

## "Footprints"

Episode #175

[Immediately After #174]

### [Previously ...](#)

\*Sarah confessed to her parents and Jason that her marriage may be on shaky ground because the baby may not be Brent's.

\*Claire's trust of Ryan grew less and less. Tim continued to worry about her involvement with the Morianis.

\*Ryan was shocked by who he found when he answered the doorbell.

## TEASER

### BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APARTMENT-

Sarah's mind is bursting with thoughts and yet they are all leading her back to the same place. She tries unsuccessfully to brush it all aside, as she has been doing throughout the entire drive back home. She finds the correct key on her ring and slides it into the door.

The lock, she finds, is already undone. Did I forget to lock it? she wonders as she turns the knob slowly. Her cop's instincts kick in as she slides the door open noiselessly.

Part of her wants to call out but she knows it would not be the wisest move. She takes a careful step inside, leaving the door open.

She almost immediately becomes aware of noise that seems to be coming from the back of the apartment. It sounds like ... rummaging.

She is trying to decide upon her next move when the intruder beats her to it, appearing in the hallway.

"What are you doing here?" she asks in shock.

\*\*\*

### TIM & CLAIRE FISHER'S APARTMENT-

"Stop!!!"

The terrified cry comes blasting out of the master bedroom. The spoon that Tim is using to feed Samantha drops to the floor as he jumps to his feet.

"Claire?" he calls out, hurrying into the bedroom. "What's wrong?"

He finds his wife lying on the bed, writhing around on top of the sheets. Her eyes are clenched closed.

"No!" she shrieks.

"Claire!" He rushes to her side and seats himself on the edge of the bed. "Claire, wake up!"

The fog of her afternoon nap begins to lift and slowly, with a few groans and some more twisting around, she awakens.

The feeling that something is wrong strikes her immediately and her eyes pop open wide and she sits up. "What's wrong?" she asks, further worried by Tim's concerned expression.

"You were having a nightmare," he says. "That's what it sounded like."

"Was I screaming?"

"Yeah."

"I can remember it." She falls back onto the pillow and rubs her eyes. "That's weird. I was yelling 'No!,' right?"

"That was the last thing you said, yeah."

"Oh my gosh," she says, shaking her head. "That was terrible ..."

"Why? What was it about?"

She isn't sure if she should tell him.

\*\*\*

MORIANI HOME-

A rush of emotions attacks Ryan as he stares at the face in front of him. "What are you doing here?"

"Am I not allowed to visit?" the man asks with a clueless grin.

"No, but ... I didn't expect to see you!"

"I'm just full of surprises."

"Apparently," Ryan says. The end of the word trails off, dying a lazy death as he grapples with his shock.

"So are you glad to see me?" Stan asks.

## ACT ONE

### BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APT.-

"I just needed to pick up some stuff," Brent says.

"Oh." Sarah finds herself trying to conceal her disappointment.

"I'll be gone in a few minutes, don't worry," he announces as he heads back into the bedroom.

Sarah is silent for a moment before she takes off after him. "Brent, wait."

He stops cold. "Why?"

"Because ..." She kneads her hands together. "We have to talk."

His only response is to grasp his upper lip with his front teeth.

"Please, I want to talk this out," she says. "Stay."

Her stomach twists as she tries to read his face in anticipation of his response.

\*\*\*

### MORIANI HOME-

"I-Yeah, of course," Ryan stammers. He motions for Stan to come inside and quickly shuts the door.

"You okay?"

"Yeah," Ryan says. "Yeah. It's just - I'm surprised to see you, that's all."

"I thought you would be," Stan replies proudly.

"My fa-Nick - he didn't see you coming in, did he?"

"Nope. I saw him leaving so I hung out on the other side of the driveway until he was gone."

"Okay, good." Ryan rubs the back of his neck, which is suddenly tight with tension.

"Would it be that bad if he saw me? Would he even care?"

Ryan cannot answer the question. "It's just not a good idea, all right?"

"Fine, whatever," Stan shrugs. "Look, this wasn't just a random drop-in. There is a reason I'm here."

"What is it?"

"Well, I need a favor ..."

## ACT TWO

TIM & CLAIRE FISHER'S APT.-

"It was nothing," Claire says, moving to get up.

Tim stops her. "No, it was definitely something. I can tell."

"Tim ..." she begins. But all of a sudden, she wants to tell him. She wants to share this with someone - Tim, in particular.

