

HOME AND AWAY
EPISODE 6774
SUBMISSION SCRIPT

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ALF, TORI, ASH, LUC (BABY), N/S SURFERS

ASH has just emerged from the water, surfboard under his arm, and is coming up the beach when he crosses paths with TORI.

They hesitate at the sight of each other, an awkwardness between them.

ASH

How's it goin'?

TORI

All right. I haven't seen you around.

ASH

Just been out of town. Catching up with my brother. You?

TORI shrugs.

TORI

You know.

She doesn't give him anything else. It's painfully uncomfortable. ASH takes the plunge...

ASH

I was just about to grab a coffee from Salt, if you - (WANT ONE)

TORI shifts uneasily. ASH reads this.

ASH (CONT'D)

Or not.

TORI

(dismissive)

I should really get going.

She goes to move past ASH, but he's not about to be brushed off so easily.

ASH

Come on, Tori. Can't we just talk about this?

TORI

I just need time to think, okay.

(CONTINUED)

1

ASH

What's there to think about?

TORI stops short, stunned and frustrated.

TORI

Do you really need to ask - (THAT)

ALF (O.O.V.)

(over)

Ash!

ASH turns to see ALF, holding LUC, moving briskly towards them.

TORI takes the opportunity to leave.

TORI

Look, I've got things to do. I'll see you round.

ASH goes to say something, but TORI's already walking away, leaving ASH deflated by the exchange.

ALF catches up to him, almost breathless.

ALF

I've been lookin' everywhere for you.

ASH

Everything all right?

ALF is stern.

ALF

Ash. It's Mick.

Out on ASH, his expression hardening.

0.50

CUT TO:

2

MOTEL - MORNING

2

IRENE, LEAH, VJ, ASH, MICK (G)

IRENE, LEAH and VJ are facing off against a defiant MICK - tensions are running high.

IRENE

Mick, you can't do this.

MICK

Luc's mine. That's all there is to it.

VJ

You're a monster. There's no way you're getting Luc!

MICK

I don't care what you think. Luc is my flesh and blood. I have a right to see she's properly looked after.

VJ is struggling to remain calm. LEAH puts a calming hand on her son's shoulder.

LEAH

Haven't you caused this family enough damage?

ASH barges into the room, hot with rage, still in his wetsuit.

ASH

What do you think you're playing at?

He makes a beeline for MICK...

IRENE

Ash, no!

... but VJ springs into action, holding him back. LEAH positions herself between ASH and MICK.

LEAH

Ash, this isn't going to help!

ASH

(to MICK)

I want you gone and on that plane tomorrow. Luc's staying here. With me. Where she belongs.

(CONTINUED)

MICK

She belongs with her real father.

ASH

You're no father. You're scum!

MICK incensed, bites back.

MICK

No, you're the one who's scum,
mate.

ASH is taken by surprise. It's the first time MICK has stood up to him. ASH looks as if he might arch up again.

ASH

What did you say?

LEAH

(cautioning)
Ash...

MICK doesn't back down.

MICK

You don't deserve Luc.

IRENE

Mick, that's enough!

But MICK goes on...

MICK

You're a thug. And a bully.

ASH

What're you on about?

MICK

You left me out in the bush. Like
an injured animal.
(then)
Do you really think I'd want my
child raised by a violent low-life
like you?

ASH is enraged by this.

ASH

Low-life?
(then, threatening)
I'll show you who's the low-life!

2

ASH tries to go for MICK again, but VJ keeps a hold on him.

LEAH

Ash, don't - he's baiting you.

MICK shrinks at ASH's intimidation.

MICK

I don't want him near me! Get out
of here, the lot of you!

VJ

Like hell we will.

MICK

I'll call the police.

IRENE takes control of the situation.

IRENE

Just do as he says, all right?
I'll talk to him. Just, leave...
(then, to ASH)
... before you make things worse.

A fired-up ASH nods reluctantly. VJ loosens his grasp on ASH
as IRENE ushers them to the door.

1.30

3

SUMMER BAY HOUSE - MORNING

3

ROO, RYDER (G)

ROO is studying, her uni books spread open on the table, as RYDER trudges down the stairs yawning, still half-asleep.

ROO

(playful)

Look who decided to grace us with his presence.

RYDER grunts.

