

"FOOTPRINTS"  
episode #135  
time frame: a few days after [#134](#),  
Christmas eve

**TEASER**

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

Tim turns over in the bed, upsetting the already well-laid chaos of the sheets and comforter. With a groan, he opens his eyes and searches the room for Claire. His eyes quickly find her.

TIM: I am so sorry, hon.

Claire smiles.

CLAIRE: Don't be. It's not your fault you got sick.

TIM: Yeah, but ...

Another groan.

TIM: It's Christmas Eve. Shouldn't we be celebrating or something?

She dismisses his worries with a wave of her hand.

CLAIRE: It's not a big deal. The kids already fell asleep, believe it or not. So at least I get to spend some quiet time with you ...

She sits down on the bed beside him and strokes his golden mess of hair.

TIM: Quiet is right. I don't think I'm gonna be good company for too much longer.

CLAIRE: You're getting tired?

His nod is accompanied by a yawn.

CLAIRE: Why don't you try to get some sleep? Tomorrow's going to be a busy day, anyway.

TIM: I don't think I'll have to try too hard.

They share a warm smile before he buries his head in the pillow and closes his eyes.

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EXT: APARTMENT BUILDING  
EVENING

Katherine's shoes send a few hurried clicks off the pavement before she pauses at the foot of some stairs.

KATHERINE: What am I doing? This isn't a good idea ...

Her mind is again overcome by images of a packed ballroom, couples whirling with the orchestra's music and individuals navigating through the crowd gathered at her mansion ...

KATHERINE: This is one tradition that I have always loved.

ANDY: I know ... it reminds me of Father.

KATHERINE: (suddenly upset) I know. It always serves to bring back memories of the happy times the three of us shared.

Andy places an arm around her.

ANDY: Don't let that ruin your evening, Mother. It's a time of celebration.

KATHERINE: I know, Andrew. You're right. ... It's just so hard sometimes.

ANDY: I understand. But we've made it this far, Mother. There's no point in giving up now. Believe me, I miss him just as much as you do.

KATHERINE: I'm sure you do.

ANDY: Now let's stop this moping and try to enjoy ourselves.

KATHERINE: You're right. Thank you, dear.

ANDY: Any time, Mother.

The bitter chill of the night air yanks her back out of her memories and into the present. Unfortunately, things aren't nearly so peaceful now.

KATHERINE: To think that was just a year ago ... Look how far apart we've grown so quickly, Andrew.

With strengthened resolve, she pulls up the bottom of her fur coat and ascends the outdoor stairs leading up to her son's apartment.

KATHERINE: The time has come to close that gap.

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INT: BRENT & SARAH'S APT. (LIVING ROOM)  
EVENING

Sarah hands Brent a glass of champagne as she takes a seat beside him on the couch. The sounds of "White Christmas" fill the air around them.

SARAH: Jeez ... Can you believe it's Christmas Eve already?

BRENT: Barely.

He moves in for a sip of champagne, but as he does so, bubbles spring up and dance on the tip of his nose. He pulls away, laughing.

BRENT: God, that feels so weird.

SARAH: What?

BRENT: When it jumps up and tickles your nose-

He sees the grin that has bust out on her face.

BRENT: Fine, see how you like it!

He shoves his glass of champagne under her nose, but before either of them can even notice whether or not the bubbles are assaulting her, they are drowning in laughter.

SARAH: You are so weird!

She pulls herself back up to a sitting position, pushing Brent away from her. He sets his glass down on the coffee table.

Their eyes hold on one another for a moment in which everything else - the champagne, the music, everything - seems to have vanished.

SARAH: I love you.

She places a hand underneath his chin and uses it to draw him gently nearer. Her lips quickly find his for a soft kiss.

## ACT ONE

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

Claire remains seated on the edge of the bed, looking over a now-asleep Tim. His breathing is light, almost undetectable. She watches him lying peacefully, his eyelids having fallen together, his hair reflecting the light of the lamp on the side table.

CLAIRE: Tim ... We made it. After everything we went through - with my dad, and Diane, and even Ryan - we're here together, ready to celebrate another Christmas.

She rests a hand on his cheek. It lingers there for a moment. At last, she lets her index and middle fingers slide slowly down the smooth skin.

CLAIRE: I love you so much.

She plants a delicate kiss on him, and it does nothing to disturb his sleep.

CLAIRE: So much.

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

Meanwhile, Danielle and Andy are sharing a much more festive celebration. She has lured him onto his feet, and they are now dancing with abandon to "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree." He twirls her under his arm and spins her out. She pauses, right in line with the music, and then joins in to sing the next line.

DANIELLE: ... deck the halls with boughs of holly!

