare you!

She is about to let loose when she realizes she can't move her arm forward. Turning, she finds Jason beside her, his hand firmly gripping her wrist.

JASON: Cut it out.

SARAH: Molly said-

JASON: I don't care what Molly said! God, listen to yourself - you sound like a five-year-old!

SARAH: Hey, I'm not the one going around trying to make trouble.

MOLLY: Oh, like I am!

Jason forces his body between the two of them.

JASON: Stop it, alright? Just cut it out!

The sisters look at him, and then briefly at each other, and then back at Jason.

JASON: Look, I don't know what the two of you were fighting over, and honestly, I don't care. But I would rather not have my sisters beating each other senseless after Thanksgiving dinner, okay?

SARAH: Fine.

There is a tension in her voice, an anger that only comes through more clearly as she speaks through gritted teeth.

JASON: Molly, what about you? No more antagonizing, or whatever the hell you are were doing.

MOLLY: Fine ...

JASON: Good. Now, Sarah, why don't you go find your husband, okay? I wanna talk to Molly alone.

SARAH: She's all yours.

Sarah stomps off. Jason takes Molly and moves her over to the side, closer to the couch. This little

motion unnerves Molly: She can tell what he's about to get into.

JASON: Gee, I wonder what that was all about ...

Molly doesn't say anything. She knows she can't lie, but she doesn't feel right admitting it either.

JASON: Molly, you have got to stop this. This-this obsession with Brent has got to end.

INT: FISHER HOME (UPSTAIRS HALLWAY)

NIGHT

Tim continues to listen to his parents' conversation through the door.

BILL: What do you mean?

PAULA: It's not as if I couldn't find out if I tried-

BILL: You can't.

A heavy pause settles over them. Tim listens in confusion, trying to figure out what in the world they're talking about.

PAULA: Why not?

Her voice stings with what sound like shock and annoyance.

BILL: Paula, don't you think that would upset things just a little bit? What would we tell the kids?

TIM (THINKING): Tell us about what?!?

PAULA: Maybe it's time we got everything out in the open, then.

Bill waits just a moment before answering quite decisively.

BILL: No. We can't.

At that, a creak indicates he has turned on the floor. Tim retreats as his father's footsteps move closer to the bedroom door. He has barely made it onto the stairs by the time Bill emerges, and somehow slinks downstairs without being seen.

INT: FISHER HOME (DINING ROOM)
NIGHT

Courtney doesn't see the anger in Claire she feared would come as a reaction to this intrusion. Rather, Claire shakes her head sadly, slumping her shoulders.

CLAIRE: Of course not. Tim - and the kids - mean more to me than anything else in this world.

COURTNEY: Then why are you willing to risk it all? Who is this person he's so intent on keeping you away from?

Claire hesitates. She folds her arms up in front of her chest to grab her neck and bends her head backward, showing her frustration with the whole predicament.

COURTNEY: Who is it?

CLAIRE: Just an old friend. Someone I ... knew as a teenager.

COURTNEY: Then what's the big deal?

CLAIRE: R-this person is sort of connected to my time with my dad, and Tim doesn't want me being pulled back into all that.

That is the reason, her mind insists.

COURTNEY: Look, Claire, I would never put myself in a position to judge what you do, but really ... I can totally understand why Tim would be concerned.

Claire can't do anything but give a reluctant nod.

CLAIRE: I guess I can, too.

COURTNEY: There you go! Now why don't you tell Tim that?

She bobs her head in the direction of the living room, where Tim has just appeared at the foot of the stairs.

CLAIRE: I guess you're right ...

She turns to go to Tim, but freezes in mid-stride. She turns back to Courtney.

CLAIRe: Thanks.

Courtney responds with a small smile as Claire continues on towards Tim. They meet at the entry to the dining room.

CLAIRe: We really need to talk - right now.

TIM: O-

Just then, Bill comes down the stairs and walks past them.

TIM: Not now.

Without another word, he spins on his heels and heads back upstairs. Claire just watches in confused annoyance.

INT: ANDY'S APT. (LIVING ROOM)
NIGHT

Andy stands, flashing a disgusted look at Roberta.

ANDY: Of course I minded!

ROBERTA: Then why didn't you do anything?

She asks her question coolly, confidently. He looks at her, his mouth hanging open wordlessly. After much stammering, he forces a reply out.

ANDY: It was a little hard when you were climbing all over me!

ROBERTA: Oh, puh-leez!

ANDY: What?

ROBERTA: You were enjoying it. Admit it. We both know it, Andy - Little Miss Superstar just hasn't been around enough to keep you interested, has she?

ANDY: Don't you even start to bring Danielle into this! This has nothing to do with her!

ROBERTA: It has everything to do with her - her relationship with you.

