

## "Footprints" Episode #220

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

*\*Encouraged by Danielle, Andy went to take Katherine away from Nick. He was shocked to overhear Katherine shout that she arranged for Danielle to be kept away from King's Bay forever.*

*\*Danielle tried to convince Sarah to give up on Brent, who refused to speak to his wife when she showed up at the hospital.*

*\*Jason and Courtney made love.*

## CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE

The late hour has brought a hush over the coffee house. The night's performers have cleared out and so has most of the audience, though they have left empty cups, dirty plates, and crumpled napkins in their wake. The staff is now bustling around to clean up as the few remaining patrons share giant mugs of coffee and quiet conversation.

Molly and Danielle, each holding her mug carefully in its saucer, sit down on an empty sofa in the middle of the room.

"This was a good idea," Molly says. "I was hoping we'd have a chance to sit down and catch up."

"Me, too. I figured it would be done best away from the hospital," Danielle says.

"Yeah, probably a good idea. Gosh, I am so glad to see you! I was hoping you'd come up to see Brent."

"The timing just happened to work out. But I'm glad I could be here for him. When we heard about the fire--God, I just thought the worst ..."

"I know," Molly agrees, her eyes widening as she relives that initial fear.

Danielle touches a hand on her friend's knee. "Brent told me about Tim. I'm so sorry to hear that."

Molly lets the comment soak in for a moment. "Thanks. It's hard ... There are days I can hardly believe he's gone, and some I don't want to believe it. But it gets easier, from what I hear. I hope."

"It does." Danielle sighs and then takes a drink of her coffee, letting it coat her insides with warmth and calm. She didn't realize how frazzled her nerves had gotten. "It is so

nice to see all of you again, but it seems like there's so much ..."

Molly completes the thought with a raised eyebrow and half-grin. "Drama?"

"Yeah. And speaking of drama ... I didn't want to get into this back there, but I ran into Andy at the hospital."

"Andy was there?"

"He came to see Brent. But that's the weird part."

"That he came to see Brent?"

"No. I'll get to that in a second." Danielle pauses to pull the story together in her head and realizes that the encounter has been running nonstop through her mind. "I was out in the hallway and he turned the corner all of a sudden, and there we were. There was no getting around it."

"Did it go okay?"

"Yeah. It was fine. We got to catch up a little bit and it was actually very pleasant ... Better than I imagined it would be. I was so worried that he would be full of bitterness about what happened."

"Andy's not like that," Molly pipes in.

"I know. But ... he got hurt pretty badly, Mol. I wasn't sure how he'd react if we saw each other. Though to tell the truth, I was hoping to see him. I needed to have it all resolved."

"So how'd it go? Did you resolve things?"

"I guess so," Danielle says. "I had some things that I needed to say to him and he had some very nice things to say in return. I think the whole thing was a little bit awkward, but I guess it had to be. I'm just glad he's doing well."

"He is, I think. He's having more trouble with his mother--"

"He told me about that. And that's where things got weird, actually. We were talking about that whole situation and then all of a sudden, he just said he had something to take care of and took off."

"Just like that?"

"Yeah." Danielle stops, resting an elbow on her knee and using her hand to support her chin. "I wonder what it was he had to do so suddenly."

## MORIANI HOME

"I thought I took care of that," he hears Katherine cry. "I arranged for her to be away from King's Bay for good!"

Andy freezes in the driveway, his entire being fixed on what he can hear through the open window. Something inside of him is protesting violently. It can't be true. Danielle left town of her own accord -- that had nothing to do with his mother.

But another part is screaming that it can be true, it must be. After everything Katherine did to them ...

He rides a current of outrage back up to the front door and begins hammering at it with the knocker. It is only a matter of seconds before the door flies open.

"I thought I told you to get lost," Nick says coldly.

"This won't take long," Andy announces through gritted teeth. He pushes his way inside the house without even looking at Nick. His gaze is already focused on Katherine, perched on the landing of the staircase.

"Mother!" he cries angrily, stopping at the foot of the stairs.

Nick's hand grasps Andy's shoulder roughly and spins him halfway around. "She is my wife and she's staying here," Nick orders.

"You can have her!" Andy frees himself from his stepfather's hold and turns back to Katherine. He stares directly at her as he declares, "I don't want her!"

