

## "FOOTPRINTS"

Episode #143

Time Frame: Shortly After [#142](#)

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### TEASER

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

NIGHT

The doorbell's chime is hollow as it is dropped upon the emptiness of the house. Its echo fades and, for an extended moment, elicits no reaction. Finally, however, Molly pads into the living room from the kitchen, the carpet soft beneath her quick-moving bare feet. She expertly undoes the locks on the front door and pulls it open.

MOLLY: Hi.

Her greeting is warm and welcoming, but by no means lacking evidence of the surprise she is feeling. She smiles - albeit a bit awkwardly - at Matt.

MATT: Hey.

MOLLY: What are you doing here?

MATT: Nothing, really, I guess. I was just looking for someone to talk to ... You busy?

MOLLY: Not at all.

She steps aside, wordlessly offering him an invitation inside. He obliges.

MATT: So what've you been up to?

MOLLY: Tonight? Absolutely nothing.

Three rapid-fire clicks signify the locking of the now-closed door.

MOLLY: Everyone's out doing something - my parents are at dinner, Jason's with his girlfriend ...

MATT: And you're just sitting here by yourself, on Valentine's Day.

Molly gives a nod and an accompanying "Pretty pathetic, huh?" expression.

MATT: Why is that, exactly?

MOLLY: What?

MATT: That you're all alone tonight?

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EXT: FITCH MANSION  
NIGHT

The door of Nick's Mercedes latches into place gently, a result of the owner's almost obsessive care. He adjusts his beautifully cut black suit and begins walking up the driveway, his gaze fixed upon the grand exterior of the mansion. He has taken but three steps, however, when a ring alerts him that he has a call. He pauses and withdraws his cellular phone from his jacket.

NICK: Nick Moriani.

As the threats on the other end of the line quickly kick into gear, a Valentine's date with Katherine becomes the furthest thing from Nick's mind.

NICK: Look, you said I could have until the end of the week-

He is interrupted.

NICK: That's ridiculous! It's not like we haven't done business before - Dammit, no! You will get the money by the end of the week. ... Goodbye.

His emphasis on these last two syllables adds a certain confidence to his message, and he ends the call with the push of a button. Inside, though, he is far less confident: What if they don't want to wait until the end of the week? And what if they do and I still don't have the money?

He does his best to shake these thoughts from his head as he resumes his walk up to the front door.

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INT: APARTMENT BUILDING  
NIGHT

The elevator doors have hardly opened halfway, and already Jason is out of the elevator and storming

down the hall. He's only been here once before, but he can remember the exact apartment for which he's looking. He steps in front of the door and gives it three rapid pounds with a tight fist.

The door is opened in a flash, and concern is painted all over Alex's face.

ALEX: Jason? What's wrong?

JASON: Why don't you tell me what's wrong - with you?

ALEX: Huh?

Jason holds up the pink paper heart that he found on Courtney's car.

JASON: What's the big idea, Alex? Going after Courtney now?

His body heaves with the heavy breaths of intense anger.

ACT ONE

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

NIGHT

Molly looks at Matt with perplexity, unsure both of how to respond and of the question's intent.

MATT: Are you going to answer, or are you going to just stare at me like I've got three heads?

MOLLY: No, uh ... What do you mean?

MATT: Why are you sitting here all alone tonight? Is there a specific reason? 'Cause it's not like you should have any trouble finding a guy.

MOLLY: Oh, it's not finding a guy that's the problem ... It's finding a normal one.

His expression begs for an explanation.

MOLLY: You sure you wanna hear this?

MATT: Only if you want to tell me.

MOLLY: Well, have a seat.

He sits on the sofa, still wearing his leather jacket. Molly moves two pillows to the middle of the couch and sits, leaving a cushion in-between them.

MOLLY: Let's just say I haven't had the easiest time with men.

MATT: You make it sound like you dated Charles Manson.

MOLLY: That's not too far off. To be honest, I haven't had that many serious relationships. The first one was really this guy Craig - we met, what is it, almost two and a half years ago. ... Jeez.