ANDY: Why I-

ROBERTA: Just step back for a minute and take a look at the big picture, Andy. Do you really need Danielle in your life? I mean, really, truly need her?

ACT TWO

INT: RESTAURANT
NIGHT

Alex doesn't break his gaze with his mother. Rather, he allows her to stare right into his eyes, showing the depth of his complete and utter frustration with her. She is the one who finally shatters the lock of their eyes.

ALEX: I don't even know why I try to get through to you anymore. All you do is worry about yourself!

SALLY: I think that's a little harsh, don't you? I have sacrificed so much to give you the life you have. I would think you could at least show some gratitude.

ALEX: Gratitude isn't the issue here, Mom.

SALLY: Then what is?!

ALEX: The way you-we-have been living. This has got to stop. We just keep hopping around, looking for magical happy ending or whatever. You know what? It's not out there!

At last, Sally is quiet. She lets a significant pause fill the air before she speaks again, and this time her voice is far quieter.

SALLY: Maybe you're right.

ALEX: This is gonna sound cocky, but yes, I am right. Mom, it's time we stopped acting like we're just passing time until the good times roll around. It's pretty obvious to me that they're not coming.

Sally nods. Even this simple motion is infused with a deep melancholy.

INT: ANDY'S APT. (LIVING ROOM)
NIGHT

Andy tosses his hands up into the air.

ANDY: Of course I do! I never gave any indication otherwise!

ROBERTA: Oh, you did. The way you kissed me just then-

ANDY: I think you're getting your facts a little messed up here, Ms. Owens!

The emphasis he places on the formality of her name stings Roberta.

ANDY: Look, it was a bad idea for me to invite you in tonight in the first place. Why don't you just head on home ...

He snatches her coat from the peg by the front door and holds it out to her. She watches him, unmoving, for a moment before taking the coat.

ROBERTA: Fine. You know what? You win! I've just had enough of all of this!

With that, she tugs the coat on and grabs for the doorknob. With an angry yank, she pulls the door open and steps outside.

Before leaving, she flashes Andy one last sickened look.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
NIGHT

MOLLY: I would hardly call it an obsession!

JASON: But that's exactly what it is!

Molly flashes him a critical look.

JASON: Seriously! Think about it. You spend so much time worrying about how Sarah's treating Brent, and how Brent is taking everything, and how you need to do this or that with Brent. You've got to stop it

already.

He awaits some sort of response, and makes a face when none appears.

MOLLY: What?

JASON: Aren't you gonna say anything?

MOLLY: Of course-

JASON: Well, what's it gonna be, Molly? You've got to admit that these feelings you have for Brent have gotten out of control.

MOLLY: I ... I know. I just don't know what I'm supposed to do now.

JASON: I think that's pretty obvious: Do whatever you can to forget about them!

MOLLY: I can't!

INT: FISHER HOME (DINING ROOM)

NIGHT

Brent and Sarah stand near the table, which is littered with the remains of a well-enjoyed feast. Brent stands behind his wife, with his arms wrapped around her.

BRENT: It's been a nice night, hasn't it?

SARAH: Yeah, it has.

She looks up at him, a warm smile radiating from her lips.

BRENT: I'm just so glad that we've got so many people to spend it with.

Sarah nods. Her head bobs slowly as a pensive look creeps onto her face.

SARAH: You know, could you find it within you to excuse me for a minute? There's a call I really should make.

BRENT: Okay ...

He releases her from his embrace and they share a parting peck as Sarah makes her way to the kitchen.

INT: FISHER HOME (UPSTAIRS HALLWAY)

NIGHT

Tim takes one careful step after another, slowly but steadily making his way back to the end of the hallway - and to the door of the master bedroom. He sets his foot down and the floor moans an anguished creak; Tim pauses. He allows several seconds to go by before continuing.

When he reaches his parents' bedroom, he finds the door open just enough for him to peek inside. A pang of guilt strikes him as he looks in and sees his mother sitting on the bed, clutching a set of papers in her hand and doing her best to keep her tears from spilling onto them. This guilt, however, is quickly replaced by compassion for her - and intrigue. What could possibly be going on?

ACT THREE

INT: RESTAURANT

NIGHT

Alex looks at his mother with a bit more compassion now, softening his voice.

ALEX: Mom, I just think it would be best for you to accept that nothing is ever going to happen between you and Don. It's been over for more than twenty years and it's not going to pick up again, believe me.

SALLY: I know.

With just these two words, she places on exhibit all the sadness that has infested her life over the years. There are creases in her face where Alex had previously not seen any; the corners of her red lips sit with the slightest of a downward curve. She seems to be all too aware that Don Chase is not the right place to be looking for happiness - just as so many others have been.

ALEX: But even so, what would be so bad about staying in King's Bay? I think it'll really give us a chance to make a fresh start.

