

"Footprints"

Episode #194

<The Day After #193>

[Previously ...](#)

**Claire stunned the Fishers with the news that Tim has been presumed dead.*

**Katherine blew off Andy's warnings and left for her honeymoon with Nick.*

**Ryan did not tell Nick that he revealed the truth about the rape to Claire.*

FISHER HOME

Brent can almost feel grief radiating from the house as he raises his finger to the doorbell. He has been turning this visit over in his mind for over 24 hours: trying to gauge what the family's response to him will be, considering that he was the one who turned up the news of Tim's death; dreading seeing both Sarah and Molly but still wanting to be there for both of them during this time; and simply trying to tell himself that if he were never to come pay his respects, then he may not have to accept that he has lost a friend.

He shoves those things aside as best he can as he pushes the bell. The familiar chime sounds from inside the house and, in a moment, the bustling that follows it produces an open door. He takes in the sight of Paula, who stands before him looking utterly torn apart.

"I'm so sorry," he says quietly.

"Thank you." Paula bows her head. "And thank you for doing what you could to find him. If nothing, it was better to have an answer than to going on wondering what might have happened."

Brent nods.

"But still ..." Paula sighs heavily. "Do you think there is any chance that this could be wrong -- that Tim may not be dead?"

Brent bites his lower lip and works it under his teeth for a few seconds before he answers. "It's a possibility. Without a body, it would be stupid of me to say otherwise. But I'd say it's a very remote possibility."

Paula doesn't move. Brent allows her a few moments of quiet acceptance before he asks softly, "Is everyone inside?"

Paula nods. "In the kitchen and upstairs. I don't know who's where ... We've all just been

milling around since last night."

With a compassionate lowering of his eyes, Brent accepts this information and moves past her into the house. He finds Claire in between the living and dining rooms, having overheard his arrival.

"Hi," she says weakly.

"I'm so sorry, Claire," he offers. "I can only imagine what a blow this must be ... If there's anything you need--"

"I've got Paula and Bill behind me," she says with a sniff. "So I don't think I'll be at any loss for support. But thank you."

They fall into quiet. Finally Claire looks up and says, "I guess you're looking for Sarah, huh?"

"Yeah."

"I think she's upstairs. In her old room, probably. We all slept here last night."

"Thanks," he says, moving to the stairs but giving her a warm half-hug with his left arm as he moves past her.

When the embrace is over, he plants his foot on the bottom step. Here goes nothing ...

MORIANI HOME

Andy pulls the car -- an extra from his mother's garage, given the damage that his own car suffered in his New Year's Eve accident -- up into the driveway. He sits for a few seconds after turning off the vehicle, absorbing the strangeness of the situation. Here he is at the home of his new stepfather, a place where his mother may soon be living, for all he knows.

If only I could have stopped her, he thinks for what must be the millionth time since he left the wedding in defeat. But as he has learned all too well in the last couple of days, worrying about that now is not going to get him anywhere. He pushes the thought aside as best he can and climbs out of the car.

He crosses the driveway, still soaked from the rainstorm that raged all last night and well into this morning, and makes his way up to the front door. As he rings the doorbell, he tries to figure out what exactly he is going to say.

Almost instantly, Ryan is standing before him. He can see his new stepbrother looking him over for a minute, trying to place his face, before the connection is made. Andy watches Ryan's recognition of him set in and sees the subsequent confusion of how to react to Andy's visit.

"I need to ask you a question," Andy begins.

Distrust flickers in Ryan's eyes. "Claire better not have--"

"It's nothing like that. I was just wondering when my mother -- and your father -- are supposed to return from their honeymoon." He keeps his tone even, not quite pleasant but a little more than civil.

"Oh. I think my father said next ..." He quickly does the mental computations. "A week from tomorrow, I guess."

"All right," Andy says. He half-turns, ready to leave.

Ryan speaks up before Andy can make his exit. "Hey, do you want to come in for a drink? Maybe we should get to--"

"No thanks."

"O--" Ryan stops. "Is this about what I said about Claire? I didn't mean anything by that, I'm sorry. I'm just frustrated with the whole situation ..."

"That's the least of it, believe me," Andy spits. "And as for Claire -- you stay away from her. There shouldn't be any more of a situation, do you understand?"

"You have no right--"

"Claire is a friend, and I'm not going to allow you or her father to hurt her any more than you already have!"

Andy's outburst gives Ryan pause and he clams up for a moment. But Andy's reaction is not that of someone who knows the full story, he realizes -- at least, he doesn't think so.

"You have no idea," Ryan huffs. "You have no idea about the way things are between Claire and me!"

"I have plenty of an idea," Andy fires back. "I seriously doubt that she will want anything

to do with the people responsible for her husband's death!"

FISHER HOME, KITCHEN

Molly blows softly on her tea. Her breath skips across its surface, but the steam continues rising. She watches the ripples and lets the steam warm her face.

"I don't know what to say," she says quietly. "Every time I think about it ... every time I think in my mind that Tim is gone ... it's like I'm hearing it for the first time."

"I know," Bill agrees wearily. "I was up all night, just lying in bed, hearing it over and over and over, and trying to figure out how we can possibly ... *be* without him."

"I have no idea. I can't even imagine ... I can't even think of how this family could exist without him ..."

Bill wants to second the sentiment, but it is all too much. He forces the lump down his throat and stares down at his hands.

