

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #124
TIME FRAME: IMMEDIATELY AFTER [#123](#)

TEASER

EXT: KING'S BAY PARK
EARLY EVENING

The wind whistles, scattering leaves around the park with abandon. Sarah tromps along a well-beaten path behind the main grassy knoll of the park, far away from the bay. Though she walks with her arms crossed and her body sealed in a fleece jacket, the seasonal chill is hardly bothersome to her at all. In fact, coupled with the dismal sky, it seems almost appropriate, considering her mood.

She walks with her eyes turned downward; her mind is too busy grappling with itself to deal with anything but the dusty ground. She wanted to spend this evening getting some work done on a new case, but it quickly became clear that wasn't going to happen. No, the quick lunch she shared with Brent in mid-afternoon has left her feeling even more unsettled than she usually has as of late.

Brent - ugh! Since she's been back from New York - or since she showed herself after returning, anyway - things have actually been fairly normal between them. Somehow, that troubles Sarah. The memory of her passionate night with Matt is all too fresh and unwilling to slip away, no matter how hard she wishes it gone. And this recent reconciliation of sorts with Brent ... Much to Sarah's surprise, it's actually almost become more of a burden than a blessing ... because of that memory.

Her mind's traveling is brought to a sudden halt as a pair of feet, clad in hiking boots, quickly enter her frame of vision. An uncomfortable bump startles Sarah into finally raising her eyes, and she realizes she has rammed right into the wearer of the boots.

She looks up into Matt Gray's sad face.

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
EARLY EVENING

Andy clicks his tongue on the inside of his mouth, never removing his eyes from his mother as he stands, hands thrust into his pockets, awaiting what he is certain will be a ridiculous proposition.

ANDY: So, Mother ... ?

Katherine allows his anxiety to hang in the air for a moment. He swallows hard, and Katherine finally takes that as a sign that it's time to speak.

KATHERINE: It's really very simple, Andrew. You can have the money back right away if you just do as I ask.

Nick stands not five feet away, doing his best to remain invisible. The tension draped over this scene is unbelievable - in all his years of crooked business dealings and backhanded manipulations, he actually finds the animosity hanging between this mother and son duo to be overwhelming.

ANDY: Then just say it already, Mother! What do you want me to do? Break up with Danielle?

As if snagged on a pair of hooks, the corners of Katherine's mouth slowly creep upward with delight.

**INT: HOSPITAL
EARLY EVENING**

A beep signals the arrival of the elevator on the third floor, and the doors glide open at their usual lazy pace. As soon as they have given him enough room to escape, however, Tim does just that. He rushes out into the middle of the floor and begins looking around.

TIM: Claire, where are you?

His frantic mumbling draws a few baffled looks by passersby. He simply doesn't care. I don't have time to worry about them, he reminds himself. I've got to find Claire.

A set of painfully long seconds passes, during which his wife makes no appearance.

TIM: I just hope I'm not too late ... I hope that monster hasn't gotten to her yet.

ACT ONE

**EXT: KING'S BAY PARK
EARLY EVENING**

MATT: Hi.

Sarah hesitates a moment, feeling a rush of words leaping into her mouth. It takes her a second to organize it all and return the simple greeting.

SARAH: Hi.

She quickly diverts her eyes back to the ground.

MATT: So, uh, how have you been?

SARAH: Me? Fine ... fine, I guess.

The stiffness looming between them seems almost appropriate, given that the last time they saw each other was when they woke up together in a hotel room. Part of Matt wants to shatter it with some wildly articulate declaration, but as the words zoom through his head, he realizes that this is probably the best - or at least, the safest - way to go.

MATT: How are things with Brent?

His question crawls out with uncomfortable slowness.

SARAH: Um ... okay.

MATT: You didn't tell him, did you?

This comes out sounding more like an accusation than a question, and it, coupled with the almost annoyed look on Matt's face, force Sarah into involuntary silence.

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
EARLY EVENING

Andy doesn't even wait for Katherine to coo her inevitably diabolical response before launching into her.

ANDY: Are you insane?

KATHERINE: No, my dear, I'm afraid I'm actually quite sane. How else do you suppose I'd put such a clever little plan into action?

Andy rolls his eyes. His balled-up fists raise to shoulder level as he holds them back from tightening around his mother's neck.

KATHERINE: So, what's it going to be? The money or the girl?

ANDY: I think that's fairly obvious! I can get a job or find some way of supporting myself, but I'm never going to find another girl like Danielle.

Nick, watching silently, cracks a smile at the sight of Katherine Fitch opening her mouth and inserting her index finger to mime gagging herself.

KATHERINE: Oh, cut out this romantic nonsense, Andrew! You know just as well as I do that one day you're going to wake up and see that Danielle Taylor just isn't good enough for you, so why not save us all a lot of grief and just accept it now?

INT: HOSPITAL
EARLY EVENING

Tim emits a sigh of remarkable relief as he sees Claire step through the set of swinging doors, dressed in her regular clothes. He dashes over to her as quickly as he can.

TIM: Thank God you're okay!

He throws his arms around her, but she receives the embrace with puzzlement.

