

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #134
TIME FRAME: A FEW DAYS AFTER [#133](#)

TEASER

INT: SKATING RINK
EVENING

The thinnest layer of fog rises from the stark white surface of the ice. It sits there on the floor of the darkened arena, grabbing whatever sparse light the dimmed building will allow. The light scars of just a handful of performances sit upon the white sheet, marking it like a sheet of paper that has been touched only by a pencil held in an unfocused hand.

ANNOUNCER: And now, please welcome Courtney Chase and Jason Fisher!

Applause erupts from the crowd as Courtney and Jason skate out to center ice, hand-in-hand. It is the same crowd that has watched the two grow up, developing from a pair of innocent beginners into well-balanced, talented young adults, here in this very rink. The couple strike their opening pose and hold it even as the first few strains of "Starlight, Starbright" fill the arena.

The emotion in the soft music is brought to life by the passion hanging between the two as they begin to skate. Each movement - every turn of the head, every drape of the arm - is filled with this intensity.

They break and glide down the surface of the ice side-by-side. They turn backwards in perfect unison and each reaches the left foot back. For a stunning split-second, they hang in the air, bodies twisting around some invisible axis. Both of their blades touch down on the ice at the same moment, drawing noisy approval from the crowd.

The couple carries on, maintaining the same captivating flow. A series of gliding maneuvers and a side-by-side spin win over the audience, as if the effort were even necessary. By the time the last notes of the music have died, the arena is filled with cheers.

Jason and Courtney make their way off the ice. They step off and, after accepting congratulations from various friends and acquaintances, locate Sandy, their coach.

SANDY: That was ... amazing.

COURTNEY: Oh my gosh. That felt so good!

JASON: It really did. It was like ... I don't know, like I could feel something out there with us.

SANDY: That's 'cause there was something out there with you.

Both shoot her quizzical looks.

SANDY: It's called passion, guys. And if I know anything at all, I know that what I saw out there between the two of you was real.

Neither Courtney nor Jason is sure of how to respond, but they share smiles with Sandy before turning to each other. They are drawn together in a kiss tame enough for a public place but deep enough to make words unnecessary.

EXT: FISHER HOME
EVENING

Though evening darkness has draped itself over the neighborhood, Paula is instinctively not afraid when footsteps come up the front steps behind her. She turns her head slightly as she continues unlocking the front door.

PAULA: Tim! What are you doing here?

TIM: I just thought I'd stop by on my home.

PAULA: What for?

She pushes the door open and steps inside; her son follows.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

TIM: I don't know ... Just thought I'd see how you guys were.

PAULA: Well-

She pulls her coat off and begins hanging it on the coat rack.

PAULA: -your father is still at the restaurant, Molly isn't home yet, and Jason is at the rink's Christmas show.

TIM: Why aren't you there?

PAULA: I took the opportunity to finish some Christmas shopping.

She nods her head towards the bags she has set down on the floor.

TIM: Ah.

PAULA: So, tell me, how are things with you? How are the kids?

TIM: Fine. Pretty good, actually. I'm just not liking this walking thing too much. Travis is all over the place.

PAULA: And pretty soon, Samantha will be up and about, too.

Tim smiles with mock enthusiasm.

TIM: Oh, boy.

Paula pats him on the back as she takes a seat on the sofa.

PAULA: And how about Claire? How are the two of you?

INT: POLICE STATION (BRENT'S OFFICE)
EVENING

Brent stays bent over a stack of paperwork as a knock on the door sounds.

BRENT: Come in!

The sound of heels on the linoleum floor brings his eyes up from his desk.

BRENT: Hey, hon-

He freezes mid-word, seeing Molly. Neither of them speaks for a moment.

MOLLY: Hi.

BRENT: Hi ...

He stands and comes around to the other side of the desk.

BRENT: What's up?

MOLLY: Nothing.

Confusion twists Brent's face.

BRENT: Okay ...

MOLLY: Well, I don't know. Maybe it's nothing, maybe it's ... something. But I thought I should talk to you about it.

He waits for her to go on.

ACT ONE

INT: SKATING RINK

EVENING

The cheerful sounds of "Jingle Bell Rock" fill the arena, but Alex and Lauren are oblivious to the song as they walk.

LAUREN: That was sooo good!

ALEX: I know. Jeez, I knew Jason and Courtney were good, but ... wow.

LAUREN: It's just amazing that the two of them are able to be out there together, performing like that. They went through so much to get back to each other.

ALEX: What do you mean?

LAUREN: Like two years ago, Courtney got hurt during practice, so she was out for awhile. Their coach found Jason a temporary partner so he could compete that season. Unfortunately, she turned out to be a complete lunatic and did everything she could to keep them apart.

ALEX: Was that that Shannon girl?

LAUREN: Yeah ... how'd you know about that?

ALEX: I've just heard bits and pieces.