Until now, Katherine has been wearing a look of shock, as though she were not quite sure what to make of Andy's powerful return. Though she still appears shocked, genuine hurt and confusion have come in to join it.

"I heard you," he says almost under his breath. "I heard what you said about taking care of Danielle for good."

Katherine remains stony. She gives no evidence of guilt but certainly makes no move to contradict him.

"What did you do to her?" Andy demands, his voice burning so intensely through his throat that it almost sounds hoarse. "What did you do to me?" No response. "Answer me!"

Katherine gazes down upon him from her post on the staircase. An agonizingly long moment slithers by as she considers this man, the son she once held so dear, the one who has turned her life so utterly upside-down over the last few years.

"You heard correctly," she says with an eerie calm. "I arranged to have Danielle kept away for good."

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

Jason's entire body feels so incredibly intense and yet so amazingly relaxed at the same time. The soft sheets of the hotel bed embrace his body, coaxing his breathing down from the exhilarating highs it reached just minutes ago.

He can see the black of the night clearly through the thin layer of curtain that is covering the window, but right now it feels like morning to him. A glorious new morning.

"Oh my God," he says again, using his arm to draw Courtney more tightly to him.

She chuckles. "I know. Jason, that was ... whoa."

"It was powerful." The quickness of his response, which sounds so certain, comes as something of a surprise both to him and to Courtney, but it sounds right.

"Yeah," she agrees. "It's like ... I don't know, I always wondered about how they talk about love and all that stuff in movies. Part of me always thought that none of that stuff really happened, that maybe it wasn't possible to share something that deep with another person where you feel like you just totally ... connect."

Jason doesn't miss the chance for a double entendre. With a sly grin he lifts his eyebrows.

Courtney shakes her head in amusement. "You know what I mean. Don't you?"

"Yeah," he says with hesitation. "Totally."

Her slender fingers begin tracing random circles and lines over the smooth skin of his torso. Courtney finds herself marveling at every curve of his body, at every firm spot of

muscle and every spot of fat. Not that there's much on his body, but still. Even the untuned parts of his chest and stomach are absolutely mesmerizing to her.

"I am so glad I waited for this," she says softly. "I always thought I was missing out on something when everybody else started doing it. But it never seemed right, not until now. It was like I knew what kind of experience it could be and I didn't want to settle for anything less ... Jeez, how corny does that sound?"

She is expecting another quick response, but when it doesn't come, she assumes that Jason is just reflecting back on the night they have had, much like she has been doing. But when she looks up to catch that amazed expression on his face, all she sees is the back of his sandy hair.

She slides up away from his chest and props herself up on her arm so that she can get a look at his face. The expression she sees is definitely not one of amazement.

"Jason?" she says. A horrible stab of panic assaults her. "Jay, what's wrong?"

## **CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE**

"So tell me," Danielle says, "what happened when Sarah went back to Brent's room?"

Molly conveys her amazement with a pair of widened eyes. "Shockingly, almost nothing. I was all set for another blowout."

"Yeah, I thought I saw it heading in that direction. Did Brent and Sarah finally talk?"

"Not really. She talked. He refused to listen." Molly pauses in thought and shakes her head as she stares down into her coffee. "She actually gave in and left without much of a fight, but I think it's because she's trying to deny that things are so bad between them."

Danielle nods sadly. "I'm detecting a lot of denial from Sarah. I don't think she's ready to accept how far this has gone."

"I don't think so, either. I also don't think she wants to admit that a lot of this is her fault."

"She's not the only one at fault here," Danielle says tersely.

Suddenly Molly feels distinctly uncomfortable around her friend. It takes her a very long moment even to muster a weak response: "I know that, Danielle."

"You say that, Molly, but I don't know if you really understand." Danielle's tone is hovering somewhere between reprimanding and counseling, and the tightrope walk is clearly an uncomfortable one for her. She looks strained as she continues, "Sarah didn't set all of this in motion. Obviously she's picked up on something between you and Brent -- that's what she said made her sleep with Matt, isn't it?"

Molly's mouth opens in protest but Danielle cuts her off. "Mol, that has to be a devastating thing to deal with. I'm not condoning the things Sarah has done, but I can understand where she's coming from. Don't forget that I saw you and Brent kissing. If Sarah had--"

Now it is Molly's turn to interrupt. "She did."