CLAIRE: Huh? What's going on?

TIM: I-I thought he might come back and try to take you away or something.

CLAIRE: Who would do what?

TIM: Ryan.

She narrows her eyes and cocks her head to the right, surveying his sober face for a clue of some sort. She finds none.

CLAIRE: Why would you think that, Tim?

TIM: Because ... because I know what he did before.

CLAIRE: Huh?

She privately realizes her heart has begun pounding with nervousness - almost as if it can sense what is to come.

TIM: I know the whole story, Claire. I know everything about your past with that guy.

ACT TWO

EXT: KING'S BAY PARK
EARLY EVENING

Sarah pushes her hair back with both hands and then continues to grip it.

SARAH: I couldn't.

MATT: Are you crazy?

SARAH: Crazy? Why, because I didn't go ahead and ruin my marriage?

MATT: No, because it sounds like you're suddenly trying to keep it alive. What gives?

Sarah's left hand goes up to her neck, where it sits nervously.

SARAH: I couldn't do it.

MATT: Why not? You said yourself your marriage was over - especially after the way you said Brent and Molly were acting out on the porch that night!

SARAH: I ... I was wrong.

He takes her by the shoulders, squaring her up so she must face him.

MATT: Huh? What in the hell is going on with you?

SARAH: Nothing! Is it so wrong that I'm-that I want to be committed to my husband?

MATT: But you ...

He turns away in disbelief. Now it is his turn to eye the ground. He scans it as if searching for some kind of answer.

Finally his face springs back up to meet Sarah's.

MATT: I know exactly what's going on here.

SARAH: Oh yeah? What?

MATT: It's not that you didn't want to tell Brent about what happened - you just don't want to be the one to admit you're wrong!

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
EARLY EVENING

Andy throws up his hands in total disgust.

ANDY: I would never give you the satisfaction of hearing me say those words, even if they were true!

KATHERINE: Dammit, Andrew! Just end this farce already! Break your engagement to that wretched woman!

Andy crunches every muscle in his face together as tightly as he can manage as he squints at her in utter disbelief.

ANDY: You have truly lost your mind! Look, I'm not going to stand here and play your stupid game anymore, alright? I'm leaving.

He stomps out of the room before Katherine can protest. Once he is gone, she lets loose with a growl that goes far beyond mere disgruntlement.

KATHERINE: What is wrong with that boy?

Her anguished moaning only serves to deepen the amused creases etched into Nick's face.

KATHERINE: What's so funny?

NICK: This whole situation ... You know, I had heard so much about the great Katherine Fitch, but no one ever mentioned the fact that she could be reduced to absolute madness so quickly.

KATHERINE: Yes, well, if your son were up to such ridiculous behavior, how would you react?

INT: HOSPITAL

EARLY EVENING

CLAIRE: What? How?

In that one impulsive instant of panic, Claire realizes she has sent herself packing to a point of no return.

TIM: Uh, did you just happen to forget telling me all about it?

CLAIRE: No, but-

She swallows hard and glances around, more out of nervousness than for any real reason. However, seeing the familiar faces all around does give her an idea.

CLAIRE: Can we please just out on the terrace to talk about this?

Tim agrees with a solemn nod and Claire leads the way outside.

EXT: HOSPITAL TERRACE

EARLY EVENING

Tim shuts the door firmly before turning back to his wife.

TIM: I don't believe you! Are you nuts?

CLAIRE: No, I'm just-

Her sentence dies with a thud, as she can't find the right word to describe her predicament.

TIM: You have to be! I-I can't believe this!

Claire's nervous eyes don't move from him as her body heaves along with the anguished rhythm of her breathing.

TIM: Why have you been doing this? Why have you been spending time with a - a rapist?!?

ACT THREE

EXT: KING'S BAY PARK

EARLY EVENING

Sarah seems to have forgotten all about the fact that she and Matt are arguing in public.

SARAH: Oh yeah, duh! Of course - this was just some stupid pride thing!

Her words, with their harsh coating of sarcasm, sting Matt painfully.

SARAH: Did it ever occur to you for one minute that maybe I just love my husband? Is that such a farfetched idea, Matt?

MATT: Of course not! But you-

SARAH: But what, I slept with you?

Matt doesn't blink as he stares into her face.

SARAH: There, I said it. Are you happy now?

Desperation sets in, as Matt suddenly feels her slipping away from him.

MATT: Sarah-

SARAH: No, don't start with me. Please. Look, I made a mistake hopping into bed with you, okay? I hated what I saw going on between Brent and Molly - or what I thought I saw - and I guess I just wanted to get back at Brent somehow.

MATT: Oh, that's real fair!

SARAH: This isn't about fair! Why don't you see that? I'm not giving up on my marriage - not now. I have come too far to just let everything slip away because I made one little screw-up.

MATT: No matter what Brent may have said to Molly, I think what you did tops that by far!

SARAH: I don't care! I'm not giving up on him! Is that clear?

Matt is suddenly stricken speechless. He resists the deafening urge to shout something horrible at her, knowing he'll only regret it later. Luckily, he doesn't have much time to think about it, because Sarah opens her mouth once again.