She comes back to him and they continue shimmying - until the doorbell cuts in. Quickly they stop, giving each other amused looks as they break apart. Danielle grabs the remote control and lowers the music, while Andy answers the door.

After doing so, he falls immediately silent.

KATHERINE: Andrew ...

ANDY: Mother?

She looks up at him hopefully, expectantly, not quite certain what to say.

ANDY: What are you doing here?

KATHERINE: I ... Well, I was thinking ...

She finally gets enough hold over her words to form a solid sentence.

KATHERINE: I wanted to wish you a Merry Christmas.

He looks at her blankly.

## **ACT TWO**

INT: APARTMENT BUILDING  
EVENING

Matt steps swiftly down the hallway, pulling his keys out of his pocket. He looks through the assorted keys on his ring before landing on the right one. He sticks it in the lock-but then pauses.

What am I doing? The thought suddenly hits him. Spending Christmas Eve alone - eating at some restaurant I don't know and then sitting by myself the rest of the night. And for what?

He can't answer the question. He turns the key and lets the door to his apartment creak open. Even as he steps inside, the thoughts continue: If I were back in New York, at least I could celebrate with Andrea and some other friends. I had someone back there, at least. Here, I've got no one.

Especially not Sarah.

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**INT: BRENT & SARAH'S APT. (LIVING ROOM)**  
**EVENING**

Sarah and Brent separate, bringing their kiss to an end.

**SARAH:** It's amazing, isn't it?

**BRENT:** What?

**SARAH:** That we're here.

He responds with a uncertain look.

**SARAH:** I mean, think about it. We got married all spur-of-the-moment one random night-

She has spit the words out before she even realizes what she's doing. She pauses and her face appears strangely sober for a moment before continuing.

She is so consumed by memories of Brent kissing Molly that night, however, that she fails to check for Brent's own reaction. If she did, she would notice the same anxious look on his face.

**SARAH:** -and here we are, almost two years later, having a perfectly happy, normal Christmas Eve.

**BRENT:** Yeah, I see what you mean.

He speaks solemnly. Sarah feels an urgent need to recover, somehow-to bring him back to her.

**SARAH:** That's why I was thinking it might be a good time to discuss something I've wanted to bring up for a while now.

**BRENT:** What?

She visibly hesitates, but her lips manage to speak the words.

**SARAH:** Having a baby.

Her lips curl up at the corners, forming a tiny smile that carries a hint of persuasiveness.

**ACT THREE**

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

## EVENING

Katherine and Andy stand locked in a cool stare. Having just spoken, Katherine is not sure of how to continue the conversation, and Andy has no intention of reaching out to her with open arms.

Finally Danielle speaks, from the other side of the room.

DANIELLE: Katherine, what do you want?

Katherine turns to her, almost shocked. How dare this woman speak to her like this? After everything-

After everything I've done, Katherine considers, I can hardly complain. Still, the urge to smack Danielle is burning up her hands.

KATHERINE: I simply wanted to wish the two of you a Merry Christmas. That's all.

She notices their skeptical looks. Her response comes with hands raised defensively.

KATHERINE: I promise, that's all!

Silence again settles over them. This time, Andy is the one to break it, as he places a hand on the open door.

ANDY: Well, Mother, you said it.

Katherine quickly swings her head around, looking first out the door and then back at her son.

KATHERINE: I was-I was thinking we could ... talk, or something.

Again, Andy shoots her that "I-don't-believe-you" face.

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## EXT: KING'S BAY PARK EVENING

If not for the chill of the wind, the evergreen trees and calm night sky might be enough to convince one that this were a summer night. It's not, however, as Claire is all too aware. She pulls her coat a little more tightly around her body and stuffs her hands a bit deeper into her pockets as a single leaf skips by on the pavement in front of her.

Freezing or not, the fresh air comes as an incredible relief. After an entire day in an apartment with a sick man and two young children, Claire is all too ready to have some quiet time. An evening walk just felt like a good idea.

She is so wrapped up in enjoying the serenity of the park that she doesn't even notice the man approaching her until he is directly in front of her. She looks right into his face-and gasps.

CLAIRE: Ryan.

RYAN: Hey!

He waves a hand right in front of her face.

RYAN: What are you doing out here on Christmas Eve?

Remembering Tim's words of warning and their recent arguments, Claire doesn't answer.

## **ACT FOUR**

INT: BRENT & SARAH'S APT. (LIVING ROOM)  
EVENING

Upon seeing Brent's halfhearted reaction, Sarah's smile fades.

SARAH: What?

BRENT: I don't know ... Just surprised, I guess.

SARAH: Why?

A "duh" expression fills his face, though in a light sort of way.

BRENT: I guess I just wasn't expecting it, that's all.