"What?"

"She saw us," Molly explains. The words sound as though they are being dragged out against her will. "The night she and Brent got married, Sarah came home and saw Brent and I kissing. That was the first time it happened -- the only time aside from the one you saw. But I guess she freaked out and decided that she had to marry Brent or she would lose him."

"Wow." Danielle allows the information to sink in. "Molly, this ... It's gone really far, farther than it should have. And part of the reason for that is because everyone's been hiding things."

"I know ... but there's not a lot we can do about that now, is there?"

"Maybe not," Danielle agrees. "Everyone has to move forward. But I think part of that is reconciling with what's happened in order to finally move away from it. Does that make sense?"

"Yeah, of course," Molly answers tentatively, trying to read Danielle.

"That means being honest. You and Brent have denied it and evaded the question and run all sorts of circles around it. But be honest now," Danielle says, hardly able to believe that she is asking this question. "How deep are your feelings for Brent?"

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

Jason's silence sucks all the air out of the room. Courtney can feel her breathing getting tighter as her heart begins thudding against her chest.

"Jay, what's wrong?"

She hears him sigh heavily but he makes no move. She is about to reach out a hand and turn him herself when he finally begins to roll over.

"It's nothing," he says as he settles slowly onto his back.

"Which, loosely translated, means that it's something. So tell me what it is." When she sees him struggling to respond, she says, "After what we just shared--I don't want us to have to keep things from each other. Tell me what's wrong."

Jason stares up at the ceiling as he speaks, not risking the chance of eye contact. "What you said before about being glad you waited ... I was thinking how much I regret what happened with Shannon and me."

For Courtney, the barrier between them is broken completely now. She clasps his hand tightly in hers and strokes his fingers. "That doesn't matter. It was a completely different thing from what we just did."

"I know. I keep trying to separate the two in my head. But it's like the time with Shannon -- and don't get me wrong, *this* was just, like, incredible -- but the time with Shannon kinda tainted it. Because I didn't get to have that same experience you had of it being your first time ... I didn't get to share that with you."

"That is so sweet," she says with a soft smile. "And so un-guy-like. Have you been reading romance novels or something?"

He grins at the comment, although the effort feels like a bit much. "I dunno, maybe I'm just being stupid," he says finally.

"No, you're not. The fact that this matters to you, that it means so much to you that you want every little detail to be perfect--that just makes it better. But let it go, Jay. What happened with Shannon was just a big mess. I don't want that to have any bearing on our relationship now."

She can see his hesitance but he eventually assents. His body gives in to her touch and he rolls over onto his side so that he can stroke her hair.

"I love you so much. Thank you," he says, his lips turning up into just enough of a grin for his whole face to light up. Courtney finds herself wishing that she could capture the expression in a photograph and stare at it forever.

"I love you, too," she says after silently drinking him in for a moment. She feels his lips

come down upon hers as his weight moves back on top of her.

## **CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE**

Suddenly Molly's mocha seems to hold some incredible interest: Her attention is focused firmly upon the steaming chocolate pool.

Danielle waits, allowing Molly time to gather herself, but finally she has to speak. "Molly?"

Molly continues staring into the cup and then looks up abruptly. "Sorry. I--It's just strange to talk about this."

"I can imagine. But Molly ..."

"I know, it's not like it's a big secret anyway, I guess." She draws in a deep breath, letting the mocha's steam fill her head. "I do have feelings for Brent. Very deep feelings. If we'd met under different circumstances ..."

"Mol." Danielle rests a comforting hand on her friend's forearm. "This has to be hard for you. But I'm glad you can at least admit your feelings, and I know you're not out to cause trouble."

"No, I'm not. And the way I feel about him ... a lot of that is--it's based in friendship. Brent is probably the best friend I've ever had. That's what's most important to me."

"Good. This is just such sensitive ground. At least you understand that."

"Of course I do." Molly's eyes return to the coffee and she takes a deep sip before she speaks again. "I know that Sarah has been hurt. I'm not excusing anything she's done, but this must be hard for her." She pauses for a moment of deliberation. "Although it would help if she didn't react to everything so melodramatically."

