

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #125
TIME FRAME: THE DAY FOLLOWING [#124](#)

TEASER

INT: BROOKS HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Lauren sets down two bowls of potato chips - one regular flavor, the other barbecue - and then steps back to admire the scene. We've done one hell of a job getting ready for this party, she thinks. Indeed they have. The furniture is still there, but the valuables and breakables have generally been removed; the carpet appears totally spotless.

And to think it'll be ruined in just a few hours' time ... A smile cracks on Lauren's face. Who cares? She has a gut feeling that this will be a night to remember.

She positions herself in front of the emptied-out curio cabinet, the front of which doubles as a mirror. She admires her outfit, smoothing her top once more to get out the wrinkles that only she can see.

LAUREN: Everything has to be perfect ...

And hopefully, it will be. While she is excited about Jason turning 21 - after all, it is the reason for the party - this night holds a greater hope for Lauren. Tonight's the night she makes her move on Alex, she's promised herself.

The doorbell rings, slicing into her thoughts. She crosses the room and pulls the door open.

LAUREN: Hey, Alex.

She looks right up into Alex's smiling face.

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)
EVENING

Courtney pulls the door open, wondering who might be there. She isn't expecting anyone - in fact, she is just on her way out.

Her confusion turns to joy as she finds her father, Don, waiting outside.

DON: Hey, Court!

COURTNEY: Dad! Hi!

They share a warm, lengthy hug.

COURTNEY: What ... what are you doing here?

The question is a difficult one for her to ask; she never imagined a time would come that he wouldn't be living there.

DON: I need to see your mother.

Courtney's face is overcome by a sorrowful frown.

COURTNEY: You can't.

INT: SARAH & BRENT'S APT. (BEDROOM)
EVENING

Sarah is lined up before the mirror, examining herself one last time. Brent enters and attempts to sneak up behind her, but the reflection makes it impossible. She turns around just as he is about to tickle her.

SARAH: Freeze!

BRENT: Oh, you got me.

SARAH: Don't you even think of-

His hands lunge forward and tickle her midsection for only an instant. It is enough to provoke wild laughter.

SARAH: No more! Please!

Brent raises his hands in front of him.

BRENT: Fine, no more. I promise.

SARAH: Good.

He can't help but notice the smile radiating out from her face.

BRENT: You're certainly looking happy tonight.

SARAH: What's not to be happy about? I'm wearing my brand-new - and incredibly expensive - dress, and I'm going out for a night on the town with my favorite husband in the whole world.

BRENT: So I win the award after all?

SARAH: Hands down.

Their lips pull together and rest upon each other. As Brent holds his wife in his arms, however, he can't help but feel a certain ... phoniness looming over them.

ACT ONE

INT: FISHER HOME (KITCHEN)

EVENING

Bill watches Helen across the table, as she stares down into her coffee, which is still reeling from the stir she gave it moments ago.

BILL: Why are you doing this to yourself?

She looks up instinctively, almost caught off-guard.

HELEN: What?

BILL: Why are you sitting here like this? You could be with Don right now, sorting everything out.

HELEN: That's just the problem - there's nothing for us to sort out!

BILL: Why not? Helen, I hate to sound like a broken record, but what proof do you have that something actually went on between Don and Sally? For all you know, this could just be one major misunderstanding.

HELEN: It's not.

The words come out almost as one, in a sound bite dripping with such painful certainty that Bill can't

help but be alarmed.

BILL: Why do you say that? You weren't there in Paris-

HELEN: No, but I was at the hotel the other day.

BILL: So what?

HELEN: He was kissing her, Bill!

INT: CHASE HOME (FOYER)
EVENING

DON: What? Why not?

COURTNEY: She's not here.

Don's shoulders slump under the weight of another disappointment. He felt so ready to talk to Helen-

COURTNEY: She's at the Fishers'.

Don suddenly perks up.

DON: Really?

COURTNEY: Yeah. Go by and see her. Please.

DON: I ... I think I will.

COURTNEY: Good. It's time you two put all of this behind you.

DON: I just hope that's possible.

COURTNEY: It is! Don't even think like that!

She begins to herd him out the door.

COURTNEY: Now get yourself over there!

For the first time, he notices the car keys in her hands.

DON: Are you going out?

COURTNEY: We're throwing Jason a surprise birthday party at Lauren's house. I'm in charge of actually getting him there.

DON: So you're headed over to the Fishers', too?

COURTNEY: Yep.

Don takes a deep breath, steeling himself for the confrontation to come.

DON: Okay, then. Let's roll.

INT: WINDMILLS RESTAURANT
EVENING

Sarah and Brent are led into the dining area, a large room lit only by handles sitting in glass holders up on the walls. They are seated at a small table; its white tablecloth is adorned with carefully arranged cutlery, an elegantly folded pair of napkins, and a golden centerpiece holding a tall, white candle.

SARAH: This place is beautiful.

BRENT: Yeah, it is. You ever been here before?

SARAH: No ... you?

BRENT: Uh-uh. Someone mentioned it to me a few weeks ago and it's been sticking in my head since then. It sounded just like the place to take you tonight.

