

"Footprints"

Episode #172

[Shortly After #171]

[Previously ...](#)

*Matt realized that he might be the father of Sarah's baby. He agreed not to say anything to anyone until they are certain, but then he enraged Sarah by claiming that the baby is merely a tool for battling Molly - so much so that Sarah decided to tell Brent and sent a nurse to go get him.

*Brent and Molly discussed the tension between Molly and Sarah.

*Paula and Bill came close to reconciling but it fell apart when Paula insisted that she wants Bill to accept what has happened, not just forget about it.

*Coming to see Claire at the hospital, Ryan ran into Tim and the two had words.

TEASER

TIM & CLAIRE FISHER'S APARTMENT-

Claire feels a pair of hands reach around her middle and pull her backward just as she is reaching for the doorknob.

"Where do you think you're going?" Tim asks playfully, pulling her up right in front of him.

"Well, I was going to go to the store, but if you're going to be so forceful, I guess I have no choice but to stay here," she smiles back, looking up at him over her shoulder just in time to see his lips come in and snag hers for a peck.

"What do we need at the store?" he asks, releasing his hold so that she can turn to face him.

"A whole bunch of stuff. Paper towels, for one. And we have no bread, either."

"Ah ..." Tim sits down on the back of the couch. "How about we make a little deal?"

Claire comes closer. "What have you got in mind?"

"Let's say you put off all that boring stuff for an hour or so and we take care of some business of our own around here?" he suggests, grinning devilishly.

"I think we might be able to work something out."

"You think so?"

Claire leans in and allows her mouth to join his in a deep kiss. "I know so," she says in a half-whisper.

They kiss again, but suddenly Claire breaks it. "Hang on - what about the little monsters?"

"Sleeping sound. Have you forgotten it's naptime?"

"I guess so," she says with a lift of the eyebrows. "But I think we might want to take a hint or two from those kids."

"What do you mean?"

"Maybe we should head on into the bedroom ourselves," she says, pulling on his hand.

He's after her in no time at all.

FISHER HOME-

"Hi," Bill says awkwardly as he enters the kitchen.

Paula doesn't put down the pot she is scrubbing, nor does she turn off the running water. She just says, "Hello," without any warmth.

"What do you have planned for the afternoon?" Bill asks, taking a few steps closer.

"Nothing in particular," Paula says coolly, her back still to him.

"I'd like for us to talk, then."

"Why bother? You should have stayed at the restaurant for the afternoon. You're not going to accomplish anything by hanging around here."

"I don't know about that."

Paula snaps around. "I'm not in the mood to keep going in circles with you. If you're here for the same old argument, forget about it. I have better things to do with my day."

She begins to storm out, but he cuts her off by stepping into the doorway.

"You're not going anywhere," he says. "Not until you let me say what I have to."

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

"Are you really gonna do this?"

"I have to," Sarah says, looking over at Matt and then back at the door quickly. "This has gotten way too messed up, and you're right - I want Brent to be with me because of me, not because he feels like he's stuck with me. And the more I keep from him ... the greater my chances of losing him if all this stuff actually did come out."

Despite her actual words, Sarah's conviction in them seems far from solid.

"Just be delicate," Matt says. As much as he's wanted to have the air cleared, the only thing he feels now is fear - both for himself and for Sarah.

Both their hearts seem to skip a beat as the door opens. Brent hurries inside the room.

"Is everything okay?" he asks with concern.

"Yeah," Sarah answers somberly. "But-not exactly."

Brent looks up at Matt for some indication as to what is going on but finds that Matt won't meet his eyes.

Brent looks back at Sarah. "What do you mean, not exactly?"

"There's something we need to talk about ... something that's been put off for far too long already."

Brent's curious gaze, tinged with worry, is momentarily broken by another entrance.

"What's wrong?" Molly asks as she bustles into the room.

"What are you doing here?" Sarah snaps.

"I was over at the nursery, looking at the baby, and Brent was there and we were talking ..." Molly casts a glance over at Brent, as if to say, "See what I meant before?"

"Get out now!" Sarah orders.

Molly comes closer instead. "Sarah, if something's wrong-"

"I said, get out!" Sarah cries, louder than before. "Why are you always butting into everything? This is all your fault to begin with!"

ACT ONE

FISHER HOME-

"Fine," Paula says, yanking a chair out from the kitchen table and dropping down onto it. "Go ahead."

"I know I've been very hard on you these last few months ..." Bill begins.

"Yes, you have."

He is so badly tempted to fire back something harsh, but he reins in the urge. "It's time to put an end to it."

"I already told you what that would require," Paula says, "and if you're not willing to admit it, then there's no other way."

"I'm ready."

She has another argumentative remark ready to go and she must pull it back. "You are?"

"Yes," he says, taking her hand. "I was wrong to act like you had no business telling the kids the truth. As much as it affected me ... It was your mistake and it was your choice to tell them."

A sigh of relief, held back for so long, now comes tumbling out of Paula.

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

"What do you mean, my fault?" Molly asks, her voice rising.

"Exactly what I said - this is all your fault!" Sarah shouts. "You're always sticking your nose into everything when it doesn't belong!"

"What the hell are you talking about?" Molly shoots back.

"Calm down," Brent intercedes, stepping in front of Molly. "Stop it. She's still emotional. Just calm

down."

"No!" Molly hisses. "I want to know what this is all about."

"Let's go outside," Brent says, leading her towards the door.

"And there you go again!" Sarah calls out. "Taking Brent away from me!"

Molly and Brent freeze in their tracks. They share a brief but meaningful look. She couldn't be talking about ... ?

"You know, Molly, I wouldn't be surprised if you planned it this way!" Sarah continues. "Just like you probably planned for me to find you acting all lovey-dovey with Brent on the night I got back from New York!"