"I was having a nightmare about the-about when Ryan-"

It takes a second for the facts to click in Tim's head. "The ... rape?"

She nods.

"Oh, God." He wraps his arms around her and pulls her close. He feels as though he should be saying something else, though he can't fathom what that might be.

"It was terrible," she gasps. "It was like it was happening all over again ..."

He can see the waves of memory washing over her and he pulls her closer. "It's okay," he says. "You're safe."

Her breathing is still heavy. Tim strokes her hair softly, doing whatever he can to soothe her.

"I don't know where it came from," she says. "All of a sudden - there it was. Like I was there again, all those years ago, and ... I haven't had a real nightmare about it in so long, Tim. Not like that."

"It's not something that just goes away."

"I know. I know ... But I thought I was past it. I made myself get past it ..."

"Did you ever tell anyone about this?"

"No. I mean, Ryan, but ... no one else. I couldn't tell my father. And I wanted to tell my mom, but the time was never right and ... You were the first one I told."

"I'm so sorry," he says. "Sorry that you had to go through this at all - sorry that you had to go through this alone." He continues petting her hair, though she doesn't even seem to be aware of it.

"Tim, could you ... could we ..."

"What?"

"Could we talk about it? I just ... I need to." She looks up at him with moist eyes. "Would it bother you?"

As much as he wants to say "of course not," as much as her sniffles and her tight embrace are affecting him, he doesn't know what he is going to say.

\*\*\*

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APT.-

"There's nothing to talk about," Brent says, opening up his palms to her.

"Of course there is!" Sarah counters. "Maybe we can-"

"What? Maybe we can what, get back on track? Put all of this behind us? Is that what you were gonna say?"

She fumbles for words.

"It's not gonna happen, Sarah! It's too late for everything to be perfect again!"

"Brent, it can't end like this! I love you! I want to be with you! Doesn't that count for anything?"

"It would," he huffs. "It would, if I could really believe it. But the moment you hopped into bed with Matt, you broke that trust. And every time you neglected to tell me the truth about the baby - you tore apart my faith in you over and over again."

"I told you myself! I didn't hang on until you found out and then try to hide it-"

"You might as well have! Do you realize what you did? You threw away our marriage vows!"

"Don't you dare try and play that card with me!" she shouts, index finger pointed sharply at him. "Don't even pretend that you were giving this marriage everything you had and I'm some ungrateful tramp who threw it all away without a second thought! Don't you dare!"

"I never said any of that," he chokes. "But you need to understand the seriousness of what you did, and why we can't just go back to normal."

"I do understand! I want you to understand why I did it in the first place! Brent, if you're gonna hold my mistakes against me, at least own up to yours."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Just admit it," she says through gritted teeth. "Admit that there's something going on between you and Molly."

## ACT THREE

### MORIANI HOME-

The tone of Stan's voice puts Ryan even more on-edge. "What kind of favor?" he ventures tentatively.

"Nothing huge," Stan assures him. "I just need to borrow some cash."

"How much?"

"I dunno, a couple thousand."

"A couple thousand?" Ryan feels something similar to relief - he knows that there is no way he can wind up feeling torn here. "I wish I could help you, but-"

"But what?" A desperate look falls over Stan's face. "Ry, I need some cash - fast."

"I don't have any cash."

"Huh?" Stan surveys the interior of the house from his post in the doorway. "You and the big guy are livin' here and you got no cash?"

"No." Seeing Stan's skepticism, Ryan adds, "We owe some people some money, too. I don't have that kind of money to hand out, not right now."

"I need this money, Ry! I got myself into some trouble and-"

"I don't have any money to give you!"

"Yeah, you do! You hafta! C'mon, Ry, just this one little favor."

Something inside Ryan bursts. "Look, I've done you enough favors, okay?" he blurts.

\*\*\*

TIM & CLAIRE FISHER'S APT.-

"Sure," Tim finds himself saying. He holds Claire in silence for as long as he can, but he knows that he has to be the one to speak. "So, uh, what-what do you want to talk about?"

"I don't know." She moves to get up. "Nothing, I guess. This is stupid."

Tim holds her down with gentle force. "No. Claire, I want to hear about this."

She responds with a puzzled look.

"Okay, maybe those are the wrong words," he says. "But this is something that exists - not talking about it won't make it go away. I want to be able to help you deal with it."

She nods, staring off at the opposite wall.

