

"Footprints"

Episode #165

[A Few Days After #164, Early Evening]

[Previously ...](#)

*Sarah's family and friends learned of her pregnancy.

*Bill clashed with Paula and Jason over his motivations for wanting Paula to keep their secret.

*Andy wasn't sure how to deal with the news of Katherine's engagement.

TEASER

322 BAR-

Some song that Brent only vaguely recognizes fills the air, mixing with the smacks of pool cues against balls and the general murmur of conversation. Brent lifts his mug to his lips and takes a hearty sip.

"Well, look who it is ..."

Brent turns with something of a start but quickly relaxes. He offers Andy a halfhearted smile in greeting.

"Are you okay?" Andy asks, sliding onto the stool beside Brent.

"Yeah." Brent runs his finger along the lip of the mug. "Just thinking, I guess."

"Anything you'd like to run by me?"

"I don't know ..." But Brent hesitates only a second before beginning to pour it all out. "I'm gonna be a father."

Andy's surprise is evident. "Sarah's pregnant?"

"Yep." Brent takes another sip. "She's due in a couple weeks."

"What?"

"It's complicated. She didn't find out for awhile herself, and then she didn't know how to tell me ..." He can see the skepticism in his friend's face. "What?"

"I hate to bring this up," Andy says with apparent hesitance, "but aren't you worried that something's wrong?"

FISHER HOME-

"Is Mom here?"

"No, actually," Bill says, his hand resting on the open front door. "She went out with Helen."

"Oh. Mind if I come in?" Sarah asks.

"Of course not." Bill gladly steps aside to let her in, but he can't suppress a flutter of nervousness.

"Good." Sarah gazes around the familiar room idly, working herself up to the topic on her mind.

"Actually, I'm glad Mom's not here," she finally says. "There's a lot for us to discuss, Dad."

"I know. Things have certainly become a lot different lately, huh?"

"That's for sure." Sarah looks down at her ever-expanding stomach. "This is the first time I've seen you since ..."

"Since you told anyone."

Sarah sighs lightly. "Yeah. This is weird, isn't it?"

"That you're having a baby? I'd say so." Bill grins in amazement. "How are you, Sarah?"

"What do you mean?"

"You've sort of been lost in a lot of the commotion, it seems," Bill says. "So tell me, how are you? Are you all ready to become a mother?"

ACT ONE

322 BAR-

"What would be wrong?" Brent asks as if Andy's suggestion is the most ridiculous he has ever heard.

Andy is stumped. "I don't know. I'm just saying, are you sure there isn't another reason Sarah was so scared to tell you?"

"I'm sure," Brent says after a brief pause. "It was my fault, to be honest. I totally blew her off when she brought up having a kid-

"What'd you say?"

"That I didn't think we were ready for a baby. I mean, we just came through a really rough patch, and ..." He can't complete the thought. It strikes him that their separation - when Sarah was in New York with Matt - was about a year ago. And it's still creeping up.

Andy uses the lull to signal the bartender. After calling out an order, he turns back to Brent. "I'm assuming you heard from Danielle."

The vagueness of the statement puts Brent on guard. "Well, yeah ..."

"She called me the other night," Andy adds, sensing his friend's discomfort. "She told me about the tour."

"I'm sorry, man," Brent says almost instantly. "This has to be rough for you."

"It is. But it's a good thing, I think. If Danielle's not here, it'll be a lot harder for me to keep mooning over her. Who knows - it might even help me get along with my mother better."

The bartender delivers Andy's drink. Andy nods appreciatively and then says to Brent, "Speaking of which, have I got news for you."

"Oh yeah?"

"Definitely - my mother is engaged."

"As in, to be married? To who?"

"Nick Moriani, this man she's been seeing for a couple of months."

Brent nearly leaps off his stool. "You can't let her marry him!"

FISHER HOME-

"I don't know." Sarah moves over to the mantle and fingers the frame of long-ago family photograph. "In a way, yeah, I'm ready. I feel like I'm ready to devote myself to raising this baby."

"Good," Bill says. "Believe me, that's exactly what you'll need - devotion."

Sarah looks back at him, raising her eyebrows knowingly. "It's a commitment I'm willing to make. But I don't know if I can."

"Why not?"

"There's just all this other ...stuff going on."

"You mean between you and Brent?"

Sarah shrugs.

"How are things between the two of you?" Bill lowers himself onto the sofa. "I know you were having trouble a while ago ..."

For an instant Sarah wants to toss it all out there, to share with her father things that she's pretty sure he won't repeat. But she can't. "We're all right, I guess. No major arguments or anything. And he's dealing with this baby thing pretty well."

"Then why do you sound so uncertain?"

She turns back to the mantle, moving her eyes over the pictures aimlessly as she pulls together a response. "I guess I feel weird not having told him earlier."

"The way your mother explained it, you had your reasons," Bill says.

"I did. I really, truly did. But it seems like we've missed out on a lot now. You know, bonding and stuff ... It's like we're gonna be instant parents."

