

"Footprints"

Episode #166

[Several Days After #165, Midday]

[Previously ...](#)

*Matt grew suspicious about Sarah's pregnancy.

*Courtney kicked Jason out of the bedroom during their night at the cabin.

*Nick wondered why Ryan continues to protect his biological father, Stan, by keeping the truth about the rape from Claire.

TEASER

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APARTMENT-

Sarah rushes to the door, having been pulled from the comfort of her bed by a series of heavy, rapid-fire knocks on the door. She yanks the door open and squints her eyes at the brightness of the sky, which has somehow managed to be very bright and yet overcast at the same time.

"Matt! What's wrong?"

"We need to talk," he says, his voice thick with urgency as he charges inside.

Sarah closes the door and places her hands on her now-bulging stomach. "About what?"

"Brent's not here, is he?"

"No, he's at work-"

"Good." Matt looks around, frenzied, as if it doesn't seem real that he is actually here, about to do this.

"Let's sit down."

Sarah is already making her way over to the couch, her walk more of a waddle than anything else at this point. Matt helps her into her seat and then plants himself in an armchair.

"What's wrong?" Sarah asks. Her heart is already beating a million miles an hour.

Matt is trying to pull his thoughts together into words. "This is important, Sarah," he says, already out of the chair.

"Okay ..."

"I need you to give me some answers. About ... us - and about the baby."

ACT ONE

CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE-

"I'm glad you're here," Jason says, sliding into a chair.

Across the small table from him, Courtney wraps her hands around her mug of coffee. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"I dunno." Jason shrugs. "You've just been so quiet at skating this whole week, and it seems like you're busy every time I call ..."

"I've had stuff to do."

Jason isn't sure if the line is an excuse or an explanation, and he doesn't want to handle it the wrong way, so he just lets it hang in the air.

"I'm sorry," he says. "I know I was being weird up at the cabin, but I just ..." Part of him wants to tell her about the whole Alex situation, about how he kept flashing back to the night of the party and being in that bed with Alex - how he felt like he had to make it go away.

"You were drunk, I know. I'm not mad about what happened, Jay. I didn't like it, but I understand why it happened."

"Then why have you been so ..."

"Distant?" she interjects. As Jason nods, Courtney lifts up the mug and holds it in front of her face, ready to take a sip. She breathes in the rich fumes of the coffee, letting them ease her.

"It scared me," she says at last. "I mean, it was new territory for us anyway, and with you acting like that ... I just got freaked out."

Jason isn't sure how to respond.

"I guess I just need to know that everything can be normal again," Courtney says. "Can it?"

"Of course. Court, I promise, I won't let things between us get like that again."

She looks into his eyes and is almost certain that she sees something absolutely desperate in there,

something that tells her she has to nod. But she does so happily.

ACT TWO

MORIANI HOME-

"He's an asshole, Ryan," Nick says. "Need I remind you how much you hated living with him that summer?"

"Can you blame me?"

"After what happened with Claire? No. And I understand why you thought it would be a good idea to keep the truth from Claire - originally. But after all this time? It's been years! You certainly don't owe Stan anything-"

"Still ..." Ryan sets his drink down on the bar.

"Still what? He hasn't even bothered to keep in touch with you. For all we know, he's in jail again. Why worry about loyalty?"

Ryan looks away. He picks up his drink, takes a final swig, and exits the room.

Nick shakes his head, although he's the only one around. *I don't get anything Ryan does, I swear.*

He strolls into the kitchen, putting his keys down in their usual spot on the counter. A flashing red light - the number "1," he realizes - catches his eye, and he hits the "play" button on the answering machine.

"Ryan, it's me," the message begins after a beep. "I've been trying to get in touch with you. I left a couple messages on your line, but I haven't heard from you, so I thought I'd try this line. Gimme a call, okay?"

Nick immediately pushes the button that will tell the machine to store the message as new. Once the red numeral "1" begins flashing again, Nick turns away.

I'll let Ryan get that. I'll pretend I didn't listen to it. For now, at least.

Although the caller left no name, Nick is fairly certain of the man's identity. But that doesn't make sense, he tells himself. Why would Ryan ... ? No, it can't be ...

Can it?

ACT THREE

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APT.-

"What about the baby?" Sarah responds quickly, hoping to assuage whatever suspicions Matt might have.

But there is a flicker of something in her eyes that is not lost on Matt, something that strengthens his resolve to get the entire truth. "Sarah, this baby-

He stops at the sight of an entirely different expression. "What's wrong?"

She clutches her stomach and breathes rapidly, almost panting, until the intensity begins to fade.

"Sarah, what is it? Are you okay?"

She begins shaking her head but then switches to nodding. "No-yes ... I'm fine. But that - it happened a little while before you got here, too. Contractions."

"Oh, God." Matt's body begins to tingle with nervousness. "You mean ... ?"

She nods vigorously. "You've gotta get me to the hospital. This baby is on its way."

END OF EPISODE #166

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