For a moment, she marvels in silence at the passage of time.

MOLLY: There was some weird stuff going on in my life then, and when I look back, I think I dove into things with him to quickly just to feel more secure about everything.

MATT: What happened?

MOLLY: We wound up engaged after only a couple months. Bad move.

MATT: Jeez, what is it with you Fisher girls?

MOLLY: Hmm?

MATT: I was just thinking, didn't Sarah and Brent get married really fast, too?

MOLLY: Yeah, they did. But thankfully, I didn't marry Craig.

MATT: You realized it was too fast?

MOLLY: I was starting to. But no, nothing that simple. He basically went psycho and tried to kill Brent and me.

MATT: Seriously?

MOLLY: Yeah. To make a really long story short, he wound up dying. ... And then came Brian, a few months later.

MATT: Was he nuts, too?

MOLLY: Not really ... Stupid, weak, maybe, but not crazy. He got involved with some stuff that really hurt my brother Tim, and that was the end of that. But he fooled me for months.

By this point, they are facing each other, using the center cushion of the couch as a knee rest.

MOLLY: After those two, I decided it was time for a break. I was tired of being everyone else's fool ... It was time I tried to find happiness on my own.

The discussion fades to silence as Matt studies her face.

MOLLY: What?

MATT: I was just thinking ... You say you've been on your own to try and find happiness. But I'm looking in those eyes of yours, and I'll be damned if that's happiness I'm seeing.

MOLLY: I didn't say I'd found it yet-

MATT: Maybe not, but I'm getting the distinct impression that alone is the last thing you want to be.

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INT: MARSHALL APT.  
NIGHT

Alex gapes at Jason in wide-eyed shock.

ALEX: What are you talking about?

JASON: This!

Again he waves the paper heart in front of Alex's face.

ALEX: I don't know what you-

JASON: Oh, can the crap, Alex! This is exactly what you wanted, isn't it? To make all of us crazy? It's just one big, stupid game to you, isn't it?

ALEX: Calm down!

JASON: No - not until this is settled, once and for all!

ALEX: Come inside, then! You're making a scene.

He grabs Jason by the arm and yanks him inside the apartment, shutting the door as quickly as he can.

JASON: Are you alone?

ALEX: Yeah, my mom's out of town.

JASON: Good, because I'd hate for her to hear what her little boy has been up to.

ALEX: What the hell are you talking about?

JASON: This-this Valentine thing! What are you trying to do, make all of us miserable? God, Courtney doesn't need anybody else screwing with her head. And Lauren - she thinks you actually care about her! Well, I do, and I'm not gonna sit back and watch you play this ridiculous game with her - or any of us, for that matter!

ALEX: Jason, I-

JASON: Shut up! God, why are you doing this? I thought you were supposed to be a fag!

The words are out of his mouth before he even realizes it. They immediately sink their hooks into the two young men, drawing their eyes together in the suddenly painful clarity of the silence.

## ACT TWO

INT: WINDMILLS RESTAURANT  
NIGHT

The graceful sounds of a recorded orchestra almost sound live as they float through the air, courtesy of the speaker system. The special day has packed the restaurant with chattering couples, and it is through a sea of people that Katherine and Nick are led to their table.

He pulls out her chair for her, and once she is seated, takes his own.

KATHERINE: Certainly a crowd here, isn't there?

NICK: I'm sorry I didn't choose someplace less busy. If I'd-

She halts his apology with a raised palm and a chuckle.

KATHERINE: Please, don't worry about it. It's rather nice to be among so many people.

Her demeanor shifts to sorrowful.

KATHERINE: I wish I was able to get out like this more often.

NICK: You?

KATHERINE: Yes ... At least, with people I care about. I'm tiring of talking antiques over tea with women who aspire to nothing more than what their husbands give them.

A reflective pause.

KATHERINE: They're taking it all for granted, but what worry is it to them? One day the husbands will be gone and they'll be left with nothing more than money. Stupid, useless money.

