

"Footprints"

Episode #150

[A Few Days After #149, Afternoon]

[Previously ...](#)

*Katherine remained comatose and Nick was certain that her shooting was a warning to him from the mob to pay his debt.

*Sarah decided to pass her baby off as Brent's, whether it is or not. When she mentioned starting a family, his reaction was unfavorable - so she kept quiet.

TEASER

MORIANI HOME-

Ryan's feet step through bars of sunlight, thrown with a sort of whimsical structure onto the wooden floor of the foyer by the tall, thin panes of frosted glass on either side of the front door. He reaches the border of the living room - where the wood gives way to a sea of beige carpet - just in time to hear the beep of the portable phone being turned off. He sees his father set it back on the receiver with great force.

Ryan wants to ask who was on the other end, but years of such incidents have trained him to hold his tongue.

To his surprise, Nick volunteers the information. "Two weeks," he says in a tone so absent that Ryan wonders whether he's even being spoken to.

"What about two weeks?" Ryan asks in a careful voice.

"That's all we have," Nick says, his voice still not much above a mumble. Then he looks up at Ryan, puffs his cheeks, exhales, and speaks again, more directly. "To pay the money. That was Esposito on the phone."

"Two weeks?!" If his father's reaction was understated and controlled, Ryan's is the exact opposite. "Is he nuts? How are we supposed to pull together-"

"It's not as bad as it sounds," Nick interjects. "I've taken care of a little more than a third of it."

"That's still a lot of money, Dad."

"I know," Nick sighs.

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APARTMENT-

Sarah looks into Matt's happy face. "What brings you by?"

"Nothin' much," he says. "You busy?"

"No, not really." Sarah steps to the side, freeing the doorway for him to come inside. He does, and as he walks past her, Sarah instinctively covers the tiny bulge at her stomach.

"No work today?" she asks, closing the door.

"Not that I'd really call construction a steady job," he says with a self-aware smile, "but no, I'm not working today."

"You don't sound too upset about that."

"That's probably because I'm not. You can't call that fulfilling work, Sarah. At least it's not for me."

He raises his arms up above his head and his elbows stick out to the sides. Sarah can't help noticing the twin bulges under the sleeves of his already snug T-shirt.

"I guess I just thought there would be more," he continues. "I'm wondering if maybe there is - somewhere else."

Sarah's insides tighten. "You're thinking of leaving King's Bay?"

"I don't know. Maybe."

"You can't!" she blurts out.

ACT ONE

MORIANI HOME-

"So what're we going to do now?"

Nick looks squarely at Ryan, delaying his response in such a way that it troubles the younger Moriani. "I haven't a clue," Nick finally says.

Ryan picks up a small wooden carving from a side-table. "How did we get into debt like this, anyway?"

Things don't usually get this out of hand this quickly."

"But they did." Seeing the anger in his son's eyes and the way in which he's holding the miniature statue, Nick takes the object away before continuing. "And now we have to dig ourselves out of it. That's business."

"Sometimes I wonder why we don't just do normal business."

"Because," Nick says in a voice that is just daring Ryan to challenge him further, "this is how we do things. And we need to take care of this before anyone else gets hurt."

"Are you sure Katherine getting shot had anything to do with this, Dad? We just sort of assumed-"

"And we assumed correctly. The way Esposito has been talking ... They did it. I don't necessarily know that she was intended to be the target, but what do they care?" Nick pauses and the thoughts flooding his mind are practically visible on his face. "If we don't put an end to this whole thing soon, Katherine isn't going to be the only one who gets hurt."

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APT.-

Matt eyes Sarah suspiciously. "Why not?"

"Because-" The strangeness of the situation hits Sarah hard. Here she is, urging him to stay despite the fact that his leaving would un-complicate things so much. "I mean, what's the point? You left New York to start over. Why should you do that again just for the hell of it?"

"I don't know," he answers. "I guess it doesn't make that much sense. But I'm like that ... I get restless."

"Be patient. I'm sure things will start to come together."

"I hope so." The weight of something more serious settles over him and he falls quiet.

"What?" Sarah asks, a little unnerved at his silence.

"No, I was just thinking of when ... when I decided to stay in King's Bay."

The incident to which he's referring quickly clicks in Sarah's head. Her eyes sink to the floor.

"I think maybe I let that influence me," Matt admits. "Even though you said it was a one-time thing, and

a mistake ... I guess I was still holding out some sorta hope."

Sarah's reservations about the topic crumble without her noticing. "Really?"

"Yeah ... I mean, you saw me the next morning. I was-It got to me. Especially after everything we'd been through in New York." He scratches the back of his neck sheepishly.

The moment feels like something out of Sarah's imagination, albeit perhaps its dark side. She just thought - hoped? - they'd mentioned it for the last time, that they'd both realized it needed to be buried. She knows she should steer away from the subject right now, but something about it is so alluring. "I wasn't exactly in the best shape that morning, either."

