

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #128
TIME FRAME: THANKSGIVING,
TWO DAYS AFTER [#127](#)

TEASER

INT: FITCH MANSION (DINING ROOM)
EVENING

A peaceful blend of orchestral instruments dances in the air, providing the perfect backdrop for the elegantly arranged dining room. The three place settings have been laid out in just the proper manner, resting on top of a white tablecloth bearing shadowy embroidery. This scene, however, is deceptively serene.

Katherine pauses in the entry with a sigh. Just last year, she and Andrew had shared a warm, family Thanksgiving, shining with laughter and memories ... and tears. But even the tears had been happy, whether they realized it or not. The tears that have begun to pool in Katherine's eyes, however, are anything but.

KATHERINE: Blast you, Danielle! This is all your fault!

She becomes aware of an intensity building inside of her, a quaking ready to burst out into an all-out rumble. Her hand wraps around the body of a silver candlestick, and she pulls her arm back as she prepares to give it a fiery launch.

A powerful hand stops her arm in mid-motion. She turns around, clearly stunned-and finds Nick Moriani hovering over her.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

The darkness of the street, illuminated by streetlights, spills into the room as the front door opens once again. Paula steps aside as Tim comes in, hauling Travis in the crook of his left elbow and using the other hand to drag the filled baby bag. Claire follows just behind, with Samantha tucked inside her arms.

PAULA: Happy Thanksgiving!

Smiles bust out throughout the room. Claire and Tim quickly set the children - and the cumbrous bag -

down before exchanging hugs and kisses with Paula. Jason and Courtney gather behind her, waiting for a chance to present their own greetings.

CLAIRE: Hi! How's everything?

PAULA: Wonderful ... How are the two of you?

Tim and Claire's eyes meet for a split-second of chilliness before Tim replies, his voice void of all enthusiasm.

TIM: We're fine.

PAULA: Oh, look at the two of them! They look adorable!

She sweeps down to the bundled-up children, who are teetering around a small area on their uncertain legs. Claire kneels down as well and the two women begin to unwrap the kids.

Jason, meanwhile, excuses himself away from Courtney and slides over to his older brother. He speaks in a hushed voice.

JASON: What's going on?

TIM: What do you mean?

JASON: I mean, what's up with you and Claire? You think I didn't see that look you gave her?

TIM: I didn't give her any look-

JASON: Whatever. Look, Tim, it's obvious something is wrong. What is it?

ACT ONE

INT: FITCH MANSION (DINING ROOM)
EVENING

NICK: I don't think you want to do that.

Katherine just stares up at him, blinking several times as if to be certain that he is really standing beside her, before saying anything.

KATHERINE: No - no, of course not. I was just ...

Whatever lame excuse she might have been cooking up is dead before it is even conceived. She casually sets the candlestick down.

KATHERINE: I'm glad you could make it.

NICK: It's our pleasure, believe me.

For the first time, Katherine looks past Nick and sees Ryan standing quietly in the background.

KATHERINE: This must be your son.

NICK: Yes ...

He turns, ushering Ryan closer to Mrs. Fitch.

NICK: Katherine Fitch, this is my son, Ryan. Ryan, Katherine.

RYAN: Pleased to meet you.

He takes Katherine's hand and sets an appropriately gentlemanly kiss upon it.

NICK: Again, thank you for inviting us. I suppose we would have just spent the evening at home otherwise.

KATHERINE: At least you have each other.

Her voice drips with bitterness.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Tim is speechless, uncertain of how to respond to his brother's inquiry.

TIM: Look, Jase, nothing is wrong. Claire and I are both just ... stressed out.

JASON: I'm not buying it, Tim-

TIM: Well, you should, 'cause there isn't anything more to it.

Before Jason can pursue the topic any further, Tim maneuvers a quick change of subjects.

TIM: So how'd your surprise party go the other night?

JASON: How'd you know about that?

TIM: Mom told me.

As if on cue, Paula looks up at the two of them from the floor, where she is still playing with Travis and Samantha.

PAULA: Did I hear my name?

TIM: Indeed you did. Jason was wondering how I knew about his surprise party, and I told him you filled me in.

PAULA: Oh, yes.

TIM: I'm surprised you didn't tell him about it before it happened. You've never exactly been one to keep a secret for long anyway, huh?

Though he says this with a smile, the jest of the comment seems to be lost on Paula. A frown twists her face before she returns to her grandchildren.

Tim turns back to Jason.

TIM: So anyway, how'd the party go?

It is now Jason's turned to be plagued by discomfort. A knot entangles itself in his throat as his mind is flooded by the memory of those frantic moments in which he woke up to find Alex in the bed with him, caressing his face ...

JASON: Not so good.

TIM: Really? Anything you wanna tell me about?

Something within Jason cries out, urging him to just get it all off his chest.

ACT TWO

INT: FITCH MANSION (DINING ROOM)
EVENING

It is difficult for Ryan not to sense the hostility in Katherine.

RYAN: Would you mind if I had a look around? I'm truly amazed by this place ...

