

"Footprints"

Episode #201

<Immediately After #200>

[Previously ...](#)

**Sarah became enraged when she received notification of the divorce. She went to confront Brent and found him with Molly. Sarah proceeded to tear into both of them and demanded that Molly admit she is in love with Brent.*

**Jason and Courtney argued over Lauren and Alex's relationship when Jason suggested they discourage it.*

**Things turned passionate and Lauren asked Alex to make love to her.*

FISHER HOME

Thank God they're not home, Jason thinks as he unlocks the front door. The mere thought of having to deal with his parents had him in knots the whole drive home, and his relief at finding both of their cars gone when he pulled into the driveway was palpable. Now he pushes the door open and slips inside, locking the door behind him immediately.

He climbs the stairs to his room, forcing his way through the flood of thoughts that threatens to drown him. He shuts the door and collapses onto the bed, not even bothering to remove his shoes. That agonizing drive to Courtney's house keeps swirling through his head. They didn't talk, didn't say a single thing, after Courtney demanded that he drive her home.

I should have said something, he thinks. I should have explained why I said what I did ... But even as he considers the possibility, some part of him is screaming that it is a horrible idea. He feels that part take hold of him and drag him even deeper into gloom.

He turns over onto his stomach, burying his face in the pillow. Flashes of memory move through his head in rapid succession: the fight with Courtney, scenes of Alex and Lauren together, his talk with Alex from a few days ago.

I never should have let this happen. I never should have let it become such a mess. He sighs into the pillow. *But I did. And now I have to figure out a way out of it.*

His first instinct is to block all thoughts of the situation from his mind entirely, and he pulls the pillow closer to his head and shuts his eyes.

MARSHALL APARTMENT

"Make love to me." Lauren's words are hot, heavy, as they sweep into Alex's ear.

Her hands continue to caress his bare chest, but he barely even feels them. He is absorbed by memory ... He can almost feel his skin on Jason's, his quivering fingers roaming over Jason's body. He can feel the warring sensations -- the pleasure, so strange and so wonderful, wanting so badly to take over but drowning in the waves of doubt and remorse. He can hear the words pounding on his brain: *You can't do this. Not again.* But his body wants to overpower the warnings--

And suddenly, he is very conscious of Lauren's skin pressed against his. His body is covered in a cold sweat, and it is sticking them together ever so lightly.

He tries to raise himself off of her a little, but he cannot escape her gaze as her face hovers just inches from his.

"I want this, Alex," she whispers, moving in for another kiss. Her lips crush into his but they meet no response.

"Alex?"

"Yeah ..." His voice is distant -- he barely even recognizes it himself.

"What's wrong?" Lauren widens the gap between them a bit, although Alex can sense her hesitation in doing so.

"Oh, God," Alex mutters.

"What?"

"I can't," he says quickly, pushing himself up off of her and rising to his feet. He moves quickly for his shirt, picking it up from the floor and struggling back into it.

"Why not?" Lauren asks, an edge of annoyance creeping into the question. "Why does it always go like this?"

"Because ..." He shakes his head. "I just can't." He looks around almost frantically and then adds, "I need to get out. I need some fresh air, I need to think. You can ... you can let yourself out."

He scrambles for the door, still trying to pull his head together. "I-I'm sorry," he says as he exits the apartment.

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

"Come on, Molly!" Sarah repeats, her voice hard and coming through gritted teeth. "Admit it! Admit you're in love with my husband!"

Molly just stares at Sarah, not saying anything. Sarah refuses to break eye contact with her older sister. She tries to read Molly's face and is sure she can see victory for herself in there somewhere -- *Come on, Molly ...*

"Stop it!" Brent interrupts. "Leave Molly alone."

"Shut up," Sarah snaps. "You wouldn't realize what she was up to if she hit you over the head with a billboard announcing it. She's got you wrapped around her finger, just like she wants."

Brent hesitates a moment before he says, "I told you to stop it, Sarah."

"And I told you to back off. I asked Molly a question and I want an answer!"

Finally Molly speaks, though it is as tentatively as possible. "Sarah, you have to understand--"

"I understand perfectly. You're completely head over heels for my husband and you've been waiting for the day you could snatch him up for yourself. I understand, Molly -- I just want to hear you say it!"

"This is insane, Sarah! You're acting like a crazy woman!" Brent cuts in, forcefully.

"Maybe," Sarah says, her words coming out in heavy breaths now. "Maybe I'm completely off my rocker. But I think we all know who shoved me off of it, don't we?"

