

## "Footprints"

### Episode #202

<Immediately After #201 >

#### [Previously ...](#)

*\*An overwhelmed Alex was unable to make love to Lauren. He ran out on her and went straight to Jason. Alex broke down in Jason's arms and when Jason assured him that he understands what Alex is going through, Alex kissed him.*

*\*Brent tried to stop Sarah from tearing into Molly. When Sarah blasted both of them and admitted that she saw them kiss on the night she and Brent were married, Brent was pushed into admitting that he has feelings for Molly.*

## CHASE HOME

"Earth to Courtney ..."

Courtney snaps her head around quickly, her dark hair whipping around and landing across her face. She brushes it away, using the moment to stall just a little bit and gather herself.

"Are you all right?" Helen asks. "You looked about a million miles away."

"I'm fine," Courtney says, bringing her hands back together on the kitchen table and focusing her eyes upon them.

"Which I take to be Courtney-speak for, 'Something's bothering me.'"

Courtney shakes her head, still not looking at her mother. "It's nothing."

Helen bustles around in the pantry for a few seconds. She emerges holding a granola bar and unwraps it before she says anything else. "Is it Jason? I thought you two were supposed to be out tonight."

Courtney remains quiet.

"You know you can talk to me about these things--"

"I'm fine!" Courtney snaps.

Taken aback, Helen crinkles the granola wrapper in her hand. She moves to the trash can and disposes of the wrapper. Then she begins heading out of the kitchen.

She pauses just before she crosses the doorway. "I won't push. But I'm seeing you get very defensive, and that tells me that you think you made a mistake tonight."

Leaving her words to work on Courtney, Helen exits.

Courtney drops her head onto the table with a sigh. Her mother's comment swirls through her mind, weaving itself deeper and deeper with each round. And eventually it begins to take definite shape.

*Maybe I overreacted.*

And before she realizes what she is doing, she is out of her seat, grabbing her car keys off the kitchen counter, and heading out the door.

## **FISHER HOME**

Alex's lips are soft, a little wet, as they crush against Jason's.

It takes Jason what feels like an eternity to realize exactly what is going on. And the moment after it registers, he jerks away from Alex.

"Whoa," Jason says, raising a hand to his lips. He looks directly at Alex and stops his hand from wiping his mouth. "Alex ..."

"Oh, God." Alex face goes cold. "Jason, I thought--I just--"

"It's okay," Jason assures him, fighting every instinct in his body that is shouting at him to let loose.

"I-I'm sorry. I gotta go." Alex snaps around and takes a step in the direction of the door.

Jason grabs his arm to stop him. "Alex, don't go."

Alex tries to tug his arm away. "Please, Jason -- just let me go."

"I-In a second. Alex, I just want you to know ... I don't want you to think that I hate you or anything. It's not--I don't. I know how confusing this must be, and how hard it must be for you."

The sentiment hangs in the air and Jason finds himself wondering how much more of a mess this could become. But finally, Alex looks up at him with soft, blue eyes.

"I support you, buddy," Jason continues. "I do. And I'm gonna try my best to help you through this."

Alex swallows hard. "Thanks." He pauses, as if he is going to say something more. But all he does is repeat, "Thanks." And he turns back for the door.

This time, Jason lets him go.

## **KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL**

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!"

Sarah freezes. Her eyes go wide, though it appears to be more from rage than shock. "Shut up."

"No. Not anymore," Brent says, his voice suddenly weak. "We can't keep dancing around this. I'm the reason all of this has happened -- because I have feelings for Molly."

Before he even realizes it, Sarah's hand pulls back and then comes cracking across his face. Brent brings a hand to his cheek, clearly stunned and trying to figure out what kind of reaction he can allow.

He doesn't have to make a decision. Molly makes it for him: She lunges at her sister, grabbing Sarah by the shoulders and screaming, "You have lost it, Sarah! You are absolutely out of control!"

Sarah fights back, wriggling out of Molly's grip. She shoves her older sister, but Molly

bounces right back and reaches both hands up to grab Sarah by the throat.

Brent wedges himself between them and manages to find just enough strength to hold them apart.

"Stop this!" he orders. "This is out of hand!"

Sarah swings her dark blonde hair out of her face, snarling, "Well, if Little Miss Innocent over here would just learn to control herself--"

"Stop!" Brent repeats. "I mean it, Sarah."

He can see the protests rising again in Sarah's face, showing in her burning eyes and her flared nostrils, but she manages to hold them just below the surface.

"Calm down," Brent says, his voice much softer. "And Molly ... I think you should go."

Molly looks to him, her face filled with a thousand questions. Brent acknowledges them with a nod and, for now, that is enough for Molly. She makes her way to the door wordlessly and lets herself out.

Brent and Sarah watch as Molly exits. Once the door closes, Sarah says, "Good thing you got rid of her. This way we can talk this out--"

"No."

"What?"

"No. Not now. We need to cool down, Sarah."

