

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #123
TIME FRAME: TWO DAYS AFTER [#122](#)

TEASER

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
AFTERNOON

KATHERINE enters and her sight is immediately drawn to the coffee table, where a number of empty glasses and coasters sit lazily, a remnant of the small gathering she held close to an hour ago.

KATHERINE: Damn Claudia ... I wish that girl would get her act together.

She is about to rattle the walls by thundering the maid's name when another thought hits her: At least she's better than the last one.

Oh, Danielle Taylor ... quite a fine bit of work she's done. Not only was she inept in the running of a household, but she's also managed to bust this family apart. The very picture of Danielle loose in the mansion sends a shudder through Katherine.

KATHERINE: Oh, well. I don't suppose she'll be a problem much longer ... not after I'm through with her.

No sooner have her words concluded than does WALTER, the butler, enter the room.

WALTER: You have a visitor, Mrs. Fitch.

Katherine spins around, an interested smile broadening her lips.

KATHERINE: Oh, really? Who is it?

VOICE: Hello, Katherine.

NICK MORIANI enters the room with a collected swagger. At the very least, Katherine appears surprised to see him - pleasantly surprised, perhaps, but surprised nonetheless.

KATHERINE: Mr. Moriani-

NICK: Call me Nick, please.

Katherine swiftly shoos Walter out of the room.

NICK: I think we've gotten to know each other well enough to get to that point.

KATHERINE: Yes, of course.

Nick slowly takes a few steps closer.

NICK: So tell me ... How did my plan work out?

INT: HOSPITAL
AFTERNOON

CLAIRE emerges from a set of swinging doors and makes her way over to a counter, where she pours herself a steaming cup of coffee. She takes a full sip, letting it glide down her throat and soothe her into a slightly more relaxed state.

After a few seconds her eyes come up, and she finds a familiar face hovering above her.

RYAN: Hey.

Claire swallows, looking concerned to see RYAN here - not exactly upset, not exactly nervous, but just concerned.

CLAIRE: Hi. What ... what are you doing here?

RYAN: I just wanted to come by and show you something I found.

CLAIRE: What?

He reaches into the pocket of his sleek, black leather jacket and digs for a moment before withdrawing a cassette tape.

CLAIRE: What's that?

Ryan wastes no time in flipping open the case. He hands it to Claire, holding it up for her to read.

RYAN: That ring any bells?

CLAIRE: Oh my God ...

An amused chuckle bursts out of her.

CLAIRE: I can't believe you found this.

RYAN: Brings back some, uh, interesting memories, huh?

She laughs again as a broad grin takes a permanent seat on Ryan's face as well.

CLAIRE: Interesting - good word for it.

Her eyes scan over the words, written in a hand so familiar to Claire - her own, minus fifteen years and plus the giddiness of a teenager.

CLAIRE: You promise you won't ever let another person hear this?

Ryan gives her an assuring nod, accompanied by the same lighthearted grin.

RYAN: I promise.

ACT ONE

INT: CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE
AFTERNOON

MOLLY sets her coffee cup down on the small, circular, wooden table as she looks at DANIELLE in amazement.

MOLLY: She cut Andy off from all the money?

DANIELLE: Well, we're not exactly sure, but she looks like the primary candidate.

MOLLY: I wouldn't put it past her, considering everything else you've told me about her.

Danielle sighs, pushing back her thick mane of blond hair with her left hand.

DANIELLE: I'm becoming convinced that Katherine Fitch is truly out of her mind.

MOLLY: Sure sounds like it.

DANIELLE: You know, the worst part is that I believed her.

MOLLY: Believed that she was changing, you mean?

DANIELLE: Yeah. I seriously thought she was trying to accept Andy and me together ...

She shakes her head in disgust.

DANIELLE: Ugh! It amazes me how sick that woman is. First she tried to get Andy's old fiancée to come and steal him away from me, and now she cut him off from all the money.

Molly finishes a long sip of her coffee before continuing.

MOLLY: So he has no money to live on at all?

DANIELLE: No, he does. I guess what happened was that his dad left all the money to them jointly, and the bulk of it has been stored in joint accounts and invested and stuff. They each have their own separate accounts to live out of, but that money comes from the joint accounts. So Katherine just cleaned out the joint accounts.

MOLLY: Is she allowed to do that?

DANIELLE: As far as she's concerned, she's Katherine Fitch and she can do whatever the hell she wants.

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
AFTERNOON

KATHERINE returns NICK's smile as she launches into her explanation.

KATHERINE: Actually, I did exactly what you advised me to do, and nothing else has happened yet.