SARAH: Well, you lucked out. It's wonderful.

BRENT: I'm glad you like it.

He takes a short sip of the water sitting in front of him.

BRENT: I really think tonight will be good for us.

SARAH: Me, too. We need some time alone ... to get away from everything else and just focus on us.

BRENT: Definitely.

He says this pensively, as if consumed by unpleasant thoughts. Sarah recognizes it immediately - having spent so much time that way lately.

SARAH: What's wrong?

BRENT: Wrong? Noth-

Her eyebrow rises to silence his excuse.

BRENT: Okay, you got me. Sarah, I ... have a confession to make.

For some reason, Sarah feels the blood begin to pump in and out of her heart twice as fast. She swallows the lump residing in her throat before she can respond.

SARAH: Yeah?

BRENT: Yeah. Look, there's another reason I took you out tonight.

SARAH: What's that?

BRENT: Out of guilt.

ACT TWO

INT: BROOKS HOME (LIVING ROOM)

EVENING

Lauren returns Alex's smile with one of her own - perhaps a bit too sweetly, she worries after she has done it.

ALEX: Hey. How's everything coming along?

LAUREN: Pretty good.

She steps aside, allowing him to come in. He takes a look around and nods.

ALEX: Lookin' good.

LAUREN: Thanks.

ALEX: God, it's a shame to think this place'll probably be trashed in like two hours, huh?

LAUREN: I was just thinking the same thing.

ALEX: So when are people supposed to start-

The doorbell answers his question before he's even asked it.

ALEX: I guess now.

Lauren again opens the door and finds a group of friends outside. As she greets them, Alex watches from near the staircase. Let the games begin.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Meanwhile, across town, Paula Fisher comes down the stairs and opens her own front door. She greets Courtney and Don with her sunny face.

PAULA: Hey, guys! Come on in!

They do just that. Paula shuts the door lightly and then lowers her voice as she turns to Courtney.

PAULA: Are you here to bring Jason to the you-know-what?

COURTNEY: I sure am.

Paula heads to the bottom of the staircase.

PAULA: Jason! There's someone here for you!

Her youngest son comes bounding down the stairs not fifteen seconds later. He briskly makes his way over to Courtney and greets her with a kiss.

JASON: Hey, you.

COURTNEY: Well, well, if it isn't the birthday boy himself.

JASON: You ready to go?

COURTNEY: Yep.

She opens the front door to escort him out.

JASON: So what exactly do you have planned for tonight?

COURTNEY: Nothing much. But I'm sure we'll have fun.

JASON: That's all I ask.

They wave goodbye to their parents and are gone in an instant.

PAULA: It's such a thrill to see them so happy together, isn't it?

DON: Sure is.

PAULA: So what brings you by, anyway?

DON: Courtney told me there's someone here I might like to see.

PAULA: Helen?

DON: Mmm-hmm.

PAULA: Do you want me to go get her for you?

DON: That would be great, Paula.

Paula heads for the kitchen, while Don stands firmly in place in the middle of the living room. Much to his dismay, he is unable to steady his quivering hand.

INT: WINDMILLS
EVENING

Brent's declaration has taken Sarah completely by surprise.

SARAH: Really?

BRENT: Yeah. The truth is, while you were away ...

His voice dwindles away to nothing. Sarah leans forward, anxiously awaiting whatever it is he is going to say. Part of her can't wait to hear it, but the rest of her wants to jump up and leave before he can open his mouth again.

BRENT: Well, I didn't do a very good job of being supportive - or communicating. I was acting really stupid.

SARAH: You mean, all the fighting over the phone?

BRENT: Yeah. It wasn't fair that I treated you like crap just because you went to help Matt. And besides, it turns out I was wrong about him anyway.

SARAH: It was a tricky case. And Steve did make it look like Matt was guilty ...

BRENT: Still, I should've been more supportive of you. Please, forgive me.

Her eyes nearly jump out of their sockets. He's asking her for forgiveness?

SARAH: Consider it done.

BRENT: Thank you.

The sincerity ringing in Brent's voice hits a note inside Sarah. She can't help but feel guilty herself.

SARAH: Besides ... I wasn't exactly the perfect wife all that time anyway.

ACT THREE

INT: BROOKS HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

In the short period of time that has passed, the party has kicked into full gear. A good deal of dancing is going on all over the house, though not necessarily in junction with the blaring music. Over by the staircase, Alex is in the midst of a discussion with an extremely energetic young woman, whom he believes to be named Kelly - he thinks he heard the name somewhere in her hyperactive ramblings.

KELLY: So, I was like, duh! Why wouldn't I want to go with them? But Tom was just totally like-

LAUREN: Hey, guys.

Alex's eyes blink twice in rapid succession, almost as a sign of relief.

LAUREN: What's going on?

ALEX: Kelly here was just telling me-

KELLY: Remember the time Tom and Devin tried to-

Lauren cuts her off by pointing across the room.

LAUREN: Speaking of Tom and Devin, I think I see them over there.

KELLY: Really?

