

"Footprints"

Episode #190

<Immediately After #189>

[Previously ...](#)

**Tim was shot by the mobsters at the pier.*

**Pushed to his limit, Ryan broke down and shouted at Claire that he didn't really rape her.*

**Andy received a ride to the wedding from Maggie, the woman whose car he hit. He arrived too late, however, and Nick and Katherine were pronounced husband and wife.*

**Alex surprised Lauren with a New Year's kiss.*

**Brent was unable to kiss Sarah at midnight.*

FITCH MANSION

"I now pronounce you husband and wife."

Andy cannot move. Hearing that line spoken aloud seems to have paralyzed him. There is a finality to it that hits him harder than he imagined it would or could. Suddenly, the hope -- the fantasy -- of rushing in and stopping the wedding is shattered. His mother has been bound to this man, and now ... This can't be happening.

He hears himself let out a distressed "No!," but it sounds somehow hollow to his ears.

The congregation shoots around to stare at him. He knows they are looking, but his focus is too strongly locked upon Katherine and the look she is giving him. It is a glare, to be sure -- a colder glare than he has ever seen her give anyone. Even at the height of her hatred for Danielle, Katherine never looked at her this way.

A chill rocks Andy's body. He watches, as if through a fog, as Katherine gives the minister the okay to continue. She and Nick kiss, a sight that truly terrifies Andy. And the processional music begins to play as the newlyweds start on their way down the aisle and towards him.

He can tell that Katherine is avoiding eye contact with him, almost as if she is pretending that he is not there at all. But he is able to catch her eye -- and that same chilly glare -- and he holds it until she and Nick are just in front of him.

"Don't do this, Mother," he says, his voice heavy with something that is closer to warning than pleading. "Don't leave with him."

He thinks he sees a flicker of hesitation in Katherine, but it vanishes as quickly as it

materializes. She lifts her chin. "Please leave," she says, her voice maintaining that same steady chilliness as her stare. "I won't have you ruining my wedding day."

With that, she leads Nick through the curtains. At the last moment, Andy searches Nick's reaction for something -- a clue, a sign, anything -- but the man holds a stiff expression, showing nothing more than faint disapproval and perhaps sympathy for his bride.

A moment later, Andy pushes his way through the curtains as well, before the rush of guests can overwhelm him. He flies right past Katherine and Nick, not wishing to give them even another look, and storms out of the mansion.

Once he is on the porch, he draws out his cellular phone and dials frantically. But the only response he receives is ceaseless ringing ...

MORIANI HOME, CELLAR

Claire's phone rings and rings out on the driveway. In the cellar, the sound is faint but still audible -- or would be, if any attention were being paid to it.

Ryan's revelation has sucked all the air out of the room. This is certainly true for Claire, who feels as though she suddenly cannot breathe.

He cannot wait any longer for a response. "Are you going to say anything?"

"What do you want me to say?" she finally manages, almost amazing herself. "I'm standing here watching you go completely nuts--"

"I'm not going nuts." He crinkles his brow and bites his lower lip. His eyes bleed desperation. "I'm just -- that was a lot to get out. It was a lot to be carrying around ..."

"Will you just stop it?" she roars.

"Stop what?" Frustration and disbelief hit him all at once, and the desperation in his expression multiplies before Claire's eyes.

She doesn't want to allow him the chance to act on it. "Stop with this garbage!" she yells at him. "Stop playing these games!"

"It's not a game." He grabs her hand, but she jerks it away. "I'm telling you the truth, Claire. I didn't rape you."

"Look, I don't know what the hell you want from me now, but this isn't funny--"

"I'm not trying to be funny!" he cries, stomping his foot heavily. "This isn't some move I'm making to see where I can get with you! I'm telling you the truth. Finally -- finally, after how many years -- you're getting the truth."

She seems to be studying him, perhaps searching for some sign of whatever the truth might be. All he notices is how quiet she is -- not just her lack of speech, but also the timid half-gestures she makes as she works at a response.

"You have to believe me, Claire."

After what seems to Ryan an eternity of seconds, Claire lets out a nasty little chuckle. "Believe you? Why in the world would I even consider that?"