RYDER

What's for breakfast?

ROO

Break - ? It's almost lunchtime. And you can get it yourself.

RYDER

Not hungry anyway.

ROO gives a resigned sigh, then gets up from the table and heads in to the Kitchen.

ROO

Sit down. I'll get you a bowl of something.

RYDER

You're a legend, Aunty Roo.

As ROO prepares a bowl of cereal for him:

ROO

Just don't let your grandad catch you getting up this late. Not unless you want an earful.

RYDER

Couldn't be any worse than his chores.

(then)

I swear, every day he's got another list of boring jobs for me to do. I'm so over it.

ROO

(matter-of-factly)

Might be your lucky day, then.

(CONTINUED)

RYDER

How's that?

ROO

Dad's out for the morning. Said he had some things to do.

RYDER suddenly brightening.

RYDER

Serious? You mean I'm off the hook?

ROO

For now.

RYDER

(relieved)

Finally. A morning to myself. No Grandad. No chores. Just sweet TV time.

RYDER goes straight to the couch, grabs the remote and flops down in front of the television.

ROO eyes him from the Kitchen - she has a plan for today.

ROO

So that's how you're spending the day - veging out in front of TV?

RYDER

Seems that way.

As ROO comes out of the Kitchen and hands him a bowl of cereal:

ROO

Well, if you're not helping Dad, maybe you can help me out instead?

RYDER groans, sinks into the couch.

ROO (CONT'D)

Don't look so excited.

RYDER

Come on, Aunty Roo. I thought we're a team.

ROO

Hear me out... I finish my Dip Ed in a few months. Then I'll be teaching kids like you.

(CONTINUED)

RYDER

Yeah, so?

ROO

So... I need some practice. Flex my teaching muscles. And I thought you could be my -

RYDER

(over)
- your guinea pig?

ROO

(corrects)
My test pilot.

RYDER grumbles and covers his face.

ROO (CONT'D)

Come on, it'll be fun.
(then, as a sweetener)
I have study snacks.

RYDER

School work is *never* fun. Not even with snacks.

ROO feels he's softening. She gives him a grin - puts him on the ropes...

ROO

Come on, Ryder. I thought we were a team.

RYDER

(light)
No fair. Using my words against me.

ROO

(sincere)
Just do me a favour? It would really help me out.

RYDER hesitates.

ROO (CONT'D)

Not even for snacks?

Out on RYDER, sighing deeply as he lifts the remote and turns off the television.

4

MORGAN HOUSE - MORNING

4

TORI, BRODY, RAFFY

TORI is back from the beach and her run-in with ASH. She's flustered and not thinking straight. As she comes in, she nearly bowls straight into BRODY, sorting through the mail at the front door.

BRODY

Whoa, steady on.

TORI

Sorry -

BRODY clocks her mood.

BRODY

What's up with you?

TORI

(dismissive)

Nothing. Is Justin about?

BRODY

He's at the garage with Mason - you saw them leave this morning.

TORI shaking off her absentmindedness.

TORI

Yeah, of course.

BRODY

Something on your mind?

TORI

No, it's - I'm fine.

BRODY, starting to think he knows what this is about.

BRODY

Nothing to do with you and Ash being on a break?

TORI turns, suddenly alert.

TORI

How did you know that?

BRODY

You've been in the dumps all week. Did you think I wouldn't notice?

(CONTINUED)

4

TORI gives him a look as if to say "really?"

BRODY (CONT'D)
(admitting, light)
Justin told me.

TORI rubs her forehead.

TORI
I thought this feeling would go
away, but - (IT HASN'T)

BRODY
So you're still holding onto the
stuff with Mick?

TORI is stumped.

TORI
What - so I'm just supposed to
forget that Ash could've killed
someone -

BRODY
(over)
Yeah, and that someone was Mick
Jennings.

TORI
It doesn't matter who it was.

BRODY shrugs.

BRODY
Kinda does.

TORI recomposes her thoughts.

TORI
I just don't know if I can be with
someone who does something like
that.

BRODY softening his approach.

BRODY
Look, Ash is a good guy. And
sometimes good guys do bad things.
I mean -
(gestures to himself)
- case point.

(CONTINUED)

4

TORI

It's not the same.

BRODY

How isn't it?

