

"Footprints"

Episode #168

[Shortly After #167]

[Previously ...](#)

*Sarah gave birth to a baby girl.

*Ryan tried to convince Nick - and himself - that he and Claire are meant to be in each other's lives.

TEASER

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, LOBBY-

"I am wiped," Claire says, pushing a strip of dark hair behind her ear.

"I'm not surprised," Tim says. "Between keeping tabs on Sarah and running around working ..."

"Yeah, well, I'm done now. Give me five minutes to get myself together and we can get out of here." She begins to head off but turns back sharply. "Hey, do you want to go out and get something to eat?"

"Good idea. We can swing by and get the kids from daycare-"

"How about if we don't?"

"Huh?"

Claire tosses her arms over his shoulders. "Let's just go out by ourselves. We can get them on the way home." She stretches her neck up to plant a kiss on his lips. "It'll be nice to have some time to ourselves."

Tim repays the kiss with another. "Sounds good to me."

"Okay, then. I'll be right back." She turns and begins heading down a corridor - but stops when her name is called from the other direction.

Claire's eyes immediately go to the wall where the elevators are located.

"Claire!" Ryan calls again.

Her gaze jumps over to Tim, who is staring at Ryan unpleasantly. Tim's head cranes slowly over so that his eyes meet Claire's.

ACT ONE

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM-

Matt removes his hands from the pockets of his jeans as he takes the final few steps, quickening his pace slightly.

"Mr. and Mrs. Fisher," he says loudly to the couple standing in the middle of the waiting room.

A surge of familiarity strikes Paula as she and Bill turn, though she can't quite pinpoint it.

"Matt Gray," Matt says, extending a hand to shake both of theirs. "We met on New Year's Eve. I'm a friend of your daughters-"

"Yes!" Paula exclaims. "I knew I recognized you."

Matt smiles.

"Brent tells us you're the one who got Sarah here," Bill says.

For a moment Matt's blood runs cold and his heart feels as though it has stopped, but then he realizes that Bill is merely talking about today. He nods.

"We thank you for that," Bill continues. "If Sarah had been left to her own devices, she probably would have tried to get herself here all on her own."

The three share a knowing chuckle.

Matt then shrugs. "It wasn't any heroic effort or anything. It just so happened that I'd dropped by a few minutes before she went into labor, so I did what I had to."

"I hear you've been wonderful to both Sarah and Molly," Paula continues.

"They're both great girls."

"That they are," Paula says. "It's funny, they seem to always get along with the same men."

Matt can't help but avert his gaze.

ACT TWO

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, LOBBY-

Tim, Claire, and Ryan all stand frozen, the three points of a triangle with all sorts of emotions and questions surging across the lines that connect them.

"Hi, Tim," Ryan finally says, coolly. He takes a few steps forward, though not toward either one of the Fishers in particular.

"Ryan." Tim nods, his hostility obvious.

"Ryan, what are you doing here?" Claire asks after another silent spell.

"I just wanted to talk to you," Ryan says, casting a glance over at Tim.

"I'm-" Claire begins.

Tim interrupts. "Claire, go get ready. I'd like to have a few words with Ryan."

Claire is about to protest but she isn't sure how. She looks again at both men and shuffles off.

Tim waits until she is gone to say anything. "Look, Ryan, we need to get a few things straight."

"Oh yeah?" Ryan steps up so that he is practically in Tim's face.

"Yeah. I'm not sure why you're not understanding this, but Claire doesn't want you around. I'm amazed you can even show your face, after what you did to her."

For a moment Ryan's aggression fades, receding into sorrow, but then it flares up again, stronger than before.

"Look, Tim," he says, spitting the name, "I think you'd better stop confusing your own feelings with Claire's."

With that, he spins around and heads off - leaving Tim to consider that last comment.

ACT THREE

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, NURSERY-

Molly's fingertips leave behind smudges on the window of the nursery as she slowly pulls them away. She takes a step back, but can't leave, not yet. That little girl, the sleeping infant in the incubator marked "Taylor," is quite strongly holding her aunt's attention.

"Hey." A voice from behind is what finally pulls Molly's focus elsewhere.

"Hey," she says quietly to Brent, seeing him over her shoulder and then turning. "So, uh, how's Sarah?"

"Sleeping, finally. She's absolutely exhausted."

"I can imagine." Molly looks up from the scuffed tile of the floor to see Brent staring intently at the baby.

"Does it feel weird?" she asks at last.

"What?"

"Being-knowing that you're a parent. That from this point on, you're responsible for an entire life."

"It does, totally," he says. "It all sort of happened really fast, too, so that probably makes it seem even less real."

Molly's hands are now jammed firmly into the pockets of her khaki capri pants. "Everything's gonna be different now," she says weakly.

"I know." Brent doesn't look at her; he keeps his focus on the sleeping baby, on the thought of his wife, the new mother, so peaceful now. He is disturbed to find that the contentment he felt not so long ago is dissolving, giving way to resignation.

"I know," he murmurs.

Molly casts a final glance up at him. "I should get going. I, uh, I'll talk to you - to you and Sarah - later."

Her footsteps fall heavily on the tile, bouncing off the walls and filling the air of this unusually silent section of the hospital. After a few steps, she pauses and then turns. Brent tips his head slightly as he looks over at her.

"I forgot," she says softly. "Congratulations."

Without waiting for a reaction, she turns and continues on her way. Brent watches as she disappears down the corridor.

He rests his forehead on the glass and begins breathing slowly, very deliberately.

END OF EPISODE #168

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