"I'm telling you the truth!"

"Do I look stupid? After this many years, you just up and decide to drop this on me?"

"I swear, I didn't ... I didn't rape you."

"So I just imagined the whole thing, huh?" Claire folds her arms in front of her. "And you thought it would be a good idea to go along with it. Is that how it happened?"

"No--"

"This is ridiculous, Ryan! Do you have any idea how insulting it is to me to even suggest that I wasn't raped? Are you trying to tell me that the nightmares I have aren't real? That every time I feel you pushing me down--"

"It wasn't me!"

There is something raw about Ryan's fiery protest that catches Claire off-guard. A moment passes before she composes herself enough to shoot back at him, "Then who the hell was it?"

"Stan!"

The name is out of Ryan's mouth and past his lips before he even realizes it. It hangs in the air between them, Claire struggling to make sense of any of this and Ryan trying to grasp the fact that he just invalidated so many years of secrecy.

PIER 20

Tim feels the shot ripping through his body, though he isn't sure if he actually feels it or if his body is recalling the feeling. The pain dims everything, but the glint from the gun as the moonlight as it was hit by the moonlight sticks in his vision even as everything else fades to black.

His body falls backward and hits the pier with a thud, a noise that sounds somehow off in the distance to him. The pain from the impact doesn't register. His body suddenly feels as dim as his vision.

He can hear the men rushing off, their footsteps pounding across the pier, away from him, and eventually off to someplace that doesn't exist to him right now. He realizes that he needs to breathe, but the process is too painful and simply too much work. He tries to maintain a pattern of quick, light breaths.

He tries to roll over, thinking that maybe he can crawl someplace where he will be seen, but he knows even as he attempts this that it is not going to happen. His body sags down to the pier again.

A river of blood swims out from under him, creeping towards the edge of the pier and into the bay ...

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

Alex's soft lips leave Lauren's far too soon. As they slowly separate, she reaches out for another taste, hoping to hold onto this moment. She can feel Alex responding and the kiss is renewed.

She savors those last, lingering seconds before their lips part for good. When they have separated, she finds herself holding onto Alex's forearms and looking him directly in the eyes.

It takes a moment for his eyes to come up and meet hers.

"Happy New Year," she says with a devilish grin.

"Happy New Year," Alex replies. There is a heavy hint of bashfulness evident that strikes Lauren as adorable, especially when coupled with the soft creases of his dimples.

She hesitates before asking, "Do you mind if I ask what just happened?"

He chuckles. "Seems kinda obvious to me."

"Well, yeah, but ... what does it mean? What's going on, Alex? We just went through this whole big deal about how you only want to be friends and now--"

"Can we not worry about it tonight?"

"What?"

"Let's just have fun tonight," he says. "Together. We can get to all that heavy stuff tomorrow."

One look at that baby face and she's sold. "Deal."

Meanwhile, Courtney elbows Jason lightly in the ribs as they part from their own kiss. "Did you see that?" she asks him.

"Yeah," Jason says, his confusion apparent.

"You think Alex straightened out whatever was bothering him?"

He hesitates. "I don't know."

Courtney squeals excitedly. "Ooh, I am so happy for them! Aren't you?"

"Yeah," he replies absently, still watching Alex with Lauren even as Courtney drags him off to spread New Year wishes.

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

"I can't do this."

Brent can't believe he actually says it, but he does. He watches Sarah's expression change from one of delighted anticipation to confusion and then to outrage. She grabs him by the arm, offering no greater explanation than a sharp look, and leads him out to the terrace.

The late-night -- or rather, early morning -- wind is laced with a biting chill, but Brent doesn't even notice it. Sarah doesn't seem to mind it, although she folds her bare arms in front of her chest. The light wind toys with a few loose strands of her upswept hair.

"*What* was that?" she demands.

Despite having a variety of words on the tip of his tongue, he doesn't have anything resembling an explanation to offer her.

"I thought everything was going all right!" Sarah exclaims. "You couldn't even give me one kiss to ring in the New Year?"