TORI takes a breath, takes another tack.

TORI

Okay. Would you ever touch drugs again?

BRODY, put off by the question.

BRODY

Of course not. How can you ask that?

TORI quickly placates.

TORI

I know - I know you wouldn't.
(then)
But given another chance, I think Ash would do exactly the same to Mick.

BRODY

You don't know that.

TORI, cutting to the point.

TORI

Look, I appreciate the concern. But you and Justin can't keep pushing me back to Ash.

BRODY

So, it's over then?

TORI hesitates, clearly torn. She's about to answer when RAFFY comes bounding down the stairs.

RAFFY

What's over?

TORI clears her throat. BRODY picks up on the hint.

BRODY

Nothing. Never mind.
(then)
Where are you going?

(CONTINUED)

RAFFY

I'm meeting Coco at the Diner.

BRODY

I'll give you a lift. I was just heading down to check my roster.

RAFFY

Sweet. Can we get going? I'm running a bit late.

BRODY gives her a look.

BRODY

Weren't you about to walk down?

RAFFY

I was banking on a lift.

BRODY and TORI share a smile. He grabs his keys and taps RAFFY on the arm.

BRODY

Go on. Before I change my mind.

BRODY follows after her out the door, leaving TORI feeling no better about her encounter with ASH.

5

PIER DINER - MORNING

5

LEAH, VJ, BRODY, RAFFY, ASH, COCO, N/S DINERS

BRODY and RAFFY enter the Diner together.

RAFFY

Is Tori all right? She seemed a bit off.

BRODY

She's fine.

(then)

Just don't go giving her a hard time, okay?

RAFFY nods, gives him a short smile.

RAFFY

Got it.

RAFFY spots COCO and moves off (ad libbed greetings) as BRODY rounds the Counter to check his roster.

Meanwhile, ASH bursts into the Diner - now out of his wetsuit and in fresh clothes - and heads past BRODY straight into the Kitchen -

- ASH reconvenes with LEAH and VJ. Everyone's still edgy from the exchange with Mick.

ASH

Any word?

LEAH

Irene's still at the Motel.

ASH

Not a good sign.

LEAH

Let's not jump to conclusions just yet.

ASH

He's been stringing us along.

LEAH

Who knows what's going on in that twisted brain of his.

VJ, becoming restless, jumps to his feet...

(CONTINUED)

5

VJ

I'm going back there.

... But LEAH reigns him back in before he reaches the door.

LEAH

Hey... The last thing we need right now is another stand-off like. Yeah?

VJ relaxes a bit, nods in agreement.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Let's just keep our heads about us.

ASH is still prickly.

ASH

What - with that freak going after custody of Luc?

LEAH

I don't like it either. But Irene talked Mick round when he took Luc from the hospital. If anyone can do it, she can.

ASH

This never should've happened. We never should've let him anywhere near Summer Bay.

VJ starts getting something off his chest:

VJ

Maybe we shouldn't have let you near... (MICK)

ASH turns to VJ.

ASH

What...?

VJ

Just forget it.

ASH's eyes narrow.

ASH

Something you wanna say?

VJ's about to go on when LEAH steps in.

(CONTINUED)

5

LEAH

Hey, knock it off. I don't need you
two taking your frustrations out on
each other.

ASH and VJ nod, turn away from each other.

Meanwhile, out at the Counter, BRODY hangs back having
overheard everything. He rests his head back against the
wall, clearly feeling for them.

0.50

6

SUMMER BAY HOUSE - MORNING

6

ALF, ROO, RYDER, LUC (BABY)

ROO is hunched over a textbook, trying desperately to get RYDER to work on the task. RYDER is eating jelly snakes from a packet on the table.

ROO

(reading)

... so can you identify the themes
in the passage?

RYDER's in class clown mode. He has a jelly snake between his teeth and is trying to see how far he can stretch it without it breaking.

RYDER

What's a theme?

ROO

(tested)

Ryder.

RYDER tries to divert the conversation.

RYDER

Is it like a meme? You know, those
little pictures your friends send
you -

ROO

(over)

I know what a meme is, thank you.
But what we're talking about is
theme.

RYDER

So why do you want to be a teacher
anyway?

RYDER is about to take another snake from the packet when ROO snatches it away.

RYDER (CONT'D)

Hey!