"What we need to do is talk. We need to work this out--"

"I said no." His tone makes it clear that the discussion is over, at least for now. "There's just one thing I want to say to you."

Sarah takes a deep breath and brushes back a few loose pieces of hair. "What?"

"Stop this," he warns her. "Leave Molly alone. And please, just grant me the divorce."

Sarah lets a cold stare linger for a prolonged moment before she flips around. She stomps out of the room, pulling the door shut behind her as loudly as she can.

She pauses on the other side of the slamming door, her breathing now very intense. "This isn't over," she mutters, clutching her purse tightly to her body. "Not by a long shot."

## **MARSHALL APARTMENT**

A flash of dread surges through Alex as he sticks his key into the lock. The idea of Lauren still being here, of having to face her now, is almost enough to make him stay in the hallway. But he unlocks the door and slips inside, relieved to see that she has gone.

He shoves the door closed behind him. His trembling fingers fumble with the lock, but he gets it done up again, and the second it is, he bolts for his bedroom.

He throws himself onto the bed, his clothes still on, without turning on the lights. He grabs a pillow and hugs it tightly. He can feel the pillowcase growing damp from his tears, but he doesn't mind. The feeling is almost comforting -- almost.

He clutches the pillow as sobs rock his body. His cries are silent, for the most part, though an occasional moan slips out. And he finds those moans slowly turning to mumbles words, desperate clips and phrases.

"I didn't. I couldn't have ... I didn't," he sobs. Something inside tries to reassure him by bringing Jason's soothing words to the fore, but that horrible scene of leaning in and kissing Jason overrides everything and sends a fresh wave of torment through Alex.

"I was right," he cries, his words little more than a hoarse whisper. "I knew this would happen. I ruined everything ..."

And he lies there on the bed, crying, rocking, as the black clouds of memory pull him deeper and deeper into the pit of despair.

## **FISHER HOME**

Jason has no idea how much time has passed, but he is still sitting on the couch, his head collapsed into his hands and his heart racing. When the doorbell rings, he hardly even hears it. It is distant, detached, something from a faraway place in which he has no interest.

The second ring hits him differently. It takes a moment to sink in, but as the chimes echo in his ears, something clicks. He is suddenly alert -- and aware that he has to deal with another visitor.

He hesitates in standing up to answer the door, but a call from outside convinces him to do it. "Jason! Jason, it's me!" comes Courtney's voice.

Something drives him to the door and he scrambles to open it. At the very sight of Courtney, he knows everything is all right: She is holding a bottle of champagne, smiling awkwardly, her rage from earlier this evening nowhere in sight.

"Hi," she says as they share a lingering stare.

"Hey." Instinctively Jason's hand goes up to the back of his neck. "What's up?"

Courtney seems to contemplate her course of action before taking a deep breath and proceeding. "I was thinking," she says slowly. "And maybe ... maybe you had a point before. Maybe I do need to butt out of this--this thing with Lauren and Alex."

A flood of relief washes through Jason. "Really?"

"Yeah. So I was thinking--" She steps into the house, nuzzling against his body and holding up the bottle of champagne. "--that maybe we could celebrate a little."

Jason furrows his brow, though there is nothing playful about the way he does it. "Celebrate?"

"Mm-hmm." She brushes her lips against his and feels his body tense up immediately. She draws back. "What's wrong?"

He just stares at her. "I, uh, I'm just surprised ... to see you. I wasn't expecting it, that's all."

"Oh." Courtney returns to the kiss, adding more intensity this time. Jason accepts it, but that is all he does.

Courtney pulls back again. "Are you still upset?"

He doesn't respond. He doesn't even meet her gaze.

"I'm sorry," Courtney says. "I know I get ... a little dramatic sometimes. But Jason, none of that should matter. Lauren and Alex, they shouldn't be a factor in our relationship. Our love is too important to mess up because of something like that."

*Something like that.* Jason ponders the bitter irony of her words but still says nothing.

"That's why, when I was thinking," Courtney continues, "I thought maybe it's time to make it more serious--to take it to the next level."

She looks to Jason for some sign that he is absorbing all of this and he nods lightly.

"I'm ready," she says, breathing the words right over his lips. "I want you to make love to me." Her lips return to his.

This time, she feels Jason responding. She pulls his body closer to hers and kicks the front door closed behind her. The kiss grows more passionate, more intense.

And then, suddenly, Jason tears himself away from her. "I can't do this."

"What?"

"I--we--we can't do this."

"Why not? Jason--" But the fight suddenly fades. She sighs, trying to find something in that face of his, the face she's known so well for so long. And all she sees is resistance.

"I'm sorry," he says weakly.

She gives him a puzzled look, already turning back for the door. "So am I."

He watches her leave without saying another word.

## **END OF EPISODE #202**

*What do you think these new twists will mean for Jason and Courtney? How will Alex and Lauren fit into the picture? Share your thoughts on this episode over at the Message Forum!*

[Next Episode](#)