

"Footprints" Episode #216

[Previously ...](#)

**Brent awoke from his coma to hear Sarah fighting with Jason about her plot to keep Molly out of Brent's room. Jason told Sarah to leave when it became obvious that Brent did not want to speak with her, but Jay also promised his sister that he would keep Molly away for the night.*

**Courtney filled in Lauren about her reconciliation with Jason.*

**Matt's frustration over Sarah's hatred of Molly mounted.*

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"Admit it," Sarah spits. "You want to be with her."

"I--" Brent's throat is so dry that the words and ideas leaping off his brain are unable to make it out of his mouth. He casts a glance behind him at Molly, her dark brown hair swaying gently in the soft breeze that has surrounded them.

"It's not like you're doing a good job of pretending otherwise! Just admit that you want her!" Sarah moves closer to Brent, each ominous step thundering in his ears.

"Sarah, we--it's not--"

But Sarah's icy glare silences him. She is close to him now, so close that he can feel every angry breath on his face.

"You can have her!" Sarah shouts. Her voice echoes so loudly that Brent finds his ears stinging. Each subsequent word becomes more painful. "As far as I'm concerned, the two of you are meant for each other! She's a terrible sister and you're a terrible husband, abandoning me to go off with my sister!"

Despite the voice of common sense inside that tells him not to do it, Brent again glances over his shoulder. He is stunned to find Molly fading.

"Molly!" he gasps as her image grows dimmer and dimmer.

"That's too bad. Too bad!" he can hear Sarah practically screaming in his ear. He turns back to her just in time for her to spew a delighted cackle in his face.

The hospital room begins to come into focus. *Thank God*, Brent thinks as he realizes that he has escaped the realm of nightmares.

His breathing is heavy now. It's no surprise, considering how vivid that dream was. He can still hear Sarah's angry voice pulsing in his ears, can still feel the desperation aching inside as he watched Molly fade from view.

The nightmare is still swirling around him when he suddenly becomes aware that he is not alone in the room. He jerks his head to the side but finds no one standing by the bed.

His gaze continues to roam over the room and soon finds what it is looking for. He narrows his eyes at the woman, almost disbelieving, as if to ask, "What are you doing here?"

"Hi," she says. Her enthusiasm is bubbling not too far below the surface as she raises a hand to greet him. "I've been dying to see you."

FISHER HOME

Waiting in the middle of the living room, Paula hears the door open upstairs. She turns to Bill. "I'm having flashbacks to prom nights," she says, smiling.

"So am I. Kind of makes you feel old, doesn't it?" He fakes a shudder.

The footsteps from above get louder and soon Jason appears at the top of the stairs. He comes down casually, trying to look as though nothing special is going on but quite aware that his parents are observing him with rapt attention.

Bill whistles. "Lookin' good!"

Jason steps down at the foot of the stairs and rolls his eyes at Bill. "Thanks, Dad."

"You do look very handsome," Paula says, coming over to fuss with the collar of his silver shirt and adjust the matching silk tie. "This must be some night you have planned."

"It is," Jason admits as he wriggles away from her busy hands. "I just hope Courtney likes it."

"I'm sure she will," Bill says.

Jason raises his eyebrows. "Keep your fingers crossed."

He pulls his keys from the pocket of his jacket. Seeing that he is ready to leave, Paula clasps her hands together in front of her mouth.

"Look at you," she marvels.

"Mom ..."

"All right, all right," she grins. "Go on. Let us old folks get out of the way so that you can go live it up."

"Sounds good to me," Jason says slyly. He gives her a quick hug and peck on the cheek. "I'll see you both later."

He raises a hand in a final wave and makes his way out the front door. Bill watches it even after it closes behind their youngest son.

"He really is grown-up," Bill says quietly.

"I know." Paula keeps her eyes fixed on the door, too, but for a different reason.

I only wish all of my children could be so happy, her mind whispers.

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"Danielle!"

A surge of excitement rushes through Brent's body as his sister rises from the chair in the corner and comes quickly over to his bedside.

She takes his hand, starting to grip it firmly before she becomes conscious of the bandages covering it. "Thank God you're okay. I am so relieved."

"Yeah, I'm pretty happy about it myself," Brent says. He grins up at her, even though the gesture pulls at the burned skin on his face and rings a few alarms of pain.

"So how do you feel?" Danielle asks.

"Not half bad. From what I hear, I managed to do a pretty big number on myself, so not too bad at all."

"Good. I was so worried." She pauses to breathe a sigh of relief. "Dad and Josh -- they wanted to come up and see you, too, but there was a lot going on with the paper and they couldn't really get away."