Bill pats the sofa cushion beside him. Sarah eagerly accepts the invitation.

"I know," Bill begins, placing an arm around his daughter's shoulders, "that this is a lot to deal with. But if there's one thing I've always believed about you, Sarah, it's that you're strong. You've never been one to crumble under pressure. So I see no reason why things would get away from you now. If anyone can hold all of this together, it's you."

Sarah sighs, resting her head upon his shoulder. "I hope you're right."

ACT TWO

322 BAR-

Andy reacts with an immediate blend of worry and intrigue. "Why not?"

"He's bad news," Brent says, trying to organize the facts leaping through his head.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm investigating him pretty heavily. To tell the truth ... okay, this is only between you and me-

"Of course."

"We think he may have had something to do with your mother's shooting."

Andy doesn't even notice his drink arrive. "What? How?"

"This is all pretty sketchy," Brent says, "but we think he's connected to the mob."

"Oh my gosh ..."

"Yeah." Brent pauses long enough to take a drink. "That shooting was just too ... random. Either someone was trying to kill Moriani or threaten him, I'm willing to bet."

Andy finally sees his drink, but all he does is stare at the glass's translucent contents as his mind works to absorb this all. "What makes you think this?"

"I don't know if you've heard about Claire's father, James Robbins, but he was pretty heavily involved in the mob. Nick was a close friend and probably a business associate of his. He's never been convicted of anything, but he's just been lucky."

"So what do I do?"

"Get your mother away from him," Brent says almost frantically. "Don't mention the stuff I've said - Moriani's getting suspicious already, and I don't wanna give him the chance to screw up the investigation."

Andy feels some twinges of annoyance. "So what am I supposed to tell her? She has to break the engagement because I've got a bad feeling about Nick?"

"I don't know. Just don't say anything that she'll pass on to him."

Andy props his elbow up on the bar and rests his chin in his hand, stymied.

FISHER HOME-

"It doesn't sound like you're so sure of that," Bill notes.

"I'm not, I guess." Sarah inhales, holds the air in her chest for a second, and then lets it all out noisily.

"It'll take you a little time to adjust to everything, that's all. You'll be a terrific mother."

Sarah lifts her head and smiles at him. "You don't know how much it means to hear that from you, Dad."

Bill returns the warm expression. "You know, I wish it was always like this."

"Like what?"

"So ... uncomplicated. I mean, yes, you're dealing with a lot, but it gets a lot easier when we just talk about it."

The weariness in his face is not lost on Sarah. "Are you comparing this to the whole situation with Mom?" she asks carefully.

"Yep. Can I ask you something?"

"Go right ahead."

"All right ..." Bill is convinced that he's going to lose his nerve as he begins to speak, but the question miraculously comes out complete. "Would you have been ... happier if your mom had just kept quiet about this?"

Sarah tries to analyze her feelings on the subject but finds them to be muddled. "I don't know. It would have kept things simpler, that's for sure-"

"Which is exactly what I've been saying all along."

"But," Sarah continues, "now that I know about it, I'm glad Mom doesn't have this whole hidden chapter of her life anymore. And it helped give me a lot of perspective on my own pregnancy."

"Really? How?"

Bill's question, asked innocently enough, makes Sarah freeze.

ACT THREE

322 BAR-

"Maybe you should talk to Claire," Brent offers. "She's definitely committed to getting Moriani and his son tossed in jail."

"Really?"

"Yeah, it's complicated. But maybe she can help you out a little. Give you some reason that doesn't have to do with a police investigation."

"I will." At last, Andy picks up his drink. "I'm surprised Mother hasn't picked up on anything suspicious yet. She's usually so critical of people."

"Like she was with Danielle?"

"Exactly."

Brent sets his empty mug down on the bar and motions to the bartender for another. "I don't know if it's my business to be getting into this, but ... It seems to me that your mother's pretty lonely."

"She is," Andy agrees.

"Which is probably why she hasn't found anything wrong with Moriani - she's trying not to. She appreciates the attention."

"You're completely right." Andy takes a prolonged swill, letting the beverage warm his stomach before he laments, "And that's why I'm already dreading having to tell her this."

FISHER HOME-

"I guess ... It just made me see that I had to tell Brent about the pregnancy," Sarah stammers in an uneven rhythm that she is sure will be a dead giveaway.

Bill doesn't seem to notice. "I just don't know what to think. I still wish she hadn't brought it up after all

these years, but ... I suppose she was entitled to do it."

"Completely." Sarah tries to make eye contact, to no avail. "Are you guys still fighting about it?"

Bill shrugs. "More like going in circles. She's got her opinion, I've got mine. I don't see anything changing anytime soon."

"Then maybe you need to be the one to make a move. It was so long ago. You guys made it through then, so there's no reason you shouldn't now. And whatever happens, we're still gonna love both of you."

Her words beat on Bill's brain as he tries to sort out the situation ...

END OF EPISODE #165

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