

## "Footprints" Episode #219

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

*\*Claire felt alienated by Paula's optimism that the Fishers would retain custody of Samantha. Later, Claire and Andy vowed to nail the Morianis once and for all.*

*\*Courtney and Jason's romantic night out took them to the beach, where they discussed Tim's death. The couple proclaimed how much they mean to each other and Jason led Courtney off to the final destination of the night.*

*\*At the hospital, Andy ran into his ex-fiancee, Danielle, who had come to visit Brent. He ended their reunion abruptly by saying he had something to take care of.*

### **CLAIRE FISHER'S APARTMENT**

The yawn seems to come from somewhere deep inside. It pulls at Claire's face, yanks her mouth wide open, and clamps her eyes shut tightly. It is so powerful that she needs to stop and lean against the wall before continuing on into the living room.

"I'll take that as a sign I need some sleep," she mumbles as she walks back into the living room. Finally, sleep is an actual possibility. She spent the afternoon and evening working an excruciating shift at the hospital, and when she got in the car at the end of it, sleep was the first thing on her mind. But she had to go pick up Travis and Samantha from the Fishers' first. And then she had to chat a little, and have a bite to eat when she admitted to Paula that she hadn't eaten dinner ...

Not that the attention and the concern aren't comforting. But the whole notion of other people looking out for her well-being without any distractions or ulterior motives is still a strange one to her sometimes, and sometimes she finds it stifling. Maybe it's because she spent so much of her youth and her early adulthood fending for herself.

Whatever it is, now she can finally get some sleep. She is about to double-check that the apartment's door is locked when something catches her eye. A blinking light.

The answering machine, of course. When she hauled the kids inside, they immediately went into their pre-sleep burst of wild energy and she had to spend the better part of an hour coaxing them into going to bed. She totally forgot to check the machine.

Casually she presses the "play" button and listens to the beep. But as soon as the voice on the tape begins speaking, she tenses up.

"Hi, Claire, it's Jim Thompson," the message says. "I wanted to let you know that we've finally gotten a preliminary hearing over custody of Samantha scheduled. It'll be held ..."

She thinks to grab a pen and jot down the details on the small pad of paper kept next to the machine but the effort seems too great right now. Instead she saves the lawyer's message, not wanting to listen to it again or think about it anymore right now.

It's too late, though. The formality of a real hearing, in a courtroom with a judge, where a decision regarding Samantha could very well be made, has snaked its way into her consciousness already, and she cannot shake it.

*I can't let this happen, she tells herself as fear courses through her veins. I can't lose Samantha, too.*

## **KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL**

"I swear, if you don't take this damn thing off ..." Courtney threatens with a raised fist.

"Cool it," Jason says, wrapping his arms around her as he kicks the door shut.

"We're there, aren't we?" she asks, moving her head as if looking around, even though her eyes are again covered.

"We might be ..."

"You're enjoying this blindfold thing way too much."

He shrugs. "Enh."

When there is no action for several seconds, Courtney throws up her arms. "Wouldja just take it off already?"

"Fine, fine." He picks up the two small duffel bags that he carried up from the car and then dumped on the floor and moves them to the bed. He can see Courtney's amused frustration mounting and snickers before finally reaching up to remove the blindfold.

Courtney's eyes drink in the room, a lush suite with touches of sea-green tile, gold, and frosted glass spread throughout. To her right is a kitchenette, with food on display and ready to be eaten. An immaculately white sofa and a light oak entertainment center sit against opposite walls towards the back of the room, while a broad window on the far wall reveals the lights of nighttime King's Bay.

"Wow," she says after the initial shock begins to dim. "Jay, this is ..."

"It's cool, isn't it?" She turns around to find Jason beaming. "Actually, I had no idea what it was gonna look like except that it was supposed to have all this stuff in it and I assumed it'd be nice," he explains as he once again folds her into his embrace from behind. "This is really cool."

"Yeah, it is ... Wow. You know, I thought when you told me to pack overnight clothes that you were gonna take me camping or something."

"I thought about it," he says, toying with her hair with his index finger. "Then I remembered that I hate camping."

"Yes, that might be a problem," she laughs. They both exhale deeply at the same time and she melts back into him.

"All right," Jason says suddenly. He releases her from his arms and sends her forward with a light push. "Go and get changed."

"Okay." She makes a move for her bag but then turns back to him. Her demeanor is much more serious now. "Jason ... This *is* really nice, and I appreciate it. But--"

He can tell where this is going and he holds up a palm to interrupt her. "I just wanted us to be able to hang out together without any interruptions," he says. "I'm not expecting anything else to happen, okay?"

She nods and grabs her bag. Once she is inside the bathroom, Jason leans against the wall.

Suddenly he feels deflated and his energy level has plummeted several notches. "That doesn't mean I wasn't hoping for it," he whispers, staring at the closed bathroom door.