"Did they call you to tell you I was awake?"

"Someone did," Danielle smiles. "Someone who cares about you very much."

The comment registers with a reverberating warmth inside of Brent. "So the tour's all over, right?" he asks. "You're back in San Diego?"

"For now, yeah. It's a little bit weird not having to work or anything."

"Well, what about the follow-up to your big smash of a debut album, Ms. Superstar?"

"It's coming along," she says. "I'm writing and we've done a little messing around with the band and some vocals. I'm still coming down off of this tour, though. It's absolutely exhausting, even moreso now that it's all over!"

"I bet. So are you ..." The developing question fades into oblivion on Brent's lips. Danielle turns around to see what has captivated Brent.

She sees Molly standing in the doorway.

SARAH TAYLOR'S APARTMENT

"What's going on?" Matt asks, gliding inside the apartment as soon as Sarah pulls open the door. "Is Victoria okay?"

"She's fine. She's taking a nap right now. What makes you think she isn't?"

"The way you sounded on the phone," he says, as if regaining his breath now that he knows his daughter is fine. "You made it sound like something had happened--"

"Something did happen," Sarah says. She closes the door and leans against it, hands clasped on the doorknob behind her. "Just not something with Victoria."

"... which means it's something with Brent and/or Molly, right?"

"Correct." She suddenly sounds weary. "Brent woke up."

"Oh, that's great. That's--that's terrific," Matt says, wondering if he sounds as though he's trying too hard to sound enthusiastic.

"Yeah, it is," she sighs. "Or it should be."

"Should be?"

"He woke up at kind of a bad time."

Matt's expression requests an explanation.

"He woke up as I was arguing with Jason," Sarah explains.

"Arguing with Jason? Why?"

"About Molly ... Of course, about Molly."

"So what? He got mad?"

"It wasn't just that," she says. "The reason Jason and I were fighting--Molly told him something that made him a little angry with me."

Matt folds his arms in front of him. His face says clearly that he isn't going to take any of Sarah's twisting of the truth. "What'd you do?"

"Nothing!" she cries, throwing her palms out in front of her.

"Nothing?"

"Yeah ... Pretty much. I just--She was milling around the damn hospital all day long, wringing her hands and crying and getting in the way."

"Probably because she was worried about Brent!"

"Yeah, but she's so damn melodramatic about it," Sarah spits. "So I asked someone to keep an eye out for her and not let her into the room."

Matt's arms fly open in outrage. "*What?* Who'd you get to do that?"

"Someone I know through work. A--He's a security guard."

"You hired a security guard to keep Molly away from Brent?" Matt repeats, hardly believing the words. "Are you nuts?"

"I was worried about Brent! I wanted him to be okay and I thought that if she was there--"

"That's bull!" Matt shouts. "You know it as well as I do. This was just a big, jealous stunt, wasn't it? You--God, you make me sick!"

CHASE HOME

Jason does feel strangely like a teenager on a first date as waits for the door to be answered. This isn't the type of date to which he's accustomed, especially with Courtney ... but that's the point. Tonight is supposed to be special.

The door flies open and he can practically feel the excitement leaping out at him from the house. Judging by the beaming faces of Helen and Don, Courtney has been hyping this night ever since Jason sprung the idea on her.

Of course, she doesn't really know what's coming ...

He grins to himself as he greets Don and Helen. "Hello there."

"Hi, Jason," Helen says happily, motioning for him to come inside. "Courtney is upstairs. She'll have herself together in a few minutes."

"Wonderful," Jason says. "So how are you two doing tonight?"

"Are you trying to suck up?" Don laughs, tossing an arm over Jason's shoulder.

"Me? Never."

Helen marches over to the foot of the stairs. "Courtney!" There is no answer. "Courtney, Jason's here!"

When there is still no indication that Courtney has any idea that Jason has arrived, Helen begins to ascend the stairs. "I'll go get her," she announces as she disappears upstairs.

"So Jason," Don says, clasping his hands together, "what kind of mischief will the two of you be getting up to tonight?"

"I dunno," Jason shrugs. "I was thinking we'd start out by toilet-papering some houses, then maybe steal some dinner from a McDonald's ... I was hoping maybe we could fit in a drag race or two, y'know."

Don pats him roughly on the back. "You do that. Go right ahead ... I'll even try to fake a couple of tears at your funeral so no one gets suspicious."

"Gee, thanks."

The two men share a laugh and then Don asks, "Really, what do you have planned for tonight?"

"I'm afraid that's top-secret information."

"I can keep a secret, I promise you."

"No can do," Jason says with a shake of the head. "But I promise that the whole point of this is to make Courtney happy."