NICK: Well, what else do you want to happen? Wasn't clearing out the bank accounts enough?

KATHERINE: Not for me, Nick. I'm not out to torture my son here - I'm trying to get him away from that dreadful woman.

NICK: And how do you plan to do that?

KATHERINE: Oh, you'll see.

As her gaze fixes on one of the empty glasses, her forgetfulness springs to mind.

KATHERINE: Oh, I'm sorry! Would you like something to drink?

NICK: No, actually, I'm fine.

KATHERINE: Alright, then.

She quickly fluffs a pillow on one of the love seats, resting it at the perfect angle as she places it back down.

KATHERINE: So now it's your turn. How is your son doing with that woman of whom he seems to be so enamored?

NICK: Not much better, unfortunately. He's constantly talking about her. But thankfully, he hasn't done anything stupid to get to her ...

KATHERINE: I sense a 'yet' coming on.

NICK: Unfortunately, so do I.

INT: HOSPITAL
AFTERNOON

CLAIRE takes the cassette and its case from RYAN's hand and looks them over, unable to remove the grin from her face.

CLAIRE: I can't believe we actually did this.

RYAN: I know. I listened to it last night ... It's pretty, uh, gruesome.

CLAIRE: I can imagine.

A wistful look sweeps over Ryan.

RYAN: Still, that was one of the most fun things we ever did.

CLAIRE: Definitely. Ugh, I can't believe we actually thought we could sing!

RYAN: I don't know about you, but I was pretty much aware I sucked from start to finish.

She gives him a playful punch in the arm.

CLAIRE: I can't argue with that.

The routine ding of the elevator sounds, but for some reason, Claire feels compelled to look up - and before she even sees who steps through the doors, she feels a certain tightness balling up in her stomach.

TIM strides over to them.

CLAIRE: Tim ... what are you doing here?

TIM: I had to go downtown for a meeting. I thought I'd drop by and see you on the way back to the office.

CLAIRE: Yeah, what a ... nice surprise.

Tim looks at Ryan.

TIM: Ryan, right?

Ryan nods and they promptly shake hands. Tim's eye soon catches on the cassette tape and the wildly decorated case, clearly a remnant of the '80s.

TIM: What's that?

Claire and Ryan exchange nervous glances.

ACT TWO

INT: CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE
AFTERNOON

MOLLY lets DANIELLE's dramatic pause hang in the air for a moment before continuing the conversation.

MOLLY: Does she really hate you that much?

DANIELLE: Apparently. The thing is, I don't think this is about social class anymore.

MOLLY: I hope not. If the woman's spent this much time trying to break you guys up just because you were once her maid, I think you're the least of her problems.

DANIELLE: It's not just about that anymore. Maybe she says it is - or maybe she even thinks it is. But it's not.

MOLLY: Well, why do you think she's going to all this trouble, then?

DANIELLE: I think she started to get scared that I would take Andy away from her or something. And then it just snowballed from there ... I think she's at the point where she feels like she just has to win, she has to beat me.

MOLLY: I guess in some twisted way, that makes sense. It's kinda like when Shannon was chasing after Jason - I wonder if she really wanted him that badly, or if it became more about beating Courtney?

DANIELLE: Yeah, she was quite the nutcase.

She glances up at the empty stage as she inhales some of her cappuccino.

DANIELLE: I guess we should be glad Katherine hasn't tried to kill me yet, huh?

MOLLY: That's one way to look at it.

Her voice rings with sad sarcasm.

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
AFTERNOON

KATHERINE has taken a seat on one of the love seats.

KATHERINE: Please, sit down.

NICK seats himself on the other one.

KATHERINE: Well, if I can offer you one piece of advice, it would be to keep him away from this woman as best you can. If anything gets started between the two of them, you'll have an awfully difficult time undoing the damage.

NICK: I'm just grateful that Claire seems so devoted to her marriage. At least that might discourage Ryan.

Katherine's eyes suddenly go wide with excitement, as if the proverbial light bulb has just flashed on inside her head.

KATHERINE: I think I may have the perfect solution to both our problems.

INT: HOSPITAL
AFTERNOON

TIM receives no quick answer from either RYAN or CLAIRE.

TIM: What is that?

His repeated question bears a heavy undercurrent of annoyance.

CLAIRE: It's, uh ... this is going to sound kind of stupid, Tim.

TIM: Just tell me anyway.

CLAIRE: Okay ... this is, um ...

She struggles with the words as laughter threatens to spill forth.