"So what happened?" he asks. "Why did Ryan ... do that?"

"I don't know. I mean, I guess I was sort of leading him on - things were getting pretty hot and heavy. But then I tried to stop it, I think."

"You think?"

"Yeah ... I don't really remember. I remember before, when everything was fine, and I remember waking up afterward, but the whole thing is just kind of a blur. It's just colors and screaming and stuff. Nothing that I can really see."

"It's probably better that you don't remember."

"I guess." She sighs. "But it doesn't mean I can't have nightmares about it. My mind has no trouble piecing it together - I have no idea if that's what it was actually like or not, but I've kind of developed a ... vision of what it was like."

"I can't believe you've had to live with this all these years," he says. "And I've known for what, three years? I haven't exactly been supportive."

"You didn't know."

"Still ... Just thinking that you've lived with this for so long, all alone. It's - it's scary. To think that someone could do something like that to you and completely change your life for the worse - it's disgusting." His hand runs down her straight, dark hair slowly. "Have you ever thought of pressing charges against Ryan?"

## ACT FOUR

### BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APT.-

"This isn't about Molly!" Brent shouts. "Stop with that! It's about whether or not I can trust you."

"I would think you could," Sarah says. "Yeah, I screwed up, but then I came and told you about it."

"After months of lying!"

Sarah's protest rises with her shoulders and then falls with a deep exhale.

"It's just ... it'll take time," Brent says. "I don't know how much or how long or anything. Just let me see."

"So what am I supposed to do, hang on waiting?"

"Oh, you want to talk about hanging on and waiting? How's this - a couple of days ago I had a daughter, and now I'm waiting to find out if she's actually mine!" His gaze burns into her as he fires the words.



Her eyes drop to the floor. "I'm sorry."

"You should be!" He turns around and reaches his hands up to grab the top of the doorframe. "Can you just let me finish getting my stuff together?"

"Fine, yeah." She begins to head back into the living room. "I'll go back out and let you finish in peace."

"Good."

The chilliness of this one word gives Sarah momentary pause. Finally she gathers the strength for a final statement.

"Just keep one thing in mind, Brent: There's a good chance that we do have a daughter together."

And with that, she exits.

\*\*\*

TIM & CLAIRE FISHER'S APT.-

"Well, yeah," Claire says. "Of course. But I couldn't. And I can't."

"Why not?"

"Because ... I don't remember clearly. I know it happened, but there would be a million ways to shoot that down in court. And the last thing I want is to come off looking like an idiot."

Tim shakes his head. "You should make him pay for this."

She looks up at him now. "I will. Tim, I'm convinced that Ryan's been hiding something big from me."

"What do you mean?"

"He swore to me that he has nothing to do with Nick's business, that he doesn't even know anything about it," she explains. "But I'm feeling more and more like Ryan's lying about that."

"So what does that mean for you? It just means he's more dangerous."

"And it also means that he has a lot more to hide from the police."

"Ah ..." Tim tips his head back and then snaps it forward. "So what are you gonna do, play Nancy Drew

until you find something good enough to get him in trouble? That doesn't sound like the best plan to me--"

"Just trust me," she says with an almost eerie calm. "Everything will work out. I'll make sure of it."

\*\*\*

MORIANI HOME-

"What favors?" Stan asks, his eyes narrowing under a crinkled brow.

"Lots of stuff." Ryan tries to shake off the inquiry, recognizing the mistake in his outburst.

"Like what?"

"Nothing." He refocuses and looks Stan straight in the face. "Look, I appreciate you dropping by, but I've got stuff to do. Maybe we can get together sometime? Are you going to be in town long?"

"Maybe," Stan shrugs. "I'll be in touch, okay?"

Ryan nods and watches as the man makes his way down the concrete steps and down the driveway. Stan disappears out of sight before Ryan closes the door.

He allows the floodgates in his head to open now. As he leans against the door, everything comes rushing to the forefront of his mind. That visit should have left him feeling pleasantly surprised - a little frazzled, perhaps, but pleased.

But it hasn't. He just feels ... the closest thing he can think of to describe it is foolish.

He's the one I'm protecting, Ryan thinks. It's not Claire and it's sure as hell not me. And he has the nerve to come in here and act like I owe him something-

"Why am I doing this to myself?" he wonders aloud. "Why am I still protecting him?"

END OF EPISODE #175

[Next Episode](#)