Lauren stops walking, and Alex follows suit. They see their friends talking to Sandy and then sharing a kiss.

LAUREN: Just the fact that Courtney and Jason are together ... It gives me hope that there's someone out there for all of us.

She looks over at Alex, and he quickly pulls his eyes away from Jason and Courtney's public display of affection, though not without showing some discomfort.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Tim wastes no time in answering.

TIM: We're better - much better.

PAULA: I'm glad to hear it. Things seemed a little ... tense on Thanksgiving.

TIM: They were.

He sighs, and this simple action somehow expresses to Paula just how frustrated he had been with Claire.

PAULA: What was going on?

TIM: That's the thing. It was hardly anything, but it became this huge deal. This guy she used to know - Ryan Moriani - showed up and started hanging around her. I thought it was dangerous, but she didn't seem to think so, so it turned into a major argument.

A conversation from the past drifts into Paula's head, overtaking her senses ...

TIM: Mom?

Paula snaps out of her thoughts.

PAULA: I'm sorry, dear. I was just remembering-

She cuts herself off, realizing that perhaps Claire told her things that would be best left not repeated.

TIM: What? What were you remembering?

INT: POLICE STATION (BRENT'S OFFICE)
EVENING

Molly is slow in continuing, and it only serves to heighten Brent's interest in what she has to say.

BRENT: What is it?

MOLLY: I was thinking about all of us - you and ... Sarah and me and Matt.

BRENT: Matt? What does he have to do with anything?

MOLLY: Sarah's such good friends with him.

BRENT: They haven't even spoken since she got back from New York. I hardly call that "good friends."

She kept it all from him, Molly realizes. About running into Matt in the park and about meeting him the day after Thanksgiving. Fire swells inside of her as all this information links together.

BRENT: What's that look for?

MOLLY: Huh?

BRENT: That look on your face. What's going on?

MOLLY: Brent-

The words stop. Can she really tell him these things?

ACT TWO

INT: SKATING RINK
EVENING

Jason and Courtney break away from Sandy and the rest of the skating people and approach Alex and Lauren.

COURTNEY: Hey, guys.

LAUREN: Hey. Awesome job, you two.

ALEX: Yeah. It was really ... great.

His eyes fall on Jason, lingering until Jason looks directly at him. The two young men lock eyes for a fleeting moment before each breaks away uncomfortably.

COURTNEY: Thanks! Oh ... Gosh, that felt good.

JASON: It was good. It was the best performance we've ever given.

ALEX: Well, I am definitely impressed.

COURTNEY: It was probably the fact that there was, like, no pressure or anything. It's just a Christmas show.

LAUREN: Does that sound weird to anyone? I mean, it's Christmas already!

JASON: Yeah, it sorta does. But I know this is gonna be a great one ... Definitely better than last year.

ALEX: What happened last year?

Jason suddenly realizes that Alex doesn't know the turmoil that he and Courtney were dealing with last year. He launches into a careful explanation.

JASON: Things were just weird. Courtney had been hurt, and we still weren't skating together again. It made things a little awkward.

ALEX: Yeah, I guess it would be weird, if you were dating someone, but they had to spend so much time with another person.

COURTNEY: Actually, Jason and I weren't dating then.

Alex's surprise is evident.

ALEX: Really? I thought you guys had been together forever-

Courtney dismisses this with a small laugh.

COURTNEY: Not exactly. Our one-year anniversary is next month.

ALEX: Ah.

The natural pause that signals the end of a conversation plants itself down in the middle of the four of them.

LAUREN: Well, why don't you two go take off your skates and get changed, and then we'll all go back to my place and hang out for a little?

The rest of the group agrees with murmurs and nods, and they split up again. Alex and Lauren take a few steps to the side to get a better view of the skater currently on the ice, skating to a thundering "Carol of the Bells."

LAUREN: So you really thought Jason and Courtney had been an item forever?

ALEX: Oh, yeah. It's just the impression I got, I guess.

Lauren shrugs.

LAUREN: I don't know, it still seems weird to me sometimes. They were best friends for so long before they hooked up.

ALEX: Well, they definitely fit together perfectly.

LAUREN: I guess it just goes to show ... The best relationships are the ones built on solid friendships.

Alex goes on watching the skating quietly, acting as though he has missed the not-so-subtle smile Lauren flashes him.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Tim stares at his mother, waiting for an answer.

PAULA: Oh, nothing. It was just ...

She hesitates, trying to make sure it makes sense.

PAULA: Just how much damage little conflicts did to your marriage in the past. After Diane had

Samantha, for example - you started softening towards her, but Claire couldn't understand that. You didn't share the same feelings, and you left that conflict nearly ruin your relationship. I'd just hate to see that happen again.

TIM: What, are you saying that I'm making a mistake by trying to keep Claire away from this guy?

PAULA: Tim, I'm not going to judge what you do.

She sees the expression of protest break out on his face and cuts it off with a raised hand and some calm words.