KATHERINE: Go right ahead.

She waves him off. He is gone in a flash, bustling away with relief. Nick, meanwhile, clasps his hands over Katherine's shoulders.

NICK: Please, Katherine. Calm yourself ... There's no need for you to ruin your holiday by dwelling on all this unpleasantness-

KATHERINE: Unpleasantness? Is that all this is? For God's sake, Nick, my own son won't even speak to me! I think that ranks somewhere above "unpleasant"!

NICK: Please-

She struggles free of his grip as tears begin to tumble over the tips of her eyelids.

KATHERINE: Just leave me alone!

She turns away, not wanting to run off but certainly not wanting to face him, either.

NICK: Look, you're the one who invited us over. If we're not wanted, we can easily leave.

Katherine is silent as she attempts to steady her breathing and banish the wetness from her eyes.

NICK: Fine-

Suddenly she whips around, hands outstretched to him.

KATHERINE: No, please. Don't go.

INT: FISHER HOME (KITCHEN)
EVENING

The cluttered counters are a clear indication that the annual Thanksgiving feast is in full swing. Bill, Don, Helen, and Molly move around the kitchen as they attempt to get the courses in order. Bill opens the oven; steam jets out in a heavy cloud around him.

BILL: Someone hand me an oven mit!

Helen quickly obliges, and within seconds Bill has confirmed that the turkey is ready to come out. He carefully removes the pan from the oven as the Chases look on.

DON: Looks like we're making progress.

BILL: Thank goodness. It sounds like we've got quite the crowd out there.

Molly peeks out into the living room.

MOLLY: Yeah, Tim and Claire just got here. I'm gonna go say hi.

She exits, and a smiling Helen watches as Molly greets her brother, sister-in-law, niece, and nephew. Don comes up from behind and lightly rests a hand on her shoulder.

DON: It's so nice to see family coming together like this, isn't it?

She looks up at him, beaming.

HELEN: It sure is.

They exchange a light peck on the lips.

**INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING**

The uncertain silence between himself and Tim that Jason has allowed to linger is broken by Molly's entrance.

MOLLY: Hey, big brother!

She quickly makes her way over, wrapping Tim up in a tremendous hug.

TIM: Hey yourself.

He steps back, examining her.

TIM: You look great.

MOLLY: Thanks. You too ... Oh, it is so good to see you! Everything's been so crazy lately-

She pulls him into another hug.

TIM: I know.

Claire stands, holding the children's coats in one hand.

MOLLY: Claire! Hi!

She hugs her sister-in-law as well.

CLAIRE: How are you, Molly?

MOLLY: I have to say, I'm doing pretty well. Things could be much worse.

CLAIRE: Glad to hear it.

The warm loudness of the greetings is brought to a crashing halt as two more bodies step inside the house.

SARAH: Hey, everyone!

All eyes are suddenly on Sarah and Brent.

ACT THREE

INT: FITCH MANSION (DINING ROOM)
EVENING

Katherine reaches a hand out and slowly allows it to come down on Nick's arm.

KATHERINE: Please, don't leave.

NICK: Are you sure?

Katherine gives an uncharacteristically humble nod.

KATHERINE: I-I don't want to spend the evening alone.

As soon as these words are out, it strikes her that they might give the wrong impression.

KATHERINE: I mean, I want you and Ryan to stay. I'd love to get to know the two of you better.

NICK: Fine. But only on one condition.

She swallows hard.

KATHERINE: What's that?

NICK: That you relax! I've seen so much of Katherine Fitch in the few times we've met: this calm, collected society lady; a woman scorned; an upset mother. But I've never really seen you have fun.

KATHERINE: I don't suppose I've had much of that lately, to be honest.

NICK: I can tell.

His smile sets off a grin on her face as well.

NICK: And do you know why that is?

She looks up at him, as if he might hold the key to tranquilizing all the turmoil that has been rocking her life as of late.

NICK: It's this silly quest you're on to split up your son and his fiancée. You've got to relax ... You've got to give it up.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Paula hoists Samantha up in her arms, feeling compelled to break the awkward silence that has blanketed the room.

PAULA: Why don't you say hello to Aunt Sarah and Uncle Brent?

Sarah reaches a finger out to poke Samantha's nose, which elicits an amused giggle from the baby.

SARAH: So, um, how's everybody doing?

TIM: Great. It's so nice to see you-

He hugs his sister.

TIM: -and you too, Brent.

Brent raises a hand in casual greeting.

BRENT: Smells awfully good in here ...

MOLLY: Definitely. The food's almost ready.

The words shoot out of her mouth, perhaps a little too quickly. She is suddenly aware of this, and again she is silent.

SARAH: Where's Dad?

PAULA: He's in the kitchen. Why don't you guys all go say hi? Don and Helen are in there, too.

Sarah and Tim head off into the kitchen. Brent is about to follow, but Molly's voice stops him.

MOLLY: Brent.

He turns around, trying to remain casual. His hands are stuffed deep into his pockets, his shoulders riding up practically into his ears.

BRENT: Yeah?