## **MORIANI HOME**

*"After all your mother put us through, after all she did to you -- you're still willing to patch things up with her and try to help her. That's admirable ... Whether she realizes it or not, she's very lucky to have you as a son."*

Danielle's words of support have been echoing in Andy's ears throughout the entire drive here and they continue to do so as he ascends the stone steps leading up to the front door. Very deliberately, he grips the doorknocker and pounds it against the door.

Almost a full minute and several more determined raps on the door pass before he hears the scrambling that indicates someone is coming. When the door opens, he is greeted not

by his mother, but by Nick.

Clearly Andy's arrival has woken up Nick and Katherine, and Andy finds the sight of the slick Nick Moriani bleary-eyed and in a robe a bit on the humorous side.

"Andrew," Nick says without inflection. Andy can't tell if it is because Nick is tired or because he isn't sure how he should be reacting to the surprise visit.

"I'm here to see my mother," Andy announces. When Nick shows no sign of making a move, Andy adds hotly, "Now!"

Now Nick takes on an expression of annoyance. "Look, Andrew, your mother and I were asleep until you so rudely stormed up to the house and woke us up. So if this isn't urgent, can it wait until tomorrow?"

"Absolutely not. You know, I was beginning to think that perhaps I should accept this marriage, that I should leave my mother alone and let her decision stand," Andy says. "But tonight I had two conversations that reminded me just why I was so unhappy about this marriage to begin with. I am not leaving unless my mother comes with me!"

## CLAIRE FISHER'S APARTMENT

In the dark, Claire tosses her body onto its side, gripping the pillow closer to her head. But she is unaware of all of this, because sleep has sucked her in ...

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He's here. Right in front of me. The face that has flooded my dreams and haunted my nightmares for all these months.

Actually, it started long before New Year's Eve. It started the day that I met him. It was at a party, some event I didn't even want to go to. But a friend forced me to attend. She said there'd be a guy there who I just *had* to meet.

Turns out that she was wrong -- the guy turned out to be a total moron. We had a good laugh afterwards about her complete lack of solid judgment. Even though that plan didn't exactly work out, I did meet Tim that night. We were introduced very casually and the whole time I was talking to that other guy, I was searching around the party to locate Tim again. Finally we caught eyes and he came over to "rescue" me. We more or less spent the rest of the party talking.

That night I dreamed about him. It wasn't a sexual dream, even though that had

definitely been on my mind that evening! We were back at the party -- somehow I knew that it was the party, even though I can't remember anyone else being in the dream and I wasn't aware of any noise besides our conversation -- and we were talking. Some of it was information that we'd gone over replaying itself in my mind and some of it was imagined. It didn't matter, though -- I could feel the attraction, even though it was just a dream. It was that strong. I woke up feeling like he should be there next to me.

The pull that I feel to him now is the same as it was that first night, in that first dream. I just *need* him, there's no other way to describe it. And I can have him: Here he is, standing right in front of me.

I take a step closer. Yet it doesn't seem to help -- we're still the same distance apart. I take another step. Same thing. I'm not getting any closer.

"Tim," I hear myself say.

He is looking straight into my eyes. His eyes, those blue eyes, are locked with mine. But he doesn't say anything.

"Tim," I say again.

Still no answer. I take *another* step, but it gets me nowhere. Desperately I lunge forward, shooting out a hand to grasp him. I touch nothing, even though I swear I moved far enough to get him.

"Tim!" The searing desperation that I feel inside is spilling out in my voice. Still, he doesn't react. "Tim!" I call again.

I rush forward but I can't get him. What is going on? Why can't I just touch him again?

"Tim!" I cry out, lunging again. This time my hand shoots right through him. I draw it back. Something must be wrong with me ...

I look up, terrified that I've removed my gaze from him even for this long. He's fading. No, no -- he can't go. Not now, not after I lost him before. Tim, no, please stay ...

"Tim!"

He's gone.

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Suddenly the dark is enveloping Claire again. Heavy breaths pound against her chest,

feeling like they are going to make her lungs explode at any instant.

*I'm awake, she realizes as the dark bedroom comes into focus. I'm at home. I'm not in that world ...*

But that thought is of little comfort as she realizes that the dream was true: Tim is gone. She can't even bear to look at the empty side of the bed next to her.

"Tim." The name blows off her lips, desperate, hopeless, like a mournful wind scattering fallen leaves through a dreary cemetery.

He really is gone.

## **KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL**

Jason is already changed into his casual clothes -- a white t-shirt and a pair of navy blue sweatpants -- when the bathroom door opens. Courtney emerges, dressed in a loose-fitting pair of pink cotton pajama pants and a small gray tank top. She has pulled down the stylish up-'do she was wearing for the evening and her dark hair falls over her shoulders in loose curls.

"You absolutely amaze me," Jason says.

"What?"

"You put all that effort into getting ready to go out tonight -- and don't get me wrong, you looked awesome -- but then we come back here and you get all casual and you still look as beautiful."

"Thanks, sweetie," she says, tossing her arms around his neck and planting a gentle kiss on his lips. Jason accepts it happily but soon lets go.

