

"FOOTPRINTS"

EPISODE #146

[THE DAY AFTER #145, MIDDAY]

[Previously ...](#)

*Nick feared that he was to blame for Katherine's shooting because of his recent threats from the mob.

*Andy and Danielle argued over Katherine.

*Ryan kissed Claire and she lashed out at him, vividly remembering the rape.

TEASER

DANIELLE'S APT.-

Danielle locks the door and begins walking down the steps to the parking lot. For a moment her eyes scan the sunlit horizon, which looks nothing like the one King's Bay has been seeing as of late. She takes a deep breath of the almost-spring air, savoring the freshness that the rain and fog have held captive for so many months.

"Beautiful, isn't it?"

The voice takes Danielle by surprise and she looks down to the bottom of the stairs. Andy smiles up at her.

"What are you doing here?" she asks, taking the last few steps at a quickened pace so that they are face-to-face.

"I thought I'd come along with you," he says.

"To the airport?"

"Yes ... I haven't met your father or your brother yet, and everything's going to be so hectic with the wedding ... I figured it would be nice if I were there to greet them."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course," he answers, taking her hands in his. "Besides, I wanted to apologize for yesterday. I let myself get carried away by the whole situation-"

"I wasn't any help," she interjects, raising a hand. "I just egged you on and I was - totally insensitive about the whole thing. I'm really sorry."

"Forget about it," comes the response. It is followed by a soft kiss.

POLICE STATION-

"So you were with Mrs. Fitch the night of the shooting, right?"

Brent glances down at a notepad as Nick responds, "Yes."

"And you were on a Valentine's Day date?"

"Yes." Nick's voice is solid but without any trace of warmth.

Brent stands from his folding chair and looks directly at Nick across the bare white table of the equally bare interrogation room. "Would you please detail for me what happened when you and Mrs. Fitch left the restaurant?"

"We were talking, waiting for the valet to bring the car around. Out of nowhere I heard tires screeching, and a moment later several shots were fired. People started screaming and dove to the sidewalk for cover."

"And then?"

Nick returns Brent's glance, square in the eye. "When it was quiet again, everyone began to get up. I started talking to Katherine, but then I saw ... blood."

Mentally, Brent notes that this is the first time Moriani's voice has broken throughout the entire questioning.

"So that's it?" he asks.

Nick tips his head in a nod. "Yes."

Brent draws a deep breath and then exhales loudly. "Mr. Moriani, I need you to think about this next question." He pauses. "Do you have any idea if anyone would have any reason to shoot Katherine Fitch?"

MORIANI HOME-

The doorbell calls to Ryan across the empty house. He comes clunking down the stairs as it beckons again and opens the door before the chiming has stopped.

"Claire?" he says in shock. "What are you-"

"Shut up," she orders, pushing him out of the way so that she can come inside. She does just that and then turns to look him straight in the face.

"I want answers, and I want them now!" she demands. Her eyes burn fiercely into his.

ACT ONE

KING'S BAY AIRPORT-

As might be expected of a weekday at the end of March, the airport isn't exactly crowded. Still, Danielle and Andy find themselves weaving through people who might convincingly fail a roadside drinking exam.

At last, the couple arrives at the correct gate, and not a moment too soon. Travelers are pouring out of the tunnel and filling the area more quickly than people can rearrange themselves. Andy follows Danielle into the fray and takes an elbow or two as he does so.

"Dad! Josh!" he hears Danielle cry. A man whose brown hair is slicked back and shows little evidence of graying sets down a duffel bag and takes her into an embrace. Beside him is a blond-haired young man in his early twenties, wearing a white T-shirt that says "Abercrombie" in large, navy letters. Danielle promptly embraces him, too.

When she is done she motions for Andy to come closer. "This is Andy," she announces. The exchange of handshakes begins and she continues, "Andy, this is my dad, Bob, and my little brother, Josh."

Bob takes a look around and cracks a grin. "Every time I come to this town, I feel old," he laughs. "I guess watching your kids get married will do that to you."

Danielle, Josh, and Andy share in the joke for a moment. Danielle jumps right in afterward. "Should we go down to baggage claim?"

Everyone agrees and they begin walking.

"To think that this is the man my little girl is going to marry," Bob muses, giving Andy a pat on the back.