MOLLY: How are you? I mean, really ... How's everything going? I know we haven't really seen each other since-

Memories of their deeply involved conversation and near-kiss settle over Molly, and she's sure she sees them floating through Brent's mind as well as she looks into his eyes.

MOLLY: -since that night I made dinner at your place.

BRENT: Yeah, I know.

MOLLY: So ... How's everything with Sarah? Back to normal?

Meanwhile, Paula has stopped Claire from proceeding to the kitchen. Concern tugs at the older woman's face as she speaks.

PAULA: Dear, I'm getting the feeling that something isn't quite right between you and Tim. Am I right?

CLAIRE: We're perfectly fine, Paula.

PAULA: Are you sure? You didn't exactly look at ease together when you came in ...

Claire's hand brushes back through her dark hair as her eyes try to avoid those of her mother-in-law.

ACT FOUR

INT: FITCH MANSION (DINING ROOM)
EVENING

Katherine again turns away from Nick.

KATHERINE: I can't. Not now.

NICK: Why not? I mean, honestly-have you really made any significant progress?

She snaps around to face him.

KATHERINE: Of course I have! Danielle is away on tour. She's not even spending the holiday with Andrew! I think that counts for something!

NICK: Does it?

His thumb and two of his fingers slowly work their way over his chin as he pauses.

NICK: What's the point of all this if you lose your son in the process?

KATHERINE: I won't lose him! I won't let her take him away!

NICK: That's just the problem! She's not trying to take him away from you!

KATHERINE: But she-

NICK: No! I seriously doubt either of them ever had the intention of ruining your relationship with your son. They just want to be together-

KATHERINE: It's too late for that now! I've already lost Andrew as it is. I won't sit back and allow Danielle Taylor to have him, either!

Nick flings his hands up and then lets them drop in total frustration.

INT: FISHER HOME (DINING ROOM)
EVENING

Jason is lingering over the set table, staring down into one of the dishes. His front teeth clench his lower lip in worry; his eyes are dark, heavy, with the murkiness of the burden he's been carrying. He doesn't even notice as Courtney takes a place by his side.

COURTNEY: What's got you so down tonight?

He looks up in surprise, shaking his head as if to distort the agonizing memory running through his brain.

JASON: Oh, uh, nothing. Just tired, I guess.

COURTNEY: Can't blame ya. That was one hell of a party the other night.

He forces an agreeable smile, albeit a fleeting one.

JASON: You could definitely say that.

His lips resist the urge to crack out in a real grin, this time at the wicked irony of his statement.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

CLAIRE: Really, Paula, it's nothing. We've both just been stressed out lately, what with work and the kids and everything. It's enough to drive a sane person mad.

PAULA: Believe me, I know the feeling.

She pats Claire on the back and tips her head towards the kitchen.

PAULA: Come on ... let's go say hi to everyone else.

Just a few feet away, Brent and Molly are locked up in their own conversation. Their voices remain low, though neither is doing this consciously.

BRENT: I don't exactly know what "normal" is, Molly.

MOLLY: Good point. But still, how have you guys been getting along?

BRENT: Surprisingly well. Now that this whole thing with Matt seems to be over, we don't have so much to disagree about.

MOLLY: Sounds like the two of them had quite an adventure in New York.

BRENT: Did Sarah tell you all about it?

MOLLY: Yeah. We ran into each other a few days ago at the store ... She gave me the impression that things are pretty much perfect between the two of you.

BRENT: Perfect?

The lone word jumps out, filled with surprise and perhaps a bit of alarm.

ACT FIVE

INT: FITCH MANSION (DINING ROOM)
EVENING

Panic overrides the rage that has been occupying Katherine's face. She forces Nick to look squarely at her as she apologizes.

KATHERINE: I'm so sorry ... I'm just being miserable.

NICK: You got that right.

KATHERINE: Please, Nick - don't leave. I want you and Ryan to spend the evening with me. Please, say you'll stay.

After a few excruciating seconds for Katherine, she sees Nick's face begin to soften.

NICK: Fine. Just promise me one thing.

KATHERINE: What?

NICK: I want you to stop worrying about your son and this woman.

Something within Katherine warns her not to protest.

KATHERINE: Fine.

She flashes him a broad smile.

NICK: Good ... Now let's find that son of mine and enjoy ourselves a little.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Brent quickly steadies himself.

BRENT: Things are far from perfect, Molly. They're getting better, yeah, but we've still got plenty of work cut out for us.

MOLLY: Well, Sarah seems to think you're on the road to recovery.

BRENT: It sure seems like it.

There's a little voice dancing in Molly's head, one which is dying to ask, "So, is that what you want?" The voices of reason overwhelm it, however, and she simply takes his hands within hers.

MOLLY: I'm happy for you. I'm glad everything is finally coming together for the two of you.

From the edge of the dining room, Sarah has witnessed this scene in silence. She can't help but raise an eyebrow in surprise ... and maybe confusion, as well. Does her sister really mean all that?

END OF EPISODE #128

[Next Episode](#)

