

"Footprints"

Episode #173

[Immediately After #172, Early Evening]

[Previously ...](#)

\*Jason and Courtney reconciled after their dispute on her birthday. A guilty Jason debated telling Lauren what he thinks he knows about Alex but couldn't bring himself to do that to Alex.

\*Sarah intended to tell Brent the truth about the baby but lost it when Molly followed him into the room. Sarah exploded and hinted quite clearly at Molly's attraction to Brent before blurting out that the baby might not be Brent's.

TEASER

KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

"She's not yours."

Brent immediately steps back. His disbelief is evident to Sarah.

"I mean, she might be," she adds quickly, hoping to erase some of the damage that she knows she has just done. "I-I don't really know-"

"You don't know?" Brent's eyes, frozen open just moments ago, now tighten in a squint. "How could you not know? How-how the hell could this happen?"

"I already told you!" Sarah shouts. "That night I got back from New York - I saw you and Molly together and I heard you saying that our marriage was over ... I made Matt come back to the hotel with me ..."

Brent's stare snaps up in Matt's direction. "You?"

Matt is silent.

"So all the time you were in New York, there really was something going on between the two of you?" Brent's statement sounds less like a question than an accusation with some uncertainty tossed in.

"No!" Sarah exclaims instantly.

"That's not how it was, Brent," Matt says, trying his best to maintain some element of control.

"Oh, yeah? How was it, exactly? What'd you do, sweet-talk Sarah into sleeping with you when she was

all confused?"

"It was ..." Matt's hands circle as he tries to string together the proper words, but he is unsuccessful. "You know, you really shouldn't be trying to turn this around and blame it on me!"

Brent's nostrils flare. "It's pretty clear who's to blame here."

"Yeah, it is - you."

Now Brent is the one left speechless.

Matt can't resist going in for the kill, not after this long. "Maybe if you actually tried to convince your wife that you loved her, none of this would have happened!"

ACT ONE

KING'S BAY PARK-

"This blindfold thing is getting a little creepy," Courtney says, reaching out a hand instinctively to make sure she's not about to slam into anything.

"What do you mean?" Jason holds her arms lightly and guides her to the left.

"You did it on my birthday and now you're just doing it randomly," she says, taking tentative steps over what she can tell is grass. "Should I be scared?"

"Nah." He brings her to a halt. "You ready?"

"Very. Are you gonna untie this thing?"

"I don't know ..."

"I may not be able to see, but my knee could still find someplace to hurt you," she warns with a smile.

"Fine, fine." Jason reaches his hands up to undo the bandana's knot but they freeze in mid-air. He steps back, admiring the lingering curl of the smile on her pink lips ...

"Hello?" Courtney's voice pulls him from his deliberation. Swiftly he puts his fingers to work on the knot and, seconds later, the bandana falls from her eyes.

Pleasure spreads over her face as she takes in the scene. "Is this what I think it is?"

\*\*\*

## KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

The room is static for a brief moment, but it is long enough for the implications of Matt's outburst to sink into everyone present.

"Shut the hell up!" Brent finally grunts, pitching forward.

A pair of hands grab him and pull back. "Brent, stop!"

He jerks his head around and sees Molly. Their eyes meet and Brent finds himself trying to convey just a fragment of everything he's feeling right now.

Suddenly he realizes that Molly's hands are still resting on his arm and his back. He slides away quickly.

"Get out," Brent snaps at Matt. "Now."

Matt shrugs with inflated cockiness. "This is my business, isn't it?"

Brent's fists ball up and he grits his teeth before flipping around.

"Brent, come on, we need to talk about this," Sarah says.

"Not like this! Not with him here."

"I've got just as much a right to be here as you do," Matt says. "Maybe if you'd given your wife a little attention-"

Brent again lunges, but this time it is Sarah's raised hand that stops him.

"Matt, go," she says.

It takes Matt a moment to realize what she has said. When he does, his gaze jerks from Brent to Sarah and his expression shifts from one of aggression to disbelief.

"Go," she repeats. "This is between me and Brent."