"Good. You know that's all I care about."

Jason nods. Just then Courtney appears on the landing of the staircase, with Helen behind her.

"Wow," Jason says as Courtney descends the stairs. Her dark hair is pulled up, with soft curls held up on the back of her head and two thin, wavy pieces hanging on the sides of her face. An ankle-length, baby blue dress, delicately beaded on the top with tiny silver crystals, compliments her tanned skin perfectly, as far as Jason can tell.

He finds that he has been holding his breath and releases it as she reaches the bottom of the stairs. "You look wonderful," he says as he takes her hand in his.

"You don't clean up so bad yourself," she grins.

"What a charmer I've got here," he says to Don and Helen, pointing at Courtney. "Anyway, we'd better get going. We've got--we have someplace to be."

Courtney pauses, flashing him a curious look. "And that someplace would be?"

"You'll find out soon enough. C'mon, let's go."

Don and Helen usher to the door and outside, amidst a flurry of goodbyes and

excitement. The young couple slips into Jason's car and heads off as the pink summer sunset hangs overhead.

"She's so lucky," Helen says with a contented sigh.

Don nods. "They both are."

SARAH TAYLOR'S APARTMENT

The angry declaration sends a shiver through Sarah. She freezes, and for once Matt is certain that he has her attention.

"This is getting out of hand," he says, trying not to keep his voice a few notches below yelling. "It's one thing to be mad or jealous or any of those things. But when you start pulling stuff like this and saying that you're gonna get Molly -- it's gone too far."

Sarah is silent. It looks to Matt as though he has made his point ... until Sarah speaks. She holds up her chin and keeps her face steely. "I'm just trying to make my marriage work."

"When you wanna make a marriage work, you go to counseling! You don't throw fits and keep your husband away from his friends!" Matt blasts, his restraint falling away quickly.

"I am *not* keeping him away from his friends. I'm keeping him away from the woman who broke up our marriage. Or at least I tried to. Even that didn't work!"

"It didn't work because it's not the solution! You could ship Molly off to Timbuktu and you wouldn't solve a damn thing!"

"Don't give me any ideas," Sarah says dryly. "You don't understand what's going on here, Matt. She set out to steal Brent from me. She wanted to ruin things between us because she's miserable and she's been such a loser with guys these last few years. If I could just get him away from her--"

"Stop it!" Matt shouts. "Cut it out! I don't wanna hear this anymore. You are *scaring* me, Sarah!"

"You're scaring me!" she fires back. "What the hell kind of friend are you, anyway, trying to make me give up something I want--something I need--this badly?"

Matt shoves his way past her and grabs the doorknob. "I can't even talk to you right now. You're cracked, Sarah. This is insane."

He yanks the door open roughly and shoots through it before Sarah can respond. The door slams behind him.

Sarah's instinct is to chase after him, but she can't. Not now.

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"Danielle!" Molly cries in surprise. She hurries to the bed and the women share an excited embrace.

"Oh, it is so good to see you," Molly says as they part. "I've missed you."

"I've missed you, too. I only wish this reunion could've been under better circumstances." Danielle gestures over at the bed and Brent.

Molly moves closer to the bed and locks eyes with Brent. "Well, everything is going to be fine now. The worst is over."

"It's good to see you," Brent smiles.

Molly studies him in silence for a moment. He looks weak, but the life is back in him. That shell that has been lying in this bed is gone and the Brent she knows is back. "It's good to see you, too."

"So when did you get in?" she asks, turning back to Danielle. "Have you been here long?"

"My flight got in this afternoon. I got here a couple of hours ago, although Sleeping Beauty over here just woke up."

"More like Sleeping Nightmare," Brent deadpans, gazing down at the bandages that cover his hands.

"Yeah, well, we'll take ya any way we can get ya," Danielle says brightly. She takes in the sight of her brother, awake and smiling again. "When we heard what had happened--it was like the world stopped turning, Brent. I'm so glad that you're okay, and I'm so glad I was able to come and see you."

"I'm glad you were able to come, too!" Molly enthuses. "I figured you were all too busy to come up right now. What a terrific surprise!"

The women launch back into some catching-up, but something Molly said is poking at Brent's mind. *What a terrific surprise ...* but she was the one who called Danielle in the first place, right?

Someone who cares about you very much. That's what Danielle said. *She must have meant--*

He doesn't need to finish the thought. As if this were all some giant play orchestrated by Fate, Sarah appears in the doorway.

END OF EPISODE #216

Did Sarah finally push Matt too far? What does the night have in store for Jason and Courtney? Come visit the Message Forum to share your thoughts on this episode!

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