PAULA: And no, I don't think it's wrong of you to try and protect Claire. You have every reason to be worried. But there's only so much you can do.

TIM: I know. That's what worries me.

He lapses into a reflective quiet, and Paula deems it best to pull him out of it.

PAULA: But for the time being, why get so concerned about it? Things are much better than they were on Thanksgiving, correct?

TIM: Yep.

PAULA: Then don't let yourself worry about it so much.

His expression quickly shifts, as he goes on the offensive.

TIM: How about you, Mom? Are you doing better than you were on Thanksgiving?

She freezes in the middle of a breath, caught in the proverbial headlights.

INT: POLICE STATION (BRENT'S OFFICE)
EVENING

Brent is confused by Molly's sudden stop.

BRENT: What?

Molly quickly looks back at him, shaking her head as if to clear it enough to speak.

MOLLY: Nothing ... It's just ... Aren't you a little concerned about the way things have been going with Sarah?

BRENT: What do you mean?

MOLLY: You two seem awfully close all of a sudden.

The first signs of annoyance begin to streak Brent's face.

BRENT: What do you mean, all of a sudden? We're married!

MOLLY: Yeah, but ... you spent so much time apart. Didn't you do the whole "forgive and forget" thing a little too quickly?

BRENT: No, we didn't!

His voice has begun to rise and take on a certain edge.

BRENT: I don't see why Sarah and I shouldn't have tried to put that all behind us!

MOLLY: It's not that-it's just, you both changed a lot during the time she was in New York with Matt. Why did you have to rush back into being the perfect little husband and wife?

BRENT: Because-

He tosses his hands up, clearly aggravated.

BRENT: Because, when you marry someone, you make a commitment to them, no matter what might happen. I think I'm obligated to honor that commitment!

Molly opens her mouth to speak, but she cannot say anything. No appropriate words are there - and the ones she really wants to speak won't allow themselves to be uttered.

BRENT: Besides, why are you so worried about this, anyway?

He focuses in on her with an irritated stare.

ACT THREE

INT: SKATING RINK

EVENING

Jason and Courtney come up behind Alex and Lauren, their arms filled with bags, costumes, and the like.

COURTNEY: We're ready, guys.

Her voice is hushed, so as not to distract others from the skater on the ice. Alex and Lauren quickly turn around, though.

LAUREN: Okay, cool.

The gang begins to walk toward the exit as "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" blares over the sound system.

ALEX: I can't believe we're listening to Christmas music. This whole year was such a whirlwind ... It doesn't feel like it should be Christmas yet.

JASON: I kinda know what you mean. It was a fast year - it seems weird to be back doing the usual Christmas stuff already.

Alex's gaze falls upon the floor as they continue walking.

ALEX: Well, that's one thing I'm not looking forward to. My mom and I, spending the day together. It's just a different town this time.

LAUREN: You really aren't doing anything?

ALEX: I guess not. There really isn't much to do. We just moved into a new apartment, though, so at least we have a place of our own to spend the day at.

COURTNEY: You don't have to do that.

ALEX: Huh?

He stops walking, confused, and the others follow suit.

COURTNEY: I think I have something for you and your mom to do on Christmas.

INT: FISHER HOME (LIVING ROOM)
EVENING

Tim has simply left Paula speechless. She cannot come up with a response, and he finds himself at a loss for words, as well. What can he say without bullying her?

PAULA: I ... Do you mean ... ?

TIM: I heard you - saw you - crying, Mom.

PAULA: Tim, I just let the spirit of the day get to me.

TIM: And it made you cry?

She trips over her explanation, but forces it out nonetheless.

PAULA: I was thinking about how quickly time has gone by, how quickly all of you have grown up. It hit me like a ton of bricks and I guess I got overwhelmed.

And what about the papers? Tim is dying to ask, but he won't let himself.

TIM: Are you sure that's all?

PAULA: Yes, Tim - everything is fine. I appreciate your concern, but really, there's no need to worry.

She stretches out her arms and pulls him in for a hug. He wraps his arms around her, as well, and with his face out of her vision, allows his confusion to show.

INT: POLICE STATION (BRENT'S OFFICE)
EVENING

Molly doesn't answer Brent's question. He doesn't force the issue; strangely, he almost knew she wouldn't have anything to say.

BRENT: Look, why don't you just go?

MOLLY: But I-

Once again, she has nothing to say. It's all there, twisting her insides and burning her cheeks, but none of

it will come out as spoken words. She takes a few steps backward and turns the doorknob, never taking her eyes off of Brent.

MOLLY: Please, Brent, just don't make any rash decisions. Don't do anything you might regret.

He stares at her wordlessly, and she backs out of the door. It closes with a solid thud. Brent continues to lean back on his hands against the desk, his face wracked with uneasiness.

BRENT: Please, Molly, just stop this ... for the sake of all of us.

END OF EPISODE #134

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