

FOOTPRINTS

episode #141

a few days after [#140](#)

TEASER

EXT: FISHER HOME

MIDDAY

Dressed in baggy gray sweatpants and a red Old Navy fleece pullover, Jason steps out of his car at the curb. He looks up at the porch and jogs up to it with intrigue, forgetting his skating bag in the trunk.

JASON: What are you doing here?

Sarah turns, holding up her hands as a sign of confusion.

SARAH: I'm not sure.

Having reached the front door, Jason casts her an odd look.

JASON: Huh?

SARAH: Mom called me and told me to come over at noon. She said there's something I need to hear.

JASON: Weird ...

SARAH: What?

JASON: She kept double-checking that I'd be home at noon before I left this morning.

Sarah lowers her voice without even thinking about it, suddenly glad that she hadn't yet rung the doorbell when Jason arrived.

SARAH: What do you think is going on?

JASON: I have no idea ... Do you think there could be something wrong with her?

Sarah shrugs somberly.

SARAH: I guess we'll find out, won't we?

Jason flips through his keys briefly and finds the correct one. He looks up at his sister as he sticks the key in the lock and turns it.

JASON: I guess so.

Pushing the door open, Jason forges ahead into the house. Sarah lags behind, making the Sign of the Cross and moving her lips in hurried whispers as she follows him.

ACT ONE

INT: MORIANI HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

Nick strolls into the room and is greeted by the sarcastic screech of Judge Judy emanating from the television. Ryan, positioned on the sofa and totally focused on the program, is wearing an amused but goofy smile.

NICK: What kind of garbage are you watching now?

RYAN: Really funny garbage.

He laughs loudly as the words "You, sir, are a moron!" come shooting out of the TV.

NICK: What is this, some kind of circus in a courtroom?

RYAN: No, it's like "People's Court" - only the people are dumber and the judge gets to insult everyone.

Nick shakes his head.

NICK: I must be missing something.

Nevertheless, he takes a seat beside his son.

NICK: This feels remarkably similar to when you where a teenager. I didn't understand a thing you did then.

RYAN: Yeah, well ...

His face lights up, and it's apparent that an important thought has hit him.

RYAN: I didn't tell you about my visit to Claire yesterday, did I?

Nick's demeanor immediately turns grave.

NICK: No, you didn't - and honestly, I'm not sure if I want to know.

RYAN: What's that supposed to mean?

NICK: It just seems that Claire Robbins always manages to stir up trouble, which is something we could certainly do without right now ... although I suppose she does have a different name now, correct?

RYAN: Yeah, it's Fisher now. Dad, what is your point?

NICK: I don't like this ... fascination you've got with the woman! As I said, she seems to breed trouble. And do you really think you can win her back, anyway?

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

Tim and Molly's heads swing around at the sound of the opening door to greet Sarah and Jason.

JASON: Hey. Mom told you guys to be here, too?

MOLLY: Yeah. Any idea what's going on?

JASON: Not a clue.

SARAH: I just really hope nothing is wrong. Especially health-wise.

MOLLY: There couldn't be anything - could there?

Sarah looks over at Tim, who has been silently leaning against the mantel until this point.

SARAH: Tim, you were saying something about her acting weird on New Year's Eve, right? Do you think it might be connected?

Tim's eyes snap up from the random spot of carpet on which they've been focused, and it's clear he's grappling with serious thoughts.

SARAH: Tim? Do you think it might be related?

TIM: I don't know - I ... Where is Mom, anyway?

He is all too thankful for the change of subject.

MOLLY: Upstairs. She went up right before you got here.

SARAH: Would she just come down and tell us whatever she's gonna tell us, already?

The siblings exchange nervous glances, each uncertain of how to fill the stagnant silence.

ACT TWO

INT: MORIANI HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

Judge Judy has been completely forgotten amidst the escalated tensions between father and son.

RYAN: Yes, I do! Dad, between New Year's Eve and yesterday at the hospital, I swear, she's feeling more for me than she's letting on.

NICK: Maybe you're just misinterpreting the fact that she hasn't gotten a restraining order yet.

Ryan pushes himself to a standing position, not even bothering to flash back a snide look.

RYAN: No, get this: The reason she's been so distant with me lately is because her husband wants her to stay away from me. It wasn't her!

NICK: So from that you make the assumption that she's still in love with you?