The wounded look lingers only temporarily before the aggression returns in full force. "Go to hell," he mutters as he storms out of the room.

Once he is gone, Sarah casts an expectant look over at Molly. "Excuse me ... ?"

"What?"

"Are you gonna leave?" Sarah asks. "Didn't you hear what I told Matt?"

"Yeah, I did," Molly says without flinching. "But you know what? He is a part of this, and so am I. You said it yourself. And I'm not going anywhere until we all figure out exactly where we stand."

## ACT TWO

### KING'S BAY PARK-

"Yes it is," Jason answers with a grin. "I figured since your real birthday got all messed up ..."

"This is terrific!" Courtney sweeps her eyes over the clean blue of the sky, the fresh green of the grass, and the picnic carefully arranged underneath the shade of a healthy tree. She tosses her arms around his neck. "I never expected this!"

"And that, my dear, is why they call it a surprise."

She wastes no time in offering a quick smooth, something Jason gladly accepts.

"Come on," he says, leading her by the hand over to the picnic setup.

"This is so sweet," Courtney continues as they sit down. "You get definite points for this."

"Good. God knows I lost enough of 'em on your real birthday." He wraps his around her from the back. "I just want you to know how sorry I am about that night at the cabin. I was stupid and I was out of line and-I'm sorry."

"It's forgotten," she says. "We've been over that already. You're entitled to a mistake or two."

"Gee, thanks."

"No problem, babe." She turns her head so that they are face-to-face. "For you, anything."

Her goofy grin is the last thing Jason sees before her lips overtake his.

\*\*\*

## KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

Sarah tosses her head back. "I don't believe you! Do you think you could possibly find it within yourself to refrain from butting in for maybe ten minutes?"

"I'm not butting in," Molly says firmly. "You said that I'm the reason you had to fall into bed with Matt-"

"I didn't have to! That's what I'm trying to say. I made a mistake - a terrible, stupid mistake. And I don't want it to cost me everything. So maybe if Brent and I could have a chance to talk this over privately-"

"You need to leave, Molly."

Both Molly and Sarah turn to Brent in partial shock.

"Sarah and I need to talk alone," he says. "You-we can deal with everything else later. But right now, I need to talk to Sarah."

"Okay." With a meek nod, Molly makes her exit.

"Who does she think she is?" Sarah begins the moment the door closes. "Acting like she's the important one here ..."

Brent shrugs. "She is involved in this."

"Yeah, she's the one who caused it all! Maybe if she had some respect for our marriage-"

"Stop blaming Molly. You say you know you made a mistake and you want to try and work it out, but then you turn around and act like she forced you to do this. She's not the one at fault here. You screwed up."

"Of course." A sarcastic laugh skips out of Sarah's mouth. "I should have expected this. You don't care what I have to say, do you? Not as long as it makes Molly look bad-"

"Leave Molly out of this for a minute!"

"I can't! You know that as well as I do!" Sarah shoots up to a sitting position once again. "This isn't just about the baby - it's about our marriage. I've been honest with you, Brent. I told you about Matt. Now I need you to be honest. I need to know exactly what Molly means to you."

## ACT THREE

## KING'S BAY PARK-

"I just figured that since I messed up the whole cabin excursion, I might as well go back to what worked last year."

"That was a great birthday," Courtney muses.

"And that's what I want tonight to be," Jason says. "A great memory."

She peels herself out of his arms and tilts her head to look up at him. Her discomfort becomes immediately apparent to Jason.

"That's not what I meant," he assures her, drawing her back into his embrace. "I don't expect anything to happen tonight. I don't expect anything to happen until you're ready. No pressure, okay?"

She nods, appreciative but a bit embarrassed.

"I don't want this to come between us," he says. "I guess I was just trying to ... I don't know, reassure myself or something. I thought that if we had sex, it would solidify everything. I didn't think that maybe you just weren't ready."

"I love you," she says softly. "You know that."

"Yeah, I do."

"So why would you need to reassure yourself about our relationship? Why were you doubting it to begin with?"