"I--" He trips over another false start. "I don't know. It just didn't feel ... right."

"I'm your wife!"

"This isn't exactly your run-of-the-mill happy marriage!" he fires back, his voice filled with a sad brand of sarcasm.

"I thought you were going to give us another shot tonight! We were having a good time together--"

"No, we were having a pleasant time. A civil time. It wasn't 'good,' Sarah."

"It was a step in the right direction."

"Just because we've been able to spend a couple of hours together without biting each other's heads off doesn't mean everything is fixed," he says hotly. "And now ... God ..."

"What?"

"When I was standing there, trying to kiss you ... I knew I should, I saw everyone else kissing -- but I couldn't. I just couldn't do it, Sarah."

"I noticed."

"And I realized something in that moment," he continues, trying to ignore her sarcastic barb, "and as you were pulling me out here. It can never be the way it was before. Not anymore. Things are too different between us."

They have had so many back-and-forth conversations and she has become so accustomed to having her hopes jerked around that the depth of what he is saying doesn't hit her for a few seconds. But when it does, her face seems to drop several shades of color. She grabs him by the arm.

"No -- Brent ... You don't mean that. You don't know that. We can get that back -- all we

have to do is keep trying. It'll work, I know it will--"

He yanks his arm away from her. "No, it won't. It's time we stopped this--this farce."

She searches for a moment for the right words to convince him that he is wrong, but the emotion is too great. She spins on her heels and storms back inside. Brent watches her through the glass door for a few seconds before following her.

She storms across the room, her hands balled up in fists at her sides as she burns a path through the crowd. Only when she comes to Molly -- who is, incidentally, right in her path -- does she stop.

Molly, who is engaged in conversation with Paula and Bill, notices her sister standing by her side and also takes note of her very visible rage. "What's wrong?" she asks, not sure if she should ask but knowing that she cannot ignore it.

Sarah just stares angrily at Molly for several seconds. A waiter walks by with a tray of champagne glasses. Sarah grabs one off the tray and holds it in front of her mouth, poised to take a sip.

She shakes her head at Molly. Bill and Paula exchange baffled glances as their daughters seem to be silently facing off.

"Damn you," Sarah finally says through gritted teeth.

"What?" Molly responds.

Sarah lets the stare linger for another moment before she tips the glass forward and flings the champagne right in Molly's face. "Go to hell," Sarah spits as she storms out of the room.

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"You don't have to do this," Andy says once again as he settles into a booth across from Maggie.

"It's my pleasure," Maggie assures him with a small shake of the head.

"I really do appreciate it. I don't think I would have wanted to be alone right now." He begins glancing through the menu.

"I can tell," she says, cracking a little smile. "And besides, I've already had a sufficiently screwed-up New Year's, don't ya think? Coming out for a drink and a bite to eat should be the lowlight of the night."

Andy raises his eyebrows. "Gee, thanks."

"That's not such a bad thing."

"No." He studies her for a moment, his index finger curled up and stroking his chin absently as he does so. "No, I guess not."

A waiter appears and they place their orders. Andy speaks again as soon as the waiter has departed. "Thank you for coming out with me."

"No need to thank me. I think it's fair to say that we've both had rough nights ... so let's just try to enjoy ourselves, all right?"

"Sounds good to me." He pauses again, drinking in Maggie's appearance -- the way stray wisps of black hair cross onto her face, and those lips ... "Can I ask you a question?"

"Sure."

"You've said a few times tonight that you weren't missing anything by not being home in Seattle tonight. I don't know if I'm prying here, but I've gotten the impression that you don't have a very pleasant situation at home ..." The inquiry drops off, losing steam as Andy realizes that he may be getting ahead of himself.

Maggie surprises him. "It's not that I have this awful life or anything. It's just ..." She shrugs. "There's tension. My parents run an architecture firm, and they have this big shindig every year with our family and friends and some people from the office."

"I'm afraid I don't follow. Where's the tension?"

"My ex-husband. He works at the firm, so he'll be there."

"That must be difficult."

"It is ... especially since I work there, too."

Andy lifts his eyebrows. "Wow."