SARAH: Look, I'm just sorry I ever jumped into bed with you in the first place!

All the passion, rage, and confusion simultaneously drain from Matt's face; they are replaced by a rush of pure hurt.

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
EARLY EVENING

NICK: Not to sound rude, but I would have much subtler ways of dealing with Ryan than what you've done.

KATHERINE: Gee, thanks. Need I remind you that this was your plan in the first place?

Nick throws her a completely stunned look.

NICK: Keeping the money away from him - that was my plan! I never said you should act like a raving lunatic!

Katherine's face fills with outrage at this remark.

NICK: What? Not used to being criticized, Katherine?

KATHERINE: I-

NICK: No, please. Do you want my advice or not?

KATHERINE: I-Of course. Do you think you can help me?

NICK: Oh, I know I can.

EXT: HOSPITAL TERRACE
EARLY EVENING

Claire flies into defensive mode.

CLAIRE: It's not that simple!

TIM: What, he didn't rape you? Is the story suddenly going to change now that he's back?

CLAIRE: I'm not changing anything, Tim! I don't need to!

TIM: Why not?

The question lingers in the air for a moment as Claire tries to piece together her answer in the solidest way she can.

CLAIRE: Because Ryan ... he didn't really rape me.

Tim's angry concern is quickly replaced by simple ire.

TIM: What?!?

CLAIRE: He didn't really rape me. It-I let him.

TIM: Then it's not rape!

CLAIRE: But it wasn't like that. I didn't want him to do it.

TIM: Claire, you can't have it both ways! Did he or did he not rape you?

CLAIRE: No.

Her answer just hardens Tim's face even further.

ACT FOUR

EXT: KING'S BAY PARK
EARLY EVENING

The weight of her last comment quickly drills Sarah. Her eyes turn apologetic as she looks up at Matt.

SARAH: I'm sorry. I didn't mean ...

MATT: No, don't say it. I know exactly what you mean.

SARAH: Matt-

MATT: Forget it. You're right.

SARAH: I'm so sorry. This whole thing is my fault. I should've considered your feelings before I just ... before I used you to make myself feel better.

MATT: And maybe I shouldn't have been so quick to let you. But I-

He is cut off by the inappropriately perky ring of Sarah's cell phone. She reaches for it and finally draws it out of her coat.

SARAH: Hello?

She listens to the voice on the other end. Matt can already tell who it is by the uncertain expression wavering all over Sarah's face. He stands by silently, his hands plunged deep into his pockets, until she is finished. She speaks only once the phone has been returned to her pocket.

SARAH: I need to go.

MATT: Brent?

A contrite nod is her only response. A terse farewell is quickly followed by her exit.

Matt watches her walk off, allowing the sounds of the crumpling leaves to fill his ears. Their conversation replays in his head.

SARAH: I'm so sorry. This whole thing is my fault. I should've considered your feelings before I just ... before I used you to make myself feel better.

MATT: And maybe I shouldn't have been so quick to let you. But I-

Matt shakes his head sadly as he completes the sentence.

MATT: But I wanted to.

INT: FITCH MANSION (LIVING ROOM)
EARLY EVENING

Katherine looks to Nick, her frazzled nerves beginning to soften.

KATHERINE: How?

NICK: I just have some advice for you - something that might make your life a hell of a lot less stressful.

She waits for his explanation impatiently.

KATHERINE: Well ... ?

NICK: Give it up.

Her face nearly jumps off of her head in shock.

KATHERINE: What?

NICK: Forget about this vendetta against your son's fiancé. Let it go.

KATHERINE: I can't - not now! I'm so close!

NICK: But you're not! Why can't you see that?

Katherine has been rendered wordless by his sheer candor.

NICK: Just give up on it already. There are so many more worthwhile things to live for ... believe me.

She purses her lips together in thought.

KATHERINE: Do you really think I should?

NICK: You have to. It's the only way your son is ever going to come back to you. Believe me, short of you killing her, nothing is going to split them up - and I doubt that would do much to endear you to Andrew.

A pensive sigh is all Katherine can muster.

EXT: HOSPITAL TERRACE
EARLY EVENING

TIM: What is going on with you?

CLAIRE: Nothing! I'm just getting to know an old ... friend again!

TIM: Why did you lie to me about him raping you?

CLAIRE: It's not that simple, Tim! He kind of did force himself on me, but I didn't stop him. I didn't

even try.

He tosses his hands up, completely fed up.

TIM: And you're not scared of him at all?

CLAIRE: No ... not anymore.

She catches the skepticism in her husband's face.

CLAIRE: Tim, he's changed. That was fifteen years ago.

Tim wants to retort with some snappy, sarcastic comment, but he just can't bring himself to do it. He came here tonight terrified, thinking his wife might be in the clutches of a madman - and instead he's found that she's been giving him - and herself - the run-around all along.

He storms out without another word. Claire watches him walk away, watches the door slam, all in silence. She suppresses the impulse to chase after him, to chase after some nonexistent instant reconciliation. She knows it's not possible - but after the way Tim just acted, will he ever allow it to be possible?

END OF EPISODE #124

[Next Episode](#)