Danielle shrugs noncommittally, reminding herself not to take one side over the other. "Has it always been like that?"

Molly hardly needs to consider her answer but she waits, thinking, anyway. "Sarah and I have never really gotten along. We bickered when we were kids and it just got worse as we got older. Since we're so close in age, we were always doing the same things at the same time. I think she resents the fact that our parents were always comparing us, especially because she's the younger one and she felt like she had to meet their expectations or something."

With a nod, Danielle adds, "I don't know if this was just because Sarah suspected there was ... something between you and Brent, but even when I was living here, I remember her being pretty hostile towards you."

"She was. She always has been." Molly throws an arm over the back of the couch and rests her head on it. "This feels like a battle that's been going on for years. I get the feeling that this is where it all comes to a head."

## **MORIANI HOME**

Every bit of energy in the room is sucked up and refocused upon Katherine. Andy and Nick, both stunned by the admission for very different reasons, are completely fixed upon her steely green gaze.

"Mother ..." Andy's voice is quivering as he hovers somewhere between not wanting to believe it and wanting to throttle her.

"I did it," Katherine repeats, satisfaction seeping in. "Or at least, I thought I did. What brought that horrible woman back here?"

"She came to visit her brother," Andy says curtly. "Mother, what did you do to Danielle? Did you--did you make her go to San Diego instead of marrying me?"

Katherine purses her lips in thought and then lifts an eyebrow wistfully. "If only I'd been able to manage that. No, what I did was a lot simpler, Andrew. And still she bought it, hook, line, and sinker."

"What did you do?"

Nick shoots Katherine a warning glance but she ignores it.

"I was still in my coma when she ran out on you at the altar, remember that," she explains. "But when you returned from San Diego, I had come out of it and you told me what Danielle had done. I arranged for her to be offered a spot on that worldwide tour so that I could be assured she wouldn't return to King's Bay to play more games with you."

For Andy, reality has suddenly become very warped. Through all those months that he missed Danielle, he kept reminding himself that the end of their relationship had come about because of them, not because of some outside force, and that was a sign that he had to let it go. To hear now that he was lying to himself -- at least, to some degree -- is surreal.

"How could you do that?" he hears himself shout. "Danielle and I might have had a chance to work things out! If she hadn't left so quickly on that tour, then maybe ..." He doesn't need to vocalize the possibilities.

"I had to do it, Andrew! I was not going to let her come back here and make a mess of our lives all over again! I saw how badly she hurt you when she left you at the altar. You were destroyed. I was *not* going to sit around and watch that happen again. You needed to heal -- we needed to."

"If we were going to heal, it would have happened independent of Danielle. You ruined my chance at happiness!"

Katherine makes no move. Andy thinks that she is going to come down the stairs but she doesn't.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have worried about her," Katherine muses with a heavy note of hostility. "Perhaps she would have come back here and distracted you and you would have let me be happy with Nick."

Now Andy's mouth flares open. "I have been concerned about you, Mother! This was not some crusade I undertook because I had nothing better to do with my time."

"Tell yourself whatever you like, Andrew."

"I have done all of this because I care about you!" The declaration works itself across his mind again. "Or rather, because I thought you were someone worth caring about. I thought we would be able to have a second chance at a good relationship. But you destroyed that by manipulating Danielle--and me!--yet again."

"I don't regret it," Katherine says firmly. "Not one bit. That woman -- she's the one who did this to you. She turned you from a loving son, a focused man with ambition, with regard for what was truly important, into this man I hardly recognize. This man who has spent a year trying to undermine my happiness and who has shown no regard for my wishes because he is too bitter about his own bad luck!"

"That is *it!*" Andy roars without hesitation. "This is the last straw, Mother, the absolute last straw! I am not going to play this game with you anymore. You've pushed me too far!"

Katherine sees him hesitate. It is only for a split-second, but he leaves the briefest window of opportunity for her to rush down the stairs and attempt to make him take back his words.

She doesn't take it.

The hesitation flies away and Andy turns. He storms out the front door and pulls it closed roughly behind him. It slams, the echo crashing through the now-silent house.

## **END OF EPISODE #220**

*Were you surprised by what transpired between Andy and Katherine? Join us in the Forum to discuss this episode!*

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