"Exactly. Don't get me wrong, it could be a lot worse. Doug and I -- we still get along and

we can work together and everything, even though he drives me absolutely crazy sometimes. But it's not always so fun to have to be around him all night on New Year's Eve."

"I would imagine not." Curious as he is to know more, the sense that he should not pry too hard is greater. He decides to swing the subject elsewhere. "So you're an architect?"

"That I am," Maggie says.

The waiter arrives with their drinks and each of them takes a sip before Andy remarks, "I used to be so interested in architecture. I was seriously considering going into it when I went to college, but my parents insisted I focus on business, so I did."

"What do you do now?"

"Nothing," he says, almost wincing at how ridiculous it sounds. "I really should be, I suppose. There's just never been any need for it ... I mean--"

"Gotcha. I did see the size of that mansion," she grins. "Well, I'll tell ya what. If you're ever up for a move to Seattle, I'm sure we could find something for you to do at the firm."

Andy takes another sip of his drink as he thinks. "I think there's something we need to do," he finally says.

"What's that?"

"Toast -- to the New Year. We missed celebrating the stroke of midnight in the midst of all that wedding chaos."

"That sounds like a wonderful plan," she agrees. There is a twinkle in her eye that gleams as she speaks -- something that catches Andy's attention for the umpteenth time tonight.

"Well, then," he says, raising his glass, "here's to the start of a wonderful New Year."

"Happy New Year," Maggie says, clinking her glass against his.

MORIANI HOME

"Your father?" Claire asks, holding a hand full of trembling fingers to her mouth.

Ryan nods, his lips held tightly together.

For a quiet moment, the information seems to be sinking into Claire's consciousness, but then she snaps her head back and forth sharply. "No. I'm not letting you do this. I'm not letting you rewrite history just for the hell of it."

"I am telling you the truth!" he shouts. "How do you not remember? I'm amazed it hasn't come back to you a thousand times already, after all these years -- I've always sort of expected it to." He pauses thoughtfully and his voice takes on a decidedly more ominous tone. "Or maybe it has and you just don't want to recognize it."

"Stop playing these mind games with me!" she protests, throwing up her hands and turning her back to him, although he sees that momentary pause of consideration before she speaks.

"They're not mind games. This is the truth, plain and simple. You have to believe that." He reaches up tentatively and touches a hand to her shoulder. It seems as though she is going to accept the gesture and his hand begins to settle down, but she jerks away suddenly and violently.

"Get the hell off of me!"

"You have to believe me, Claire."

She doesn't say anything. At first he thinks it is another of those pauses, and in a second she is going to explode. But the explosion doesn't come. There is something about the intensity with which she remains focused in the other direction that makes it clear to Ryan what is happening.

"You do remember, don't you?"

The only response he receives is a quick shake of the back of her head.

Inside that head, though, things are anything but simple. The images are replaying themselves, washing over Claire one after another, over and over again. They're the same memories she has always had: bits and pieces, never a complete scene, just flailing and screaming and pain and shame all crashing into one another in a quick sequence of flashing images.

Only this time, something is different. The face -- she can see it. The hands feel the same as they pin her down; the breathing is the same, heavy and hot and sickening; but the face is there now, and it's different. It isn't the distorted image of a teenaged Ryan that has always floated over the top of these images. It's Stan, his face clear and filled with

something that terrifies Claire even through the distance of all these years.

"You are remembering. I'm telling the truth, aren't I?" Ryan calls out to her.

Suddenly she whips around, her face crunched up and her teeth clamped down over her lower lip. Ryan reaches out to grasp her -- he doesn't know why, it just happens -- but she pushes right past him.

"I'm not going to hurt you," he says. "I never did."

"Damn you," she growls through pooling tears as she retreats to the other side of the cellar. She sits down on a crate, her back to Ryan, and he watches as the erratic spasms of crying overtake her body.

END OF EPISODE #190

What will these new developments mean for Claire, Tim, and Ryan? What will come of Katherine's marriage to Nick? And what do you think of Andy and Maggie? Share your predictions, comments, and questions at our Message Forum!

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