Her eyes flick up to Nick, as if suddenly realizing that she's not alone, and her usual composure returns.

KATHERINE: I'm so sorry. Why am I unloading all of this on you? I got carried away, I'm sorry-

NICK: Don't be. That's what I'm here for - or, at least, what I'd like to be here for.

Flustered, Katherine is trying to come up with an appropriate response. Mercifully, their waiter appears and takes Nick's champagne request. The waiter departs too soon, however; Katherine is left with nothing to do but smile and hope that it conveys just how appreciate she is of Nick's company.

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INT: MARSHALL APT.  
NIGHT

Alex swallows hard, but his eyes never move from Jason. His breathing has become slow, almost labored. He wants to say something to the effect of, "That was a little cruel, don't you think?" but he can't.

Jason is the first to break the stare. He turns away in a vain attempt to find something else upon which to focus. Remorse flickers within him - until he recalls what brought him here in the first place. Anger swells and snaps him back into battle mode.

JASON: Why do you look so surprised? Did you expect me to just forget that night forever, Alex? I was willing to put it behind us - before this.

Once more, he holds up the Valentine.

JASON: I'm not gonna let you do this to Courtney or Lauren! What kind of sick game is this, anyway? You're trying to play "Cruel Intentions" with us or something?

ALEX: I can explain-

JASON: No! Enough with the excuses. You like Lauren, you're not sure, you think you do ... You were drunk. Yeah, that was the best one. What a bunch of crap! You were in complete control of yourself after the party that night, weren't you?

Alex continues to stare straight at Jason, not even allowing himself to blink.

JASON: You weren't drunk, were you? You were just-

ALEX: Yes, I was!

His impassioned rebuttal is nothing short of a roar. It serves to freeze Jason completely.

ALEX: There is no way I would have ever, ever been loose enough to try something like that if I were sober! Don't you understand? That was me, all defenses down, all masks off!

His sheer intensity chills Jason from head to toe, and at least he sees why Alex was staring in such deliberate silence: He was doing all he could to ward off the tears that have now begun to run freely.

### ACT THREE

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)  
NIGHT

Molly rises, bringing a pillow with her. She clutches it tightly to her chest, as if it has suddenly grown much colder in the room.

MATT: You're not happy being alone, I can tell. Why? Is there someone you want to be with who you can't be with?

She takes too long deliberating his question, without even realizing it. In that space, Sarah's tearful words from the night they returned to King's Bay come back to Matt ...

*MATT: How can you just throw it all away, then?*

*SARAH: It's been coming for so long. I should've seen it - and I did. I was just too blind, too stupid-*

*MATT: To see what?*

*SARAH: The two of them. Him and Molly.*

*Her pain comes through so clearly that Matt pulls her into his arms almost instinctively.*

*MATT: What'd they do?*

*SARAH: They're in love, Matt. I know it.*

*MATT: How?*

*SARAH: They kissed!*

*MATT: Tonight? You saw them kissing?*

*SARAH: No. On our wedding night ...*

*MATT: Brent cheated on you with your sister on your wedding night?*

*SARAH: Yes. No. I mean, it was before we decided to get married. But I saw them kissing, I saw them together-*

*MATT: Then why did you marry him?*

*SARAH: Because I loved him!*

*MATT: Loved?*

*SARAH: I don't want anything to do with that bastard anymore.*

He shudders, trying to ignore the events that followed. He can't.

MOLLY: I'm alone because I haven't found the right guy yet, plain and simple.

He's tempted to ask if it's really as simple as she makes it sound, but realizes that it's not going to accomplish anything but hurting and alienating her.

MOLLY: You know, I could ask the same of you.

He looks up at her from his seat on the couch. In-between her comment and his "That's insane" expression, there is a split-second flash of the old deer-caught-in-headlights.

MOLLY: Why would you choose to give up everything in New York to move across the country all of a sudden? Do you like being alone?