With his arm around her waist, he begins leading her over to the couch. "You wanna watch a movie or something?" he asks.

They get settled on the sofa, him sitting up straight and her to his side, her legs pulled up onto the cushion, before she gives him her answer.

"Actually," she says softly, her lips brushing against his ear, "I was thinking ... I've kinda been hoping for a chance like this."

"Huh?"

She offers him another kiss, this one more passionate. "I meant what I said that night," she says. "I'm ready."

Jason eyes her with disbelief, though the hot flicker in his gaze is not lost on her. "Are you sure?"

"Positive."

Her mouth goes to his once again and this time he takes it greedily. The kiss intensifies and Courtney feels Jason's hands all over her body. She doesn't stop them.

*When the rain is blowin' in your face  
And the whole world is on your case  
I would offer you a warm embrace  
To make you feel my love*

Sometime in the midst of it all they stop long enough to stand and make their way into the bedroom, but they have collapsed together on the bed before Courtney even realizes it has happened ...

*When the evening shadows and the stars appear  
And there is no one to dry your tears  
I could hold you for a million years  
To make you feel my love*

There is something in the room with them, something so powerful that Courtney knows everything has changed. She is no longer scared of this moment, no longer scared of the act itself or of what it might bring. She gives in to Jason's touch ...

*No, you haven't made your mind up yet  
But I would never do you wrong  
I've known it from the moment that we met  
There's no doubt in my mind where you belong*

And she meets his touch with her own. Her hands roam his body, undressing him, exploring what she realizes she has wanted for so long ...

*I'd go hungry, I'd go black and blue  
I'd go crawling down the avenue  
There ain't nothin' that I wouldn't do*

*To make you feel my love*

Nothing else matters to Jason. In this moment, all that exists is Courtney and himself, and they are one. There is something so passionate about it, so intense that it draws him in further, deeper, but it is also so gentle that it wraps him up and fills him with something that until this point he has only imagined could exist ...

*Storms are raging on a rollin' sea  
Down the highway of regret  
Winds of change are blowin' wind and free  
But you ain't see nothin' like me yet*

They are lost in one another, lost in this thing that they could only dream about until now. It's so much more than what their imaginations could conjure, something they suddenly cannot imagine ever letting go.

And they don't let go of it, not tonight.

*There ain't nothin' that I wouldn't do  
Go to the ends of the earth for you  
Make you happy, make your dreams come true  
To make you feel my love*

This scene features lyrics from the Garth Brooks recording "To Make You Feel My Love," written by Bob Dylan. These lyrics have been reproduced here without official permission and are intended solely for entertainment purposes and to enhance the reader's experience. This song can be purchased on CD or cassette [here](#).

## MORIANI HOME

"How heroic," Nick says with a sneer, already moving to close the door in Andy's face. "Unfortunately, I'm afraid this little crusade will have to wait. I need to be getting back to bed."

Andy slams a hand against the door to hold it open. "No. I want to see my mother."

"Andrew--"

"Don't! Do you know who I saw tonight? My ex-fiancee, Danielle. The one that my mother worked so hard to keep me apart from. We talked and I realized that, even after all that, I want what's best for my mother. I want to have a good relationship with her and I want her to be safe. That's not possible as long as she's married to you."

Nick doesn't even respond to the implicit accusations. "Goodnight, Andrew."

He tries again to close the door but Andy blocks it. "I'm not--"

"You are. Get lost, kid." This time Nick succeeds and the door slams just inches from Andy's face.

"I'm not leaving!" Andy shouts. The door doesn't reopen. He can hear Nick climbing back up the stairs.

Suddenly he wonders why he can hear what's going on inside so clearly. A quick look around indicates that one of the living room windows is open several inches. The idea of going up to it and making a ruckus or trying to force his way inside crosses his mind.

He quickly decides against it. He had assumed this would be so easy -- he would storm in, no-nonsense, and take Katherine away. He hadn't taken into account that Nick really might get in the way.

He takes the first steps back to the car but freezes when he hears his mother's voice from inside the house. "What was that racket?" she asks.

"It was Andrew," Nick tells her. "I told him we were sleeping and he'd have to come back."

"What did he want? Was something the matter?"

"Nothing of any consequence," Nick says. "He was ranting and raving about rescuing you. I tell you--"

There is a heavy note of suspicion in Katherine's voice as she asks, "Why did he come here at this hour?"

"Apparently he had some eye-opening discussions," Nick answers disdainfully. "He said he ran into that Danielle--"

"What?" Katherine's outrage explodes and Andy can feel its power even from outside.

Nick repeats, "He had a run-in with that Danielle woman--"

"How? Why is she here?" she demands.

Andy can hear that Katherine is in a complete furious frenzy and it keeps him glued to his spot in the driveway.

"I thought I took care of that," he hears Katherine cry. "I arranged for her to be away from King's Bay for good!"

In the driveway, Andy stops breathing.

## **END OF EPISODE #219**

*Which was your favorite story in this episode? Come tell us and share your other thoughts on the episode over at the Message Forum!*

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