RYAN: Well ... No, but ... I'm making progress.

Nick just rolls his eyes and tosses in a sigh for emphasis.

RYAN: What?

NICK: I don't like this, Ryan. For God's sake, the woman let her own father die - for this husband of hers, no less! If you ask me, that's a sign of a marriage that might be a little difficult to break.

RYAN: You're letting the fact that James was your friend cloud your interpretation of this whole thing.

She had every reason in the world to let him die!

Nick's only response is quiet.

RYAN: Besides, there's more to that marriage that I know. He's fooled around on her, I know - he has a kid with some other chick.

Interesting as this is, Nick can muster only a low "hmpf."

RYAN: I'm sure there are weaknesses there. I just need to find them and play on them.

NICK: Okay, well, let's assume you do somehow manage to get through to her. You're not going to be able to hide the fact that you really are in business with me forever. Don't you think that could be a complicating factor?

An undaunted Ryan is about to respond enthusiastically when another defense altogether grabs hold of his tongue.

RYAN: I suppose I could ask the same of you and Katherine Fitch.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

Four pairs of eyes jump to the stairs as the sound of footsteps awkwardly fills in the emptiness in the air.

PAULA: Oh, good, you're all here.

Her posture serves as a sign of the tension that is ruling her day: shoulders slightly slumped, hands folded in front of her.

MOLLY: Mom, what's going on?

PAULA: Don't worry. There isn't anything wrong.

SARAH: Are you sure?

PAULA: Yes, yes, I'm positive.

The rapid fire continues with the next desperate question.

JASON: Then what's going on? You said there's something you wanna tell us ... ?

PAULA: Yes.

She draws a deep breath, steeling herself for the words that are to come.

PAULA: There's something you all need to know.

ACT THREE

INT: MORIANI HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

Nick rotates his head so he's no longer looking at Ryan.

NICK: That's none of your business.

RYAN: Why not? You certainly haven't kept out of my business.

NICK: That's because it's a bad idea for you to be chasing Claire!

RYAN: Oh, but it's okay to drag a perfectly innocent woman into this type of life? God, if everything you've argued about Claire has any merit at all, it's that it proves she's tough and can deal with this stuff. Can you say the same for Katherine?

Nick has been leaning forward, but now he drops back against the sofa.

NICK: I'm not getting Katherine involved in anything. We're just friends.

RYAN: What a bunch of bull! You know as well as I do that the two of you are getting beyond friendship.

After a few moments of silence, Ryan makes an exaggerated gesture with hands and face, as if to ask, "Are you gonna say anything?"

NICK: What would you like me to say? That I don't enjoy her company? Of course I do! But I certainly don't plan on dragging her into anything dangerous.

RYAN: You're doing it just by spending time with her!

Nick would like to argue, but he knows he cannot.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

MIDDAY

Paula feels as though every ounce of energy in the room is fixed upon her as she begins her explanation.

PAULA: I've wanted to tell all of you this for so long. I suppose I've done a lot of stalling - saying it would be best left unsaid, thinking you might not be able to handle it ... But it's enough already. I have to do this.

Molly and Jason lock eyes, each trying to hide the worry that is sending a dizzying tingle through their stomachs and limbs.

PAULA: Now, I know this might make you angry at me, or make you think less of me, but I just can't keep it to myself any longer.

Tim cannot rid his mind of the scene from Thanksgiving. Can it really be true ... ?

PAULA: It was thirty four years ago, and-

Everyone basically jumps at the sound of the door opening. In a flash, Paula has fallen completely quiet.

Bill looks around, finding his four children gathered around Paula, hanging on her every word.

BILL: What's going on here?

ACT FOUR

INT: CAR

MIDDAY

Sarah's focus is hardly on her driving as she turns the car into her apartment complex.

What the hell was that all about?

The way Paula gathered them all and began to pour out her heart ... the way Bill ushered everyone out of the house so quickly. He looked outraged - he was trying to suppress it, but Sarah could tell.

This is quickly forgotten, however, as a more pressing matter overtakes Sarah's mind. She swings her car into a parking spot just in front of the apartment as the subtle queasiness she's been feeling all day suddenly turns to full-blown nausea.

Fumbling for her key with one hand as she dashes to the apartment door, Sarah uses the other hand to cover her mouth.

END OF EPISODE #141

[Next](#)