They both look up as footsteps enter the kitchen slowly. Jason casts a dark glance over at both of them before continuing on to the refrigerator.

"How're you doing, Jay?" Bill asks. Molly notices an exaggerated touch of strength in his voice now.

"Fine." Jason opens the refrigerator and withdraws a can of soda. He turns to retrace his steps back up to his room.

"Are you sure?" Bill calls after him.

Jason grumbles a response, not exactly positive or negative, and exits.

Bill and Molly share a look of concern, acknowledging once again the devastation that has come upon the family.

FISHER HOME, SARAH'S ROOM

"Hey."

The voice, so unexpected, rattles Sarah. She whips around to see Brent in the doorway.

The first thing she notices is that he is wearing a blue button-down shirt that she bought for him while they were in New York. Her eyes linger over him for a little longer than she might like them to, but she jerks them away.

He approaches the bed, where she is sitting cross-legged. "How are you holding up?"

"I'm fine." She keeps her focus away from him.

"I thought you might want some company," he says.

She snaps back around. "I don't want your company. I don't want anything from you."

The words sting him, she can tell, and it takes him a moment to collect himself.

"Sarah, I know a lot has happened, but that doesn't mean--"

"That you can't make yourself feel better by thinking you're making me feel better? You know what? It does! That's exactly what it means. Too much has happened, Brent -- you said it yourself. If things can't be the way they used to be, then they can't."

"You know you don't mean that," he says, sitting down on the edge of the bed.

Sarah pulls her knees up to her chest and wraps her arms around them. "Leave me alone."

"No." Brent moves closer. "Sarah, don't do this. I want to be here right now. I know what it must feel like to have Tim suddenly be gone--"

"You have no idea!" she snarls.

The comment strikes a nerve in Brent. As images of his mother sweep through his mind, he tries to force aside the urge to get into it with Sarah.

Sarah continues, speaking through gritted teeth. "My brother is gone, my family treats me like some sort of unwanted appendage, my marriage is over--"

"I'm here now."

She pauses, evaluating him. He can see the pain, so real, so tangible, in her eyes, and he can almost feel it, too.

"You're only here because you feel guilty," she spits.

"No," Brent says after a moment of extended quiet. He wraps an arm around her and it only takes a few seconds for her to crumble, leaning into his chest as tears and trauma ravage her body.

"I'm here because I care," he whispers, pulling her rocking body closer.

Molly stands in the doorway. She watches as much of the scene as she can stomach before she has to turn around and run off.

MORIANI HOME

At first Ryan has no idea what Andy is talking about. Killed her husband? What? But then a thought hits him -- *New Year's Eve* -- and his stomach and chest flood with something that he can't quite identify.

"What?"

"Tim was killed on New Year's Eve," Andy says. He speaks not just with grief but with disgust. Ryan tells himself that loss makes people angry. This isn't *his* fault--

"What happened?" Ryan asks abruptly.

"He was shot. At the pier -- he was trying to help Claire by listening in on your father's meeting."

For a moment Ryan feels as though he cannot breathe. Claire's husband is *dead*?

"I doubt she's going to want to see you," Andy continues, clearly trying to push his hatred of the Morianis as far as he can. "You and your father--"

"This is not my fault!" Ryan fires back. "This is not our fault! As far as I can tell, you didn't even find anything down at that pier, did you?"

Andy gives no response.

Ryan cocks his head to the left a few degrees. "I didn't think so. And from what Claire told me, you were supposed to be with Tim, weren't you? Wouldn't that kind of make it *your* fault that Tim was--killed?"

He watches Andy's face move through a muddled sequence of reactions before it finally

hardens. "Just stay away from her," Andy orders before turning around and heading back to his car.

Ryan remains in the doorway as Andy drives off. Tim is *dead*?

FISHER HOME, LIVING ROOM

Claire sits with her hands folded in front of her mouth. Her elbows are propped up on her knees. She watches Travis and Samantha on the floor, playing with the same toys they always play with when they visit this house. "God," she says finally, her voice little more than a heavy breath. "I still can't ..."

"I know." Paula takes a seat beside her daughter-in-law on the sofa. The thought that Claire is not actually her daughter-in-law runs through her mind, but she ignores it for now. "I keep wondering when we're going to wake up from this nightmare."

Claire draws another breath and releases it slowly. "We're not. I keep realizing that ... Every time, it's like a knife twists a little harder into my heart."

"Oh, dear." Paula pulls Claire into an embrace. "Why Tim?"

Claire closes her eyes momentarily. "I don't know ..."

The two women sit in silence, together. Travis stands from his spot on the floor with Samantha and waddles as a toddler does over to his mother and grandmother.

"Why do you look so sad?" he asks.

"Because," Claire says, "do you remember how I was telling you that Daddy had to go away?"

Travis nods.

"Well ..." She takes another deep breath. "Mommy and Grandma didn't want Daddy to have to go away. That's why we're so sad."

Paula cups a hand over her mouth and turns away as the tears hit her again.

"Then why did Daddy go?" Travis asks, resting his head on Claire's lap.

"I don't know," she says. Her voice is thin, but she holds it together as best she can. "I

don't know."

And they sit there, grandmother, mother, and son, each absorbing the circumstances in whatever way he or she can manage.

END OF EPISODE #194

What would you like to see happen with Molly, Brent, and Sarah now? How do you think Tim's death will affect the other stories? Share your thoughts at the Message Forum!

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