CLAIRE: This is an album Ryan and I made when we were younger.

Instantaneously, Tim's worries vanish in a relieved huff.

TIM: Oh.

CLAIRE: Please don't say you want to hear it!

TIM: No, I'll spare you - and myself - from that horrible fate.

As the spouses exchange sincere smiles, Ryan suddenly feels out of place.

RYAN: I should be going. I have some things to take care of.

CLAIRE: Okay. I'll ... see you later, I guess.

RYAN: Yeah, bye.

TIM: Bye, Ryan.

Within moments, Ryan is gone. The elevator doors close and Claire finally turns her full attention to her husband.

CLAIRE: So, how's your day going?

TIM: I just had the most exhausting meeting. You would not believe how tired I am ...

CLAIRE: How does a nice, home-cooked meal sound?

TIM: Wonderful ...

CLAIRE: Good, because I'm off-duty in half an hour. I'll pick up the kids and get dinner going, and everything will be perfect by the time you get home.

TIM: Now that sounds good.

He plants a quick but tender kiss on her cheek.

TIM: Now if you'll excuse me, I should run.

CLAIRE: Leaving me so soon?

He has already begun to step away, but they remain attached at the hands. Claire flashes the classic sad puppy-dog face.

TIM: Hey, the sooner I get back to the office, the sooner I can be home tonight.

CLAIRE: If you put it that way ...

He leans in and presents her with another kiss, this time on the lips.

TIM: I'll see you tonight.

CLAIRE: I'll be waiting.

Tim turns and heads for the elevator. Claire watches him step inside the elevator; she watches the doors close and the lights indicating its descent. For some odd reason, she finds she can't shake the feeling of wrongdoing that is hanging over her.

ACT THREE

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)

AFTERNOON

A coyly excited **KATHERINE** turns to **NICK**. She is already leaning forward in her seat just thinking about her scheme, but her voice remains composed, revealing little of the thrill she feels inside.

KATHERINE: Why don't we just throw your son together with Danielle?

NICK: Absolutely not!

KATHERINE: Why not? It's a marvelous idea!

NICK: No, it's an idiotic idea!

Katherine's insides jump at the sound of these words. Is this man actually standing up to her in such a manner?

KATHERINE: How dare you-

NICK: How dare I? You want to pawn off some gold-digging piece of trash on my son and me and I'm supposed to be what, thrilled?

Katherine's eyes bulge forth again, as if she's just received a stunning blow to the stomach. Her lips sit positioned to speak, but they do not move, and no sound comes out.

NICK: I offered to help you with a problem, Katherine. I didn't say I wanted it to become my problem!

KATHERINE: But-

NICK: Save it.

He takes a few powerful steps toward the doorway.

KATHERINE: Wait!

Nick freezes, but does not turn to face her.

KATHERINE: You said you would help me with this whole bank account business! I need you to-

NICK: Forget it.

VOICE: Forget what?

The tension hanging between Katherine and Nick is sliced by a voice they can both easily identify - Katherine by familiarity and Nick by intuition. They both look straight at ANDY, who is standing in the doorway with his hands plunged deep into the pockets of his trousers.

INT: CAR
AFTERNOON

Finding that he's having trouble paying attention to it, TIM flips the dial to turn the radio off. He continues to drive in silence, plagued by something, the identity of which he's not quite certain.

It has something to do with Ryan Moriani, he's pretty sure. After running into that guy at the hospital, Tim has felt a strange vibe. He tries to organize things, to squeeze his thoughts into mental columns and rows.

Claire did seem a little strange at the hospital ... not entirely odd or nervous, but just a bit uneasy. Tim can't help but wonder if perhaps it's Ryan's presence that has made her act that way. And it's not only when Ryan is around - it's happened before, like that night Tim came home late ...

FLASHBACK

INT: TIM & CLAIRE'S APT. (BEDROOM)

MIDDAY

TIM and CLAIRE are sprawled on the bed in a passionate heap. Their lips connect as their hands roam each other's bodies. Claire, however, seems strangely distant.

Suddenly, she sits up in the bed, removing herself from Tim.

CLAIRE: I can't do this.

Lying on his back, Tim looks up at Claire in total confusion.

TIM: What do you mean?

CLAIRE: I don't feel well, Tim. I think I'm gonna be sick.

With that, she dashes out of the room and heads for the bathroom.

Tim shakes his head, trying to refocus on his driving as best he can. For some reason, he's suddenly quite sure that Ryan Moriani is the reason Claire has seemed so distracted lately.

Suddenly words from the past begin to float into his head ...