\*\*\*

## KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, NURSERY-

Matt's fingers press against the glass and his nose lingers just a fraction of an inch from the window. He finds himself focusing on every little thing - every breath, every step.

And every seemingly insignificant movement of the little girl lying in the incubator just on the other side of the glass.

The mere thought that she might be his - it's weird. But it's a weirdness that's far more positive than negative. To see her lying there, eyes closed, tiny fingers curled up, fills him with some strange sense of hope.

And anger. He should have been there in the delivery room the moment she came into the world. He should be able to stand here and tell the other people that that's his daughter in there.

"Damn you, Sarah," he mutters.

"My feelings exactly."

Matt turns with a start and sees Molly standing only a few inches from his shoulder.

"Molly ..."

"Are you okay?" she asks. "This must be kind of a shock for you, too."

"I'm fine," he snorts, facing the window again.

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah!" He stays focused on the baby as he says, "Would you just leave me alone right now? I'm really not in the mood to talk about this."

He doesn't even glance at Molly. She stands there for a moment, watching him, feeling like nothing more than a spectator.

Finally she turns around and walks off slowly, realizing that - as much as she knows she is a part of this - she doesn't seem to have a place in any of it.

## ACT FOUR

### KING'S BAY PARK-

Jason combs his hand back through his short, sandy hair. "I don't know ... I guess I just had myself convinced that it was something we had to do."

"It is," Courtney says.

"What?"

"It is something we have to do," she says. Seeing Jason's reaction, she adds, "Eventually. When we're ready. I promise."

"Do you mean that?"

"Of course." She runs her fingers over his neck in long strokes. "It's something I wanna share with you."

"Same," he says. "I only wish ... Since it's gonna be your first time ..."

"That it could be yours, too? Don't worry about it. It will be our first time, and that's enough."

An appreciative smile falls over his face. "Have I told you how much I love you?"

"Couldn't hurt to say it again," she grins.

"I-" He gives her a peck on the lips. "Love-" Another peck. "You."

He takes her hand and stands, pulling her up along with him.

"What are you doing?" she asks.

"Last year, we had music," he says, gesturing over at the portable boombox. "I don't see why this year should be any different. Care to dance?"

"I'd love to."

Jason kneels and smoothly gets the player turned on. The opening strains of Mandy Moore's "I Wanna Be With You" play as he rises and takes Courtney's hands, leading her off the picnic cloth and onto the grass.

She rests her head on his shoulder, listening to the words as they sway together with the music:

*I wanna be with you  
If only for a night  
To be the one who's in your arms  
And holds you tight  
I wanna be with you  
There's nothing more to say  
There's nothing more I want except to  
Feel this way ...  
I wanna be with you ...*

\*\*\*

## KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL-

"This isn't about Molly!" Brent fires back. "This is about the fact that you slept with someone else, you got pregnant, and you made a conscious decision to keep the whole thing from me!"

"I wasn't trying to be sinister!" Sarah counters. "I was just-I didn't know what to do!"

"This is why you took so long to tell me you were pregnant, isn't it?"

"No!" she shouts, although she realizes that there is some truth to the allegation. "I was worried about how you'd react, regardless. After how upset you got at Danielle's wedding when I brought up having a baby ... I didn't think you'd want it."

"So what did you expect me to do? Divorce you because you were pregnant?"

"I don't know what to expect with you anymore! To be honest, I never really have! The only thing that's constant is the fact you're always running to Molly whenever we have a problem!"

Brent draws a sharp breath, clearly fumbling for a response. Finally he just throws up his hands. "We can talk about this later. Right now, I ... I don't even want to look at you."

He makes a forceful exit, but not before flashing Sarah a final glance. It's a glance that stays in her mind long after he is gone and overwhelms the jumbled canvas of dreams and nightmares that fills her head when sleep comes. Each time she sees it, the hurt and disgust make her cringe inwardly.

But there's something else. Brent's glance carries some other ingredient and that's the part that Sarah truly can't forget. Each time it glimmers in her mind's eye, she becomes more convinced that she knows what that extra element was.

Guilt.

END OF EPISODE #173

[Next Episode](#)