To Brent, the room seems to be suddenly spinning. He has so many questions to ask but he cannot actually form any of them into words.

"You're ... absolutely nuts!" Molly cries at Sarah.

"You're right, I am! And whose fault is that? With all the ... games you've been playing, it's no wonder!"

Matt steps in from the sidelines, placing a hand on Sarah's arm. "Take it easy. You're not gonna help anything-"

"You shut up!" she shouts, whipping her head around towards Matt. "This has all been kept quiet for way too long. I-I can't go another day living like this."

"Like what?" Brent asks nervously.

He notices that, as Sarah addresses him, her fury lessens. But her intensity does not. "Living a life that's a total sham!"

ACT TWO

TIM & CLAIRE FISHER'S APT.-

Tim uses two fingers to push Claire's dark hair back. "Did you ever think it would really be like this?" he asks, staring up at the bedroom ceiling.

"Like what?"

"So ... nice. For so long after we got married, everything was so nuts. You got pregnant, and then there was the thing with your dad, and then Diane ... there were just times I didn't think we'd ever get to the point where everything could be so normal." He sighs a sigh of contentment.

"I know what you mean," Claire says, snuggling up more tightly into the crook of his naked shoulder.

"You're happy, then?"

The question, asked in a somewhat uncertain tone, takes Claire by surprise. She pushes herself up and away from him, propping herself up on her elbow. "What do you mean?"

"There's nothing else you ... want, is there?"

"No!" Claire answers quickly. Then she adds, "Well, I mean, I'd like for us to buy a house and I want to move up at work-"

"Well, yeah. But you're happy with things here? With me and the kids?"

"Of course! Why wouldn't I be?"

Tim shrugs his shoulders. "I don't know ..."

Panic suddenly strikes Claire. "Did Ryan say something to you yesterday?"

Tim is somewhat surprised that she has gotten to the core of this so easily, and it shows. "Yeah, actually-"

"What'd he say?"

"Nothing, really. That's the thing. I guess I just thought ..."

"What?" Claire's breathing has grown labored with the speeding-up of her heart. "What did you think?"

FISHER HOME-

Paula's first instinct is to leap up and hug her husband, but she restrains herself. "Do you mean that, Bill?"

"Yes. You were right - the kids aren't looking at me differently because of this."

"I knew they wouldn't," she says, giving in to the urge and standing to embrace him. "Thank you so much."

"I had to do it," he says, returning the hug. "There was no way I was going to be able to live in the same house as you and not keep loving you."

"Thank you so much," she whispers, tightening her hold on him. She feels a lightness inside again, something that had become nothing more than a depressing memory over the last few months.

ACT THREE

TIM & CLAIRE FISHER'S APT.-

"I'm not sure," Tim says, his arm slipping off of Claire's body completely. "What he said - something about not confusing my feelings with yours - made me think that maybe ... I don't know, that maybe your view on him is different than I thought it was."

"It's not," Claire says forcefully. "Believe me, I'd like more than anyone to see Ryan and Nick Moriani behind bars for good."

Tim's muscles relax visibly. "I'm glad to hear that."

"I hate them. After what Ryan did to me-" Her speech breaks momentarily as the scattered, terrifying memory comes flooding back in full. "And the way he's been hounding me, too. I've told him that we don't have any sort of future, but he's not taking the hint."

"Tell me if you have any more run-ins with him," Tim says. "I want to be able to protect you. This guy is obviously dangerous."

"Well, it's not like I'll never see him-"

"No, but you shouldn't have any one-on-one contact with him. It's not safe, Claire. And it's not smart, either."

The comment sinks in deep, despite her efforts to brush it off. "I just really want to see him and Nick put away for good. I'm positive that Nick is mixed up in something funny, and Ryan ... He says he keeps out of Nick's business entirely, but still ..."

"Let the police take care of it," Tim says soothingly, taking her into his arms again now that this bump in

the road has been cleared. "Just steer clear of the Morianis. There's no need for you to be in danger like that anymore."

With her head resting on his bare chest, slowly rising and falling with the rhythm of his breathing, Claire can't help feeling torn between two very opposite desires.

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

Despite the paralyzing tingling that has overtaken his body, Brent manages to ask, "What do you mean, a sham?"

"I don't know what the deal is with you, Brent," Sarah says, "but I'm through pretending that Molly isn't a problem."

Sarah pauses, seemingly waiting for some kind of response so that she can forge ahead, but everyone else has been left speechless.

"The night I got back from New York-It was a couple of nights before I actually came home," Sarah explains, cloaking her words in a tenuous calm. "I went into the apartment and I saw the two of you, out on the porch. You"-she points at Brent-"were saying that you thought maybe our marriage was over. And Molly was just egging you on."

Molly plants her hands on her hips. "So you just ran off?"

"I wasn't about to sit there and watch you badmouth me to my husband!"

"Well, you could've told us you were there!" Molly shouts. "Where'd you run off to, anyway?"

"Stop!" Brent interrupts. "Whatever this is - we can deal with it later. I thought there was something that you needed to see me about, Sarah."

"Not until she gets out," Sarah says through gritted teeth, a cold gaze fixed on Molly.

"Don't you talk to me like that-"

"Shut up!" Sarah shrieks. "This is all your fault! Can you please just leave us alone for two minutes? You've done enough damage - if it weren't for you, I wouldn't be in this mess ..."

A muddled mixture of concern and confusion propels Brent to ask, raggedly, "What mess?!"

"The baby!"

"What about the baby?"

"She's not ..." Sarah draws a deep breath, every fiber of her body trembling.

Brent leans in closer. "She's not what?"

Sarah exhales slowly, her eyes fixed on the wall ahead of her. "She's not yours."

END OF EPISODE #172

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