"Yeah, but you'd been through hell, with what you thought you saw with Brent and Molly ... and then the way I gave in to you. I had every chance to stop it and I didn't."

"I shouldn't have put you in that position-"

"But you did. And when it was up to me to make the right decision for both of us, I blew it." He reaches a hand out so tentatively that when it finally comes to rest on Sarah's shoulder, it is shivering.

She feels the electric of that night, the electric that has filled her dreams and nightmares for so many months. She sees herself stripping him of his clothes, attacking every inch of his naked body. She recalls her pathetic, disastrous attempt at making love to Brent the other night.

The electric pulses in the air.

ACT TWO

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

Nick is all too happy to slip inside the quiet of Intensive Care Unit 5. Moments ago, as he was weaving through the hospital's corridors, he could feel the eyes of the nurses and interns and everyone else burning into him, branding him with the hot steel of accusation and suspicion. Logically, he knows they weren't - not all of them; neither he nor Katherine is that high-profile. But he could feel it anyway, and he welcomes the lonely safety of this room.

Only it's not as safe as he was hoping. The guilt is stronger here than anyplace else.

"Katherine," he says in an uncharacteristically shaky voice. His footsteps fall with clear beats in a slow rhythm as he makes his way over to her bedside.

"I am so sorry this had to happen." Staring down at her startlingly pale face, he is sure he sees an eyelid twitch.

Hope swells within him - but it is cut off by the sudden, frantic beeping of machines that until now only seemed to him background decoration for the morose scene.

His heart begins to pound and he is quickly swept up in a sea of medical personnel.

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APT.-

As she draws a series of thin, fast breaths, Sarah's gaze drifts back up to Matt's face. It locks there. She watches as he swallows hard, the lump forcing its way down a throat that might as well be closed off.

He brushes away the strips of dark blonde hair that have fallen onto her shoulder and over his hand. His fingers ease up to her neck and slide around the back, providing a gentle cradle for her head as she tilts it back ever so slightly.

Awestruck though she is, she manages to lift a hand to his chest. It lingers there, unsure of its next move. Finding some reassurance in Matt's not flinching, the hand continues downward, grazing over the fabric of his shirt. It comes to rest at his waist and teases the button of his jeans for a second. Slowly it slips underneath his T-shirt and dances over his stomach.

Matt is finally allowing his lips to curl up in a slight grin when he sees Sarah's face go cold. The warmth of her hand, too, tugs away from his stomach.

He stares at her, feeling it inappropriate to ask what's wrong, even if his face is doing it for him.

She looks up at him with an unclouded expression. "I can't do this."

ACT THREE

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

The room is silent again. The doctors and nurses have gone, taking their urgent hollers and regulated tension with them. The machines have forgotten their frantic cries and have substituted the steadiness to which Nick has grown so accustomed in the past few weeks.

"I'm so sorry," he whispers again, taking his place by the bedside yet another time. Sincere as the words were when he said them earlier, they are weighted down now with so much more meaning.

Those terrifying few minutes when the doctors were scrambling to save Katherine took an enormous toll on him, he realizes. His mind feels weary, his muscles heavy ... and his heart just as tortured. He can't help but crack a smile at the irony of the situation: Even now, Katherine has outclassed him. She is lying quietly in the bed, looking none the worse after the scare they just endured, while those few moments put Nick through the wringer.

"You don't deserve this," he says as he leans in closer. "You didn't do anything to deserve it ... It's all my fault."

He closes his eyes somberly, and in doing so, he fails to notice that hers are now open.

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APT.-

Immediately Sarah turns away, clutching one hand over her mouth and the other over her stomach.

Matt reaches out a hand. "Sarah-"

"I'm sorry," she says, still not looking at him. "I never should have let this happen. I never-"

"Nothing happened," he says. "Don't worry. It's not like last time-"

"Yes it is!" she cries, swinging back around. "Or it would've been ... God, I can't believe I let myself ..."

"Sarah, stop."

She shoots him a helpless look, the look of a child who so desperately wants a parent to put away her misery but is seeing for the first time that it's just not possible.

"Don't get like this, Sarah. You didn't do anything wrong-"

"I almost did!"

"But you didn't. It's not that bad."

"It's horrible! I'm horrible!" The anguish rips through her voice so clearly that it chills Matt.

"What do you-" he begins, but it is now that he notices that her hand has not left her stomach. "No ..."

"Yes," she says, her eyes tearing just enough for it to qualify as crying.

"You're pregnant?"

A teary nod.

His lips start to form the beginning of a question, but they stop upon realizing that they have no idea what question they want to ask first.

"You'd better go," she says, already holding the door open.

"We need to talk-" But he knows that this isn't the time.

"I'll call you," she says, ushering him out without any formalities.

Matt lingers after the door is closed, knowing he can't go back but not ready to move on just yet.

END OF EPISODE #150

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