ACT FOUR

**INT: CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE
AFTERNOON**

MOLLY is quite aware of the attentive gaze DANIELLE has fixed upon the empty stage.

MOLLY: Are you okay?

Danielle shakes her head, attempting to push her scrambled thoughts aside enough to answer the question.

DANIELLE: Yeah, I'm fine.

MOLLY: Then what's wrong?

DANIELLE: What do you mean?

A grin tugs at the corners of Molly's lips.

MOLLY: You are so like your brother! You both think nobody can see through you, when you've obviously got something on your mind.

DANIELLE: Okay, okay ... you got me.

MOLLY: Then come on and spill it.

DANIELLE: I was just thinking about the tour and all. I am so sick of it! I just can't take it anymore.

MOLLY: Is it that bad?

DANIELLE: Oh, it's awful! I am not cut out for this whole rock star thing, Mol. I mean, I can't imagine how I could possibly spend so many more months out on the road.

MOLLY: But look at the bright side - your album is doing really well. The tour has to be helping that.

DANIELLE: I know, it is. But it just doesn't seem like enough sometimes to justify it all ...

MOLLY: Justify what?

DANIELLE: Being away from everything and everyone for so long.

MOLLY: Andy?

DANIELLE: Yeah. I feel like ...

She drifts off, fearing the words that come next.

MOLLY: Like what?

DANIELLE: Like ...

A deep sigh provides a pause long after for Danielle to decide to spit the words out.

DANIELLE: Like this tour has hurt my relationship with Andy. I just feel like we're getting further and further apart.

MOLLY: Really?

DANIELLE: Yeah. And I think the problem is that he's here, dealing with all his mother's garbage, and I'm not around to help out or support him or anything, so when I get back it's like we've been living in two different worlds.

Molly swallows, not quite knowing what to say next. She lets her friend's words hang in the air, poking at both their minds.

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
AFTERNOON

ANDY takes a few steps forward, bringing him into the center of the room. The confident smirk on his face is enough to force NICK backwards, closer to KATHERINE.

ANDY: So this was your doing, Mother?

KATHERINE: W-what?

ANDY: This whole "bank account business," as you put it. You hid all the money from me?

Katherine doesn't speak for a moment, as she tries to strengthen her poise to make her answer come out sounding the way she's dreamed of saying it.

KATHERINE: As a matter of fact, I did.

ANDY: And this-

He gestures at Nick disapprovingly.

ANDY: -must be the charming fellow who assisted you in your little scheme, right?

Katherine's eyelids flutter uncomfortably before she responds with as haughty a nod as she can muster.

ANDY: So tell me, Mother, what exactly do you plan to do next?

KATHERINE: I've got something in mind.

ANDY: Just quit the games, alright? I have a wedding to plan and a life to live. Give me the damn money now-

KATHERINE: You can have it.

Nick's brow crinkles up in astonishment as he watches this scene unfold.

ANDY: What?

KATHERINE: I said, you can have it.

ANDY: And what whim of yours will I have to submit to in order to get it?

Her characteristic devious smile - the one she's kept private for so long when it came to dealing with her son and Danielle - emerges victoriously on her face.

KATHERINE: Ah, Andrew, I thought you'd never ask.

INT: CAR
AFTERNOON

At first, the words seem to be dancing on the edges of TIM's mind. He can hear them and feel them, but can't quite make them out. Slowly, they begin to appear in his head ...

CLAIRE: My dad was heavily connected with the mob. I never let him know that I knew anything; I don't know if he was even trying to hide it from me at all. But I was so scared. But Ryan, I really liked him. I even started to go out with him. It was great. He seemed to have endless supplies of money and gave me so much stuff. Everything a teenage girl could want.

TIM: Are your dad's mob ties the reason you won't move to Chicago?

CLAIRE: Not quite. That's only half the story. One summer, I broke up with Ryan and went to Chicago to visit my mother. She was so happy, with her new husband and being pregnant. She had a new life. So I went home and told my dad that I wanted to live with Mom and Jack for a while. He didn't even bother trying to stop me - I think having a teenage daughter was getting in his way. But when I moved there, Ryan showed up. When I told him to leave me alone, he kidnapped me.

TIM: What?

CLAIRE: And then he ... he ...

TIM: What did he do? Claire, you've gotta tell me. What happened next?

CLAIRE: He ... he ... he raped me!

Tim has to exercise extreme effort to avoid careening off the road. Instead, he swings the car around at the first opportunity he gets - and heads straight back to the hospital.

END OF EPISODE #123

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