LAUREN: Yeah. See?

She worms her index finger over the crowd until Kelly's eyes light up.

KELLY: Oh, yeah! Well, if you two will excuse me, I should go hi to them.

She darts off in a flurry of energy. Alex, meanwhile, turns to Lauren and places his hands on her shoulders.

ALEX: Thank you so much!

LAUREN: She's ... special, isn't she?

ALEX: You could say that. Ugh, I swear, one more minute of that and my head would've started spinning!

They share a merry laugh.

ALEX: So thanks ... I owe you one.

LAUREN: I think I've got a way to cash that favor in already.

ALEX: What's that?

LAUREN: How about a dance?

ALEX: I'd be delighted.

Lauren takes his hand and leads him out into the middle of a crowd of other dancing people. They begin to move in tune to the pounding bass of Jennifer Lopez's "Waiting For Tonight."

INT: WINDMILLS
EVENING

SARAH: I didn't exactly do everything I could to preserve this marriage, Brent.

BRENT: And neither did I.

He reaches over the table, taking her hands in his.

BRENT: Look, neither of us did a very good job of keeping the lines of communication open while you were away. But you're back now ... I don't see why we shouldn't do our best to make this a fresh start.

SARAH: You're right. We-we made those marriage vows to each other, and then we just sort of let this fall apart these last few months. What do you say we just erase that all and try to start over?

BRENT: Sounds like a plan.

Just now, the waiter comes by; Brent finds it nearly impossible to clear his mind long enough to order anything. He trips over his words as they become jumbled in with his thoughts. After what seems like an eternity, the waiter departs.

SARAH: Are you okay?

BRENT: Yeah ... yeah, I'm fine. I was just thinking ...

SARAH: What?

BRENT: Remember when we got married? Remember how exciting everything was?

SARAH: I do. Brent, those were some of the happiest days of my life.

It is now her turn to reach across the table. She does this to push his chin up, as if it will lift him out of the funk he seems to be in.

SARAH: And I don't see any reason why we shouldn't try to get back to those days.

Though innumerable words - still unsorted in his mind - are dying to jump off his lips and into the fray, none of them make it. He settles for a nod instead.

ACT FOUR

INT: BROOKS HOME (LIVING ROOM)

EVENING

The energy of the current song fades as the swaying beat of Brian McKnight's "Back at One" takes over the house. Lauren is thrilled to see that Alex makes no move to slip away from her now that the "obligatory" one dance is over; she pulls his body more tightly to hers in response to the soothing tones of the warm ballad.

Just as she has lain her head down on his shoulder, the song reaches an abrupt halt. A confused murmur falls over the room until everyone realizes that the guest of honor has arrived! Everyone quiets as the front door slides open.

Jason enters, and before he can even react to the darkness, the lights burst on and the crowd jumps up.

EVERYONE: Surprise!

Courtney steps inside the house belatedly. A broad smile adorns her face - she is clearly thrilled that the entry went as planned. Jason turns to her, wearing an equally wide grin.

JASON: Did you set this up?

COURTNEY: Well, Alex and Lauren helped out a lot, too.

JASON: Oh, it's great! I totally did not expect this!

He gives her an enormous hug, pulling her closely to him. Lauren watches the scene happily and looks up at Alex. Her heart pulses as he flashes her a delighted smile.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)

EVENING

Though he hears the footsteps softly entering the room, Don is unable to look up. He stands in place, holding one hand inside the other.

An uncomfortable silence blankets the scene, and Don realizes that Helen is not going to be the first one to speak. Without removing his eyes from the floor, he swallows hard.

DON: Hi.

Helen remains silent, and finally Don looks up in an attempt to read her face. Only once he has done this does she respond.

HELEN: Hi.

DON: Courtney told me you were here.

Helen has been rendered speechless. She just watches him standing there, reverting to all the insecurities she's seen him shed over the years.

HELEN: Do you have them?

He is completely confused by this outburst.

DON: Have what?

HELEN: The divorce papers.

Don opens his mouth to speak, but he finds it unbelievably difficult to say what he knows he must say.

INT: SARAH & BRENT'S APT. (BEDROOM)

EVENING

Brent undoes the top button of his shirt as he walks into the room. He kicks off his shoes; his tie, which has been balled up in his hand, falls onto the bed.

Sarah enters and begins to remove her earrings.

SARAH: I have got to thank you for a beautiful dinner.

BRENT: I'm glad you enjoyed it.

She comes closer and throws her arms around his neck.

SARAH: I am so lucky to have you.

Brent returns the sentiment with a smile, albeit a bit of a strained one.

SARAH: You know, there's something I've been wanting to do for months now ...

BRENT: Oh, really?

SARAH: Totally. And now-

She undoes the next button on his shirt.

SARAH: -I finally have the chance.

She speedily unbuttons his shirt the rest of the way. Her hands begin to work their way over the flesh framing his tight muscles. Soon her lips have gone to work on his, as well.

Something inside Brent tells his brain to shut up and stop badgering him for the night. He and Sarah collapse onto the bed in a passionate heap ...

END OF EPISODE #125

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