Brent grabs her roughly by the shoulders. "This is not about Molly! This is about you and me!"

"This is completely about Molly! She's the reason this all happened!"

Brent shakes his head. "No--"

"Yes!" Sarah jerks out of his grip. "I know exactly what's going on, Brent! I know. I have since day one."

"You don't know anything!"

"You're wrong! I know plenty -- like the fact that you and Molly kissed the night we got married!"

FISHER HOME

The doorbell's call cuts into the silence that is buzzing all around Jason. He pulls the pillow tighter, hoping that maybe the sound is coming from some dream he's falling into ... even though he knows all too well that he is too far from sleep even to be touching the fringes of the dream world.

When the bell rings again only seconds later, Jason pulls himself up off of the bed. He hurries down the stairs and across the living room to the door, already envisioning a reconciliation with Courtney.

But when he yanks the door open, his relief gives way to searing anxiety.

"What's wrong?" he asks.

Alex doesn't say anything. He bursts into the house, never making eye contact with Jason. Sobs rock his body and his face, from what Jason can see, is stained with the trails of freshly fallen tears.

"What happened?" Jason repeats, his voice infused with even more concern now.

"I can't," Alex manages through his tears. "I can't."

"Can't what?" Jason can feel everything inside his chest tightening as his own heartbeat picks up.

Alex shakes his head as a pained whimper escapes his throat. "I can't do it. I just--I can't. Not anymore."

He almost falls into Jason's arms, and Jason finds himself opening up to embrace Alex, though his arms move lethargically, as if caught in some kind of awkward paralysis.

"I was wrong," Alex sobs. "I tried ... I tried so hard. But I can't keep it up, I can't keep doing this ..."

"Doing what?" Jason asks, though he has to choke the words out.

Alex is silent for a long, stinging moment. Finally he says, "You know."

"Alex ..." Jason says soothingly. "It's okay."

"It's not okay. I've made such a mess--I shouldn't have tried to do this. It was stupid--"

"You were confused. It's okay." Jason holds his shaking friend in his arms, caught between an urge to pull him tighter and a need to shove him away.

"I'm so sorry ..."

"You don't have to be sorry," Jason hears himself saying. "I know what you're going through. I understand."

For the first time, Alex brings his eyes up to Jason's. "You do?"

Jason nods softly, barely moving his head at all. He finds himself staring into his friend's face, able to see the pain, the embarrassment, the frustration, all bubbling up to the surface now.

He stays focused on Alex's face, trying to grasp the reality of the situation. He sees Alex moving closer, feels the heat closing in, but for some reason he doesn't realize what is happening.

Not until he feels Alex's lips pressing against his own.

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

A chill surges through the room. Sarah can see it shooting through both Brent and Molly, shocking them into silence. She feels it herself, a current of disbelief sweeping over her. For more than three years, she's kept that to herself. She's felt it clawing at her mind every time she even thought of Molly or Brent, felt it scratching to get out. And now it is.

"Betcha didn't see that one coming, did you?" she says finally, a hint of triumphance shining through.

"Sarah--" Molly says, a note of panic sounding prominently in her words. "If only you'd told us that before--we could have explained. It wasn't an ongoing thing. It just happened that night, we just--I'm sorry."

"It's a little late for sorry," Sarah muses as she begins to pace back and forth. "And I

don't think you would have told me the truth, even if I had spoken up. Because that would have ruined your little game, Molly. If you'd told the full truth -- that you want Brent, that you've been trying this whole time to take him away from me -- then you never would have been able to have him."

"That's not what I'm doing."

Sarah suddenly stops moving and throws up her arms. "There you go again with the lying! Stop it, already! Just tell me the truth. You want Brent, don't you?" When Molly doesn't respond, Sarah repeats, even more furiously, "Don't you?"

Molly folds her arms in front of her body. Words are twitching on her lips, almost ready to let loose, but they are in conflict and neither set can win out.

"Just admit it already!" Sarah cries. "This is all your fault!"

There is another moment of frozen intensity until Brent cuts in. "No, it's not!"

Sarah turns sharply to him. "Stay out of this!"

"No!" Brent shouts. "I won't! I can't! Because you're wrong -- this isn't Molly's fault!"

"Yes, it is!" Sarah fires.

"No, it's not! Because it's mine! I'm the one who has feelings for her!"

END OF EPISODE #201

What did you think of the developments between Jason and Alex? And how about the admissions between Sarah, Brent, and Molly? Where do you think the stories will go now? Hop on over to the Message Forum and share your thoughts!

[Next Episode](#)