MATT: Doesn't matter where I am, I'm still going to be alone. I don't have any family left, and after that whole thing with the jewels, I found out I really didn't have any friends, either. It was either stay there, where I had one real friend and a bunch of people with all these ideas about me, or find someplace new to start over.

MOLLY: So you came back here with Sarah.

MATT: Yeah, I figured, at least I'd know one person. Too bad it didn't really work out that way ...

MOLLY: Didn't work out what way?

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INT: MARSHALL APT.  
NIGHT

The apartment has fallen as silent as cold, clammy death. The breeze that has sprung up outside can be heard, as can the faint murmurs of conversation in the adjacent apartment. Alex's declaration is swirling in both the young men's heads, gathering another layer of meaning with each go-round, like cotton candy being twirled around a stick.

JASON: Just promise me you'll stop doing this to the girls. They don't deserve-

ALEX: Any of this. I know.

His voice has become nothing more than a sliver, a delicate thread that might at any moment snap, defeated.

ALEX: I never meant to hurt any of you. You've been so good to me - the best friends I've ever had, really.

JASON: I don't understand why you're doing this! You make Lauren think she has a shot with you, you send Courtney this ... love note, you tell me-

ALEX: That wasn't for Courtney! It was for Lauren!

JASON: What?

He studies the paper heart, as if the explanation has been there all along and he just missed it.

ALEX: Courtney told me to leave it on the car, since Lauren would be riding home with her.

JASON: Oh my God ... I'm a total idiot. I should've thought of that. It was just, after I came by to see Court the other day and she was with you - and then this ... I figured you were trying to ... God, I'm a moron!

ALEX: Don't-

He reaches out a hand and places it on Jason's shoulder to calm him. It lingers a fraction of a second too long before Alex realizes what he is doing and pulls it away.

ALEX: Don't worry. No one else has to know that you came over here.

JASON: Yeah, but I feel terrible for the way I barged in here and yelled at you like that.

ALEX: You were just sticking up for Lauren and Courtney-

JASON: No, I was looking for a reason to get mad at you. That's why I let myself jump to such a stupid conclusion. I told you - hell, I told myself - that I was okay with what happened ... after the party. But I wasn't, and I just used this as a reason to lash out at you. God, I'm sorry ...

He turns away, shaking his head in both disgust and embarrassment.

ALEX: Jason, if anyone should be sorry, it's me. I started this whole thing - I got drunk and I knew it was gonna screw up my judgement. I-I violated you! You have every reason to be totally disgusted with me!

The tear stains on his face have only begun to dry, and already more are on the way. They swell in his eyes, building one stinging drop upon another, before dribbling out in uncontrolled streaks.

ALEX: This is all my fault! I've spent so long going back and forth, telling myself how awful it would be if I let this out ... And then I just go and do it anyway and throw away one of the best friends I've ever had!

He bows his head in self-loathing.

ACT FOUR

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)  
NIGHT

Matt looks up to meet Molly's curious gaze.

MOLLY: It didn't work out what way?

MATT: Just ... with Sarah being there for me and all. I kinda figured we'd stay close, but I haven't seen her that much last few months. It's just like, I'm kinda alone, you know? I've been working these odd construction jobs and then just going home by myself. I sorta figured there'd be someone to hang out with - Sarah.

MOLLY: She's been busy. She's had a couple of small P.I. jobs, I know - plus she and Brent had a lot to deal with when she got home from New York.

MATT: I noticed ...

He pauses, caught on a thought and debating whether or not to vocalize it. His curiosity wins out, though.

MATT: I don't know if I'm intruding with this, but there's something I was wondering about.

MOLLY: What?

MATT: Sarah and Brent - have they ever really been stable? From what I've heard, everything from the time they got married up until now has been one big adventure.

MOLLY: There have been quiet times. Not many, but some.

MATT: 'Cause I was thinking ...

Another pause. Again, good judgement loses out.

MATT: If the whole marriage is such an uphill battle, why not just quit before serious damage is done?

MOLLY: I've wondered the same thing. But they would never give it up, either of them. They're too determined to make it work.