SALLY: You know, maybe you're right.

It is now that Alex notices the old mischievous twinkle in her face.

SALLY: Are you sure this isn't just because of someone you met?

ALEX: Positive.

She raises her eyebrows in doubt.

ALEX: Completely positive.

SALLY: Okay, okay. But maybe it would be best to stay here - who knows? Maybe we'll both find the people we're looking for.

Alex raises his glass to his lips and sighs. The surface of his wine ripples ever so lightly.

ALEX: Maybe.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

NIGHT

JASON: What do you mean, you can't?

MOLLY: I-I just can't. I can't stand by and watch Sarah treat him this way.

JASON: What way?

MOLLY: With all this-

JASON: All this what, Molly? Listen to yourself - you don't even know what you're getting so upset about anymore!

MOLLY: He shouldn't have forgiven her for running off to New York like that, Jay. He's just asking for more trouble later on.

JASON: So what? Molly, that's none of your business!

MOLLY: But it-

She simply smothers whatever words were in waiting as she stomps away.

INT: FISHER HOME (KITCHEN)
NIGHT

Sarah stands huddled in the corner, the portable phone pressed against her ear. Finally there is a click on the other end; a voice asks, "Hello?"

SARAH: Happy Thanksgiving!

MATT: Oh, hi!

Even though they are only on the telephone, Sarah finds herself smiling at his greeting.

SARAH: I just wanted to see how you were doing ... I know this has got to be an awkward holiday season for you.

MATT: Yeah, well, to be perfectly frank, I'm just glad that I don't have ... much to deal with.

SARAH: You mean since everything with Andrea and Steve got finished?

He is silent.

SARAH: Matt?

MATT: Yeah. Yeah, I'm just glad that I don't have to deal with any of that crap anymore.

SARAH: Why don't we get together or something this week?

MATT: That's a good idea.

SARAH: Yeah ... I think we really need to talk.

Standing in the entryway to the kitchen, Molly has overheard just enough to pique her curiosity.

INT: FISHER HOME (DINING ROOM)
NIGHT

Claire is utterly confused as she stares after Tim, who has dashed away. Brent comes up behind her.

BRENT: Everything okay?

She turns, almost startled at being spoken to.

CLAIRE: Oh, uh, yeah.

BRENT: Tim looked like he taking off in an awful hurry ...

CLAIRE: I know. Well, apparently, something remarkably urgent came up.

Her voice drips with a bitter hint of sarcasm.

INT: FISHER HOME (UPSTAIRS HALLWAY)

NIGHT

Tim sees Paula rising from the bed. She stands in one spot, drying her eyes, before she goes over to the dresser. He watches as she carefully places the papers in the drawer of her nightstand before heading for the door.

He ducks into the nearby bathroom before she leaves the bedroom. He listens from behind the closed door as her footsteps trail off, carrying her back downstairs.

Tim emerges from the bathroom and quickly slides into the master bedroom. He makes a beeline for the nightstand and finds the papers at the bottom of a neatly organized stack of otherwise uninteresting paraphernalia. He removes them slowly, taking care not to upset the order of the drawer any more than absolutely necessary.

He leaves the drawer open as his eyes quickly scan the papers. They drink in the words, though it takes a good three or four times before his mind even begins to absorb them. He finally speaks, despite a completely dry throat, as if it is necessary for him to hear some voice just to be reassured that this is the reality in which he has always lived.

TIM: Adoption papers?

EXT: ANDY'S APT. BUILDING

NIGHT

Roberta moves slowly to her car. Her head is spinning - not so much from the alcohol she's had, but rather as a result of everything that's happened. What a whirlwind of a night. Everything seemed so hopeful, so right ... and then he just tossed her out.

She knows one thing for certain: She's had it with this situation. The whole thing is so screwed up ... She firmly feels that it's time to just make a break from the Fitches entirely.

She stops in front of her car and leans against the front as she draws her cell phone out of her purse. Blindly she punches in the number on the speed-dial. At the beep, she speaks.

ROBERTA: Hi, it's Roberta. I just wanted to tell you I'm done with this whole thing. It's not worth it - any of it. Your son doesn't want anyone other than Danielle Taylor, and he made it pretty damn clear to me that he never will. So you know what? I'm out. It's been a blast, Katherine-

She says the name of her "employer" with arrant defiance.

ROBERTA: -but the deal's off. Buh-bye.

She utters this final parting with such bitterness that if anyone were around, he or she would truly be frightened by this woman. She turns the phone off with a sharp poke at a button and stuffs it into her purse as she gets into the car.

INT: BUS

NIGHT

Danielle Taylor's pager sits on her bunk, flashing the news that she has a new voice message.

END OF EPISODE #130

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