SARAH: Oh ...

She takes a thoughtful pause, then launches back into the conversation.

SARAH: Well, don't you think it would be a good idea? I feel like we've really recommitted to each other, and our lives are pretty stable-

She stops. The unenthusiastic look hasn't left his face.

SARAH: You really don't want a baby?

In attempting to answer, his mouth trips over every word.

BRENT: I just-Well-You know ... It's not ... I don't know. It just doesn't feel right, not now.

SARAH: Why not?

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INT: MATT'S APT.  
EVENING

The antics of Courteney Cox, David Schwimmer, and company on the television set are nothing but background noise to Matt. He is staring right at the TV, but none of what he sees is registering.

It doesn't feel like Christmas Eve at all. Granted, he has no family left, but back in New York, there were people with whom he could enjoy himself. But here in King's Bay ... no one. There could be-his mind keeps driving back to that one night, when he and Sarah clouded the air of that hotel room with steam and sweat.

And then-nothing. Nothing at all. She ran off in the morning, and they have hardly spoken since. A chance meeting or two, one nervous cup of coffee ... Hardly a solid friendship. It's hard for him to believe they were so close just a few months ago in New York.

For some reason, though, he still feels that closeness lingering, despite all evidence that suggests it should be long-forgotten.

He is jarred by the jingling cry of the telephone. Swiftly he stretches his body across the couch and grabs it.

MATT: Hello?

A look of slight confusion, perhaps even uneasiness, settles onto his face.

MATT: Yeah? ...

**ACT FIVE**

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

Katherine's solid exterior begins to fall away as she practically begs Andy to talk things out.

KATHERINE: Andrew, please ... I know I over-involved myself in your business, and I'm sorry. It was foolish of me to try to cling to you like that.

ANDY: Yes, it was!

KATHERINE: But-I couldn't help myself.

She swallows a visible lump in her throat.

KATHERINE: Every minute you spent with ... with Danielle, every moment you were concerned with new things, different things-I could feel you growing further and further away from me.

Her words might as well have been spoken to a wall. She receives no response other than chilly silence.

KATHERINE: Andrew ...

DANIELLE: Please, I think it would be better if you just left.

Tempted as she is to snap back at Danielle, Katherine stifles the urge. She gives Andy one last, pleading look-nothing. Mournfully, she exits the apartment.

Andy closes the door with some added slam.

ANDY: You know, I cannot even believe the nerve she has ...

DANIELLE: Andy, just forget about her. Don't even let her bother you. It's not worth spoiling Christmas.

ANDY: I suppose not.

He spends a few heavy seconds staring at his hands before making his way wordlessly to the kitchen. Danielle sighs and watches him walk off.

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INT: BRENT & SARAH'S APT. (LIVING ROOM)  
EVENING

Brent cannot come with an answer to Sarah's inquiry, but it's not simply that he doesn't know what to say - he has no idea, nothing more than a gut feeling.

SARAH: I mean, why wouldn't it be a good idea?

BRENT: Because ... I don't know. I'm just not comfortable with the idea right now.

A sorrowful pall immediately drapes itself over Sarah, and she wastes no time in trying to ignore it.

SARAH: I'm gonna go get some more champagne. Want any?

She stands, lifting her glass and taking his before dashing to the kitchen. His voice stops her halfway.

BRENT: Maybe-maybe if I have some time to think it over, absorb it or whatever ... maybe I'll get used to the idea. I don't know.

With a slow nod, Sarah disappears around the corner and into the small kitchen.

Left alone, Brent drops his face into his hands. He mumbles into them.

BRENT: What is wrong with me? Why did I just let myself get suckered into considering an idea I know I don't like?

And worse, his mind adds, why don't I like it?

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EXT: KING'S BAY PARK  
EVENING

Claire brushes her hair behind her left ear, but still says nothing.

RYAN: Claire? You okay?

She gives a tiny nod, little more than a few rapid vibrations of the head.

RYAN: What's wrong?

She suddenly begins to walk off. He stops her by grabbing her arm. She flips around, breaking free from his hold, and he withdraws his hand as if catching himself.

RYAN: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to-

He finds himself staring into the complex and unidentifiable emotions whirling around on her face.

RYAN: What is going on with you?

CLAIRE: Look, I can't talk to you right now!

With that, she turns on her heels and stalks away. Ryan watches, completely baffled.

The night air bites at Claire's cheeks as she walks with rapid steps, but she hardly notices.

CLAIRE: How could I treat him like that?

She sighs, knowing the next question that is to come.

CLAIRE: But then again, how could I keep my promise to Tim without treating Ryan like that?

These questions squirm around inside her head, refusing to rest, as she walks into the night.

**END OF EPISODE #135**

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