Danielle keeps her focus ahead as they walk.

POLICE STATION-

"No, I'm sorry." Nick bows his head.

"Not one person?" Brent's skepticism comes through loud and clear.

"No," Nick repeats, raising his eyes. "Granted, I don't know Katherine that well ..."

"You're sure?"

Nick gives him an expressionless stare before responding. "I'm positive," he says, keeping his annoyance in check nicely. He can tell Brent is trying to pry something out of him, but he'll be damned if he gives in that easily.

"All right," Brent sighs, opening the door. Light floods into the windowless room, for the moment seeming to overcompensate for the dimness of the single bulb hanging from the ceiling. It takes Nick's eyes several seconds to readjust after following Brent out into the hallway.

"Is that all?" Nick asks. He sounds patient, concerned - not a hint of the need he's feeling to get out of here.

"Yeah," Brent replies. "You can go." They shake hands stiffly and Nick is gone.

Brent just stands there looking as mystified as he feels. This thing isn't adding up - There's a factor missing, that much is clear to him.

"Is Moriani gone?" a voice asks, cutting into his thoughts. Brent turns around and finds Janice, a redheaded deputy, looking very intense.

"Yeah, he is. Why?"

"Because," Janice says, "we've turned up some stuff that I think you'll find very interesting."

MORIANI HOME-

Answers? What answers is she talking about? Ryan's mind roves for a split-second before settling on one thing. She can't possibly know the other ... can she?

His hopes are dashed the moment she opens her mouth.

"I know all about this thing with Katherine Fitch," she announces.

"What?"

"Come on, Ryan. I work at the hospital! Did you think I'd never figure it out? Besides, I'm friends with her son-"

"What's your point, Claire?" he asks with the bored tone of a businessman receiving a pitch he has already decided he doesn't like.

"Your father!"

The simple phrase sets off two alarms inside Ryan, but he quickly focuses on the more relevant one at the moment. "What about him?"

She huffs in frustration and throws her hands up wildly in the air. "That he's been dating her! That he was with her when she was shot!"

"Why would I ever think to tell you that? How was I supposed to know that you'd care?"

She struggles for words, so Ryan fills the gap with a few carefully chosen words. "Besides, I thought you didn't want to be around me anymore."

The sucker-punch knocks her down for a second, but she springs back to her feet. "I'm not here on a social visit, Ryan, believe me." She cocks her head ever so slightly to the right. "I'm here to find out what you know about Katherine's shooting."

ACT TWO

ANDY & DANIELLE'S FUTURE HOUSE-

Bob and Josh are staring up at the house in amazement as they step out of the car. No, it's not the most extraordinary place they've ever seen, but it's definitely impressive - and someone they know will be living in it.

"This is tight," Josh enthuses as he looks over at his sister, who is standing a few feet away, beside Andy.

Bob takes his eyes off the house and its equally stunning front yard as he asks, "So you two will be

moving in here right after the wedding?"

"Yep," Danielle answers. She feels Andy's arms wrapping around her and she allows herself to be taken inside.

"This is pretty impressive, Andy," Bob says with a chuckle. "At least we know you'll be treating her well."

"That I will," Andy says, planting a kiss on Danielle's forehead.

She slithers out of his embrace rather gracefully. "Why don't we take them inside? It's even nicer."

"Let's go," Josh says eagerly. He leads the gang up the current walkway to the front door as Andy flips through his key ring, looking for the right key.

POLICE STATION-

Molly catches sight of Brent coming out of an office and rushes over to him. "Any news?" she asks.

He ignores the question. "What are you doing here?"

"Lunch break," she explains quickly. Without missing a beat, she continues, "Anything else on Katherine Fitch?"

He deliberates for a fast moment before pulling her off to the side, out of earshot of the other people trooping up and down the hall. "I probably shouldn't be telling you this," he says, "but what the hell. I'll tell Danielle anyway, and she'll just tell you, so ..."

"So it's fine." Molly raises both eyebrows, urging him to continue.

"I finished talking to Moriani a little while ago," he begins in a hushed voice. "Nothing useful. But while I was in with him, a couple of others were looking into his background."

He pauses for dramatic effect and this elicits an "Ooh."