ROO

First work, then lollies.

RYDER reluctantly slides his chair in closer to ROO.

(CONTINUED)

ROO (CONT'D)

Thank you. Now read this and tell me what the themes are.

She slides the textbook towards him.

RYDER sighs. He leans over the book and starts reading. But he's soon distracted and starts flipping ahead in the book.

RYDER

(dismayed)

How many pages are there?

ROO

Not that many. Just one chapter.

RYDER sits back and crosses his arms.

RYDER

This is stupid. How's this ever going to help me in life?

ROO sits back - aware she's losing this battle.

ALF enters carrying LUC and RYDER deflates.

RYDER (CONT'D)

Perfect. Don't tell me - the floor needs sweeping. No, wait - the shelves need dusting.

ALF

Not now, mate. Give Roo and I a minute, will ya?

RYDER is equally surprised and relieved.

RYDER

No problem at all. Actually, all this learning has given me an appetite. I'll be at the Diner.

RYDER gets up from the table and snatches one last snake from the packet, before rushing out the door.

ALF

What was all that about?

ROO

Trying to get him to sit still for ten minutes.

ALF takes up the near-empty packet of snakes on the table.

(CONTINUED)

6

ALF

When he's hopped up on sugar.

ROO

I needed to get him in the room somehow. I'm trying to gauge his level at school.

ALF

What for?

ROO

He might not be ready for Year 11.

ROO goes on, but ALF's not really listening, his thoughts are elsewhere.

ROO (CONT'D)

He's distracted, he's on-edge. You can hardly get to the end of a sentence without his mind wandering...

ROO registers ALF's disinterest and tests if he's really listening:

ROO (CONT'D)

Then he sprouted horns and a tail, and that's I really started to worry.

This snaps ALF back to reality.

ROO (CONT'D)

He did what...?

ROO smiles, crosses her arms.

ROO (CONT'D)

I think we know where he gets his short attention span from.

ALF sighs, and ROO sees his disinterest is actually torment.

ROO (CONT'D)

Dad, are you okay?

ALF steels to tell ROO:

ALF

Mick's had a DNA test done on Luc.

(CONTINUED)

6

ROO

(shocked)
What... How?

ROO takes LUC from ALF almost unconsciously.

ALF

Your guess is as good as mine. But
VJ got a call from some DNA
laboratory this morning.

ROO

You don't think that Mick's -

ALF

Going for custody? 'Fraid so.

ROO is processing the news.

ROO

Is there anything we can do?

ALF shakes his head.

ALF

For now, we just have to sit tight.
And hope he can have sense talked
into him.

1.40

THROW TO:

7

MOTEL - MORNING

7

IRENE, MICK (G)

IRENE is with MICK in the Motel room, trying to talk him round.

IRENE

You're not thinking straight. You need to see the bigger picture.

MICK

I just want what's best for my daughter.

IRENE is fighting to stay calm.

IRENE

How are you supposed to look after Luc? You can't even look after yourself.

MICK

I'll get by.

IRENE, growing more agitated...

IRENE

Get by - how? Who's been paying your way? Who found you this place - found you a job?

MICK, suddenly defensive and angry.

MICK

I'm her dad! She should be with me.

MICK turns away. IRENE can see his vulnerability and takes a deep breath.

IRENE

Mick. She needs to be here, where she has love and support.

MICK

I won't leave her here with that animal.

IRENE gives a pained sigh.

(CONTINUED)

7

IRENE

Look, I know Ash has a bit of a temper. But deep down there's not a bad bone in him.

MICK, incredulous.

MICK

He left me out in the bush to die. You call that a bit of a temper?

IRENE

I won't say what Ash did was right...

MICK

As a foster kid, I copped a lot of abuse from men like Ash. Men who were supposed to look after me and protect me.

(then)

I won't let the same thing happen to Luc.

IRENE, shocked and appalled at what MICK's hinting.

IRENE

Hey! Ash might be a bit heavy-handed. But he would never, *never* do anything to hurt Luc.

MICK, shaking his head.

MICK

I won't take that risk.

(then)

I'm not leaving here without Luc.

On IRENE, at a loss for words. She can see MICK won't be swayed from his thinking, as warped as it may be.

0.50

FIRST COMMERCIAL BREAK: 9:05