She sighs heavily, struggling to accept the weight of this reality, even after so much time.

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INT: MARSHALL APT.  
NIGHT

Jason's initial reaction is to console the whimpering Alex with a hand on the shoulder or a pat on the back, but awkwardness kicks in, and Jason's partly outstretched hand is left hanging like a dead fish.

JASON: Alex ... Don't beat yourself up over that. You were just drunk-

ALEX: No!

Pure, unbridled emotion tears out of him with the rip-roaring attack of flames springing from a suddenly ignited track of gasoline.

ALEX: It's not that simple, Jason! I know you want it to be - God, I do, too, more than anything! That's what I've been trying to do all this time - keep it simple, keep it in the back of my mind. But it just kept sticking itself right up there in front!

His speech is flowing so smoothly that it's as if he's not addressing another person at all. It sounds rehearsed, familiar - like Alex has turned it over in his mind so many times that the words have left permanent prints.

ALEX: So I thought, okay, I can deal with this. I just have to keep it to myself. And I tried - I tried so hard! But it just snapped that night. It was like it kept building up and building up and I had nowhere to get rid of it ... so eventually, it all just came flooding out.

He studies the blankness of Jason's face: the face that he spent so many moments giddy with joy over back when they met - jeez, practically a lifetime ago now. So much has changed since he first arrived in King's Bay, and for some reason all Alex can feel as he mulls it over is a gaping canyon of sadness.

ALEX: You should go. You've got plans with Courtney, right?

JASON: Yeah, but if you need me to hang around here-

ALEX: No, go. Be with Courtney.

He opens the door.

JASON: You sure?

ALEX: Yeah. Besides, I feel like I could really use some time alone right now.

Unsure of how to tie all that has happened tonight into a single phrase, Jason exits with a forced smile.

The moment the door is closed, a black curtain swings down over Alex's mind. Forget it all - at least for now. Just get some sleep.

Suddenly the thought of his bed is the most appealing thing in the world.

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EXT: WINDMILLS RESTAURANT  
NIGHT

Nick's Italian loafers come down on the pavement with a quick succession of sharp clicks. He draws a prolonged swig of the crisp air, the coolness reinvigorating him.

He turns to his right and smiles at Katherine.

NICK: I want to thank you for spending tonight with me. I can honestly say it's the most enjoyable evening I've had in a long time.

KATHERINE: Really, it's been my pleasure.

She grins, a hint of meekness showing.

KATHERINE: I want to thank you for inviting me.

NICK: And again, thank you for coming.

The end of his sentence is clearly a pause, as the next thought hangs on the tip of his tongue, weighing pros and cons. Tentatively he leans closer, cradling his tongue underneath his lower lip.

NICK: Happy Valentine's Day, Katherine.

Suddenly Katherine finds Nick's face a mere couple of inches away from hers. Without even realizing it, she begins to hold her breath down in her chest, in close proximity to her rapidly beating heart.

Nick's silver mustache bristles against her upper lip and the tip of her nose a second before his lips descend upon hers. The kiss comes as a sort of blast from the past for Katherine, but in the instant that it lasts, the gap of lonely time between this one and the last seems to close.

Slowly they separate, a twinkle of wonder in each of their faces. Katherine's lips, still moist from the

contact, part to speak - but the words are obliterated by the screeching of tires.

Both Katherine and Nick, as well as the numerous others standing outside the restaurant, begin looking in all directions. Just as the screeching fades from the night air, it is replaced by another sound: the spray of bullets. A terrified, collective gasp flies up as individuals drop themselves to the pavement in a mad panic.

In an instant it is over, however; silence stings the air, almost making the chaos seem to echo. Heads peek up and eyes dart around, assuring that the danger has passed. People begin to stand and emerge from their hiding spots, checking on each other.

NICK: Katherine, are-

The rest of the question dies on his lips. Sprawled out next to him, a pool of blood creeping out from beneath her, is Katherine.

END OF EPISODE #143

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