"Exactly. Turns out they've been trying to nail him in Chicago forever. Tons of good stuff - money laundering, drug ring, call girls, stuff like that. They've never been able to get him on any of it, but ... That definitely opens up the possibilities."

"Yeah, really," Molly says with more than a hint of surprise.

"Oh, and one more thing," he adds. "Guess who his known cohort was?"

"Who?"

"James Robbins."

MORIANI HOME-

Ryan tips his head up and back in offense. "Why would I know anything about that?"

"He's your father, Ryan. You must know something."

"Not really," he replies, shaking his head. "I told you, I stay out of my father's business entirely these days."

She challenges him with a raised eyebrow, but he doesn't flinch.

"Claire, why can't you just trust me on this?"

"You haven't exactly been the most trustworthy guy in the past!"

He sighs. "I'm really trying here."

"So you mean to tell me that when you went to the hospital the other day and you saw Katherine Fitch lying there half-dead, it didn't cross your mind that maybe your father's dirty business had something to do with it?"

"I can't say it didn't," he explains slowly. "But he told me that it was a random drive-by and I believe him."

She narrows her eyes. "Or you're covering for him."

ACT THREE

ANDY & DANIELLE'S FUTURE HOUSE-

Danielle stands in the midst of the vast sea of untarnished wood floor of the kitchen. Early spring

sunlight has dropped several window-shaped blocks onto the floor, turning it a lighter and more reflective shade of brown in a few areas.

Her hand glides over the tile surface of the countertop. *This is where I'm going to spend the rest of my life.*

With Andy.

"It's amazing, huh?"

His voice jars her and adrenaline darts through every last inch of her body. When she has composed herself sufficiently, she turns around and responds, "The house?"

"Well, yes," he says thoughtfully. "It is. But I was really thinking about the fact that this is the place where you and I are going to begin our life together, and in just a handful of days."

He folds her into an embrace. "Just a few more days to go. I can't wait."

Danielle is silent as she stands there in his arms, her head resting uncomfortably against his chest.

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

Nick's fingers dance a mournful waltz through Katherine's light red hair. His eyes do not move from the motionless snapshot of her face, frozen in time.

Frozen in time. The phrase hits him and an even more intense panic seizes his body. He finds himself wishing that her eyelids would flutter, or her lips would twitch, or something - anything.

"I'm so sorry," he whispers, leaning in closer. He doesn't have any proof of it - at least not yet - but the burden of blame has already assumed its place atop his shoulders. "I should have taken Ryan's advice. I should have protected you."

But I didn't.

He sighs deeply, breathing in the antiseptic air. That was a warning - a warning that I need to come up with the money. But how?

POLICE STATION-

Brent's news is enough to make Molly's jaw drop. "Claire's father?"

"Uh-huh," he says with a deliberate nod and the cocky grin of one who's uncovered the smoking gun. "One and the same."

"Wow." She widens her eyes for emphasis. "Talk about weird coincidences."

"I know."

Molly pauses, considering the question before spitting it out. "So, what, you think this whole thing is mob-related?"

He just shrugs awkwardly, trying to digest all the elements.

MORIANI HOME-

"Come on, Claire! You're being ridiculous!"

"Why?" She grabs the sides of her head. "My friend's mother is lying there in a coma and I think I know why. I don't see what's so ridiculous about my trying to confirm the hunch."

"It's not-nothing!" he shoots back. "But when I tell you I don't know anything, you should believe me!"

"I don't have any reason to believe you! Why do you keep acting like I owe you something? You're the one who-who did that to me!"

"Claire-" He cuts himself off. I can't. "Why don't you just leave, okay?"

"Fine," she spits, opening the front door.

The sunlight catches Ryan in the eye and he squints as he pleads, "I just want you to believe me. Believe that I've changed ...". He shudders at the words for so many reasons.

"If you've changed, then you'll do something for me."

"What? Anything." He immediately regrets the outburst, but it's too late.

"Find out about your father," she commands in a tone that he doesn't dare argue with. "Find out what he had to do with Katherine's shooting and let me know."

Ryan doesn't say anything. In what appears to him to be a blur, Claire exits. The forceful closing of the door snaps him back into just enough focus to make his stomach churn with worry. He only has one completely coherent thought.

Crap.

END OF EPISODE #146

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