

## "Footprints" Episode #222

### Previously ...

*\*Sarah brought Victoria to stay with her parents for the weekend and had to cover when they wondered why Matt couldn't take her. Bill informed Sarah that Matt accepted a job at the restaurant. She wondered if she had really pushed Matt away for good.*

*\*Using her own experience as an example, Molly cautioned Jason against rushing into getting engaged. The siblings discussed how her failed relationships have affected her. A concerned Jason urged her not to hope for a happy ending with Brent.*

*\*Brent told Andy that he's being released from the hospital. Andy offered Brent his apartment -- and announced that he is leaving King's Bay.*

### **KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

"The apartment is all yours if you want it -- I'm leaving King's Bay."

This was the last thing Brent expected to hear, and the shock registers on his face. He had thought that Andy's news would be good news, too: That he had made progress in separating Katherine from Nick, or that his relationship with Maggie had taken a positive turn. But this?

"Why?" Brent manages, needing some more information to work with before he can really react.

"My mother," Andy says with a note of sadness. "What else?"

Brent is about to inquire about what happened now when Andy adds, "Actually, that's not completely true. I'm not leaving solely because of my mother. But she was the one to give me the extra push I needed to realize that I need to make some significant changes in my life."

"What kind of 'extra push' did she give you?"

Andy's attention falls down towards the floor. "A rough one. I--After my talk with Danielle, I was inspired to go see my mother and take her away from Nick no matter what it required. It was late when I got there and I must have woken them up."

He sighs, reliving the scenario as he relays it to Brent. His body grows tenser as he leads up to the moment of devastation. "Nick answered the door and basically slammed it in my face. I was standing in the driveway, trying to figure out what to do next, when I heard my mother coming downstairs through an open window. Nick told her that it was me at the door and said that I'd mentioned Danielle -- and she lost it. She began ranting

and raving."

"That's no surprise," Brent says, his confusion apparent. "We all know she's not exactly fond of Danielle."

"It's not the fact that she was so disturbed -- it's what *made* her that way."

Brent shoots him a questioning look.

"Obviously she didn't realize that I could hear her. She began shouting about how she thought she had arranged for Danielle to be kept away from King's Bay forever."

His brow creased with confusion, Brent says, "Danielle left because of what happened between the two of you, not because of your mother. She's not trying to take credit for all of that, too, is she?"

"I didn't understand what she meant, either, so I began pounding on the door. When I managed to get inside I demanded to know what she was talking about."

"And ... ?"

"She didn't even try to pretend that I'd misheard her," Andy says. "Apparently, after Danielle decided to stay in San Diego, my mother contacted that woman from the record company and bribed her into offering Danielle a spot on that tour."

Brent's reaction is swift: The wind has been knocked out of him. "That's ... that's horrible."

"I know. She was proud of it, too. She claimed that Danielle was the one who changed me from her loving son into a bitter man bent on destroying my own mother's happiness." Andy shakes his head, disgusted. "We had a very intense argument and then I stormed out. I haven't spoken to her since, but--I just keep thinking of how I've spent all this time trying to repair my relationship with her and protect her from that awful husband of hers, and now I learn that none of the things she said about wanting to patch things up between were genuine."

"I'm sorry, man," Brent offers after a silent gap.

"I am, too. I'm sorry that I didn't see her for the woman she truly is months--years ago. I'm sorry that my own mother could be so selfish that she would lie to me over and over and *over* without any regard for how I might be affected." He sighs. "I need some time away from everything, time to think and figure my life out on my own."

Brent nods his understanding. "That'll be good for you."

"I think so," Andy agrees. "But there is one thing ..."

"What?"

"It's just--I have one big favor to ask of you."

## **FISHER HOME**

Sarah reaches out to stroke the soft, pink flesh of the baby's arm. Victoria, still in her grandmother's arms, acknowledges her mother with barely a flutter of the eyes before settling her head back down on Paula's shoulder.

"I think Little Missy over here is ready for her nap," Sarah says.

Paula glances over at the baby, who has practically melted in her arms. "I would say so," she laughs lightly.

"Let me take some of this stuff upstairs so we can put her down--"

"I'll get it, Sarah," Bill says pleasantly, already moving to take the bags in his arms.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course."

"The only bag you'll really need right now is that one," Sarah says, pointing.

Paula is already handing Victoria to her husband. "So you can take your darling granddaughter up, too, and keep it to a single trip."

"I'd be delighted." Bill gently accepts the child into his arms, takes the bag in one hand, and heads for the stairs.

Sarah can tell that Paula has a specific agenda by the way her mother waits until the creaking of the stairs has faded, indicating that Bill is busy with Victoria and they can have a few minutes alone.

"Dear," Paula begins, "how are things? With Brent, I mean."

Sarah's first instinct is to be relieved that the question isn't about Matt, but this isn't exactly a topic she is dying to discuss, either. She can already hear her mother berating her for all the mistakes she has made in her marriage.

"Not too good," she says finally, her voice low. "We're--" She stops to sigh. "We're actually not even speaking right now, I don't think."

"Have things gotten that bad? What happened?"

Her past few visits to the hospital -- when Brent overheard her talking about blocking Molly from the room, when he refused even to answer her pleas later on -- flash through Sarah's mind and she feels that familiar stab of desperation.

"He's--" And suddenly it strikes Sarah that Paula must not know. She has no idea *how*, but clearly Molly nor Jason has said anything about her hiring the guard to keep Molly out of Brent's room.

The feeling of impending doom begins to relent, albeit tentatively. Could Molly really not have said anything? Jason, that makes sense -- Sarah expected that he would leave the matter to be resolved by the sisters. But Molly? Sarah was sure she would rush home and make a big to-do about Sarah's latest dreadful deed. She actually expected to be reamed out for it when she called to see if her parents could take Victoria for the weekend and, when it never came, she figured they were saving the reprimanding for an in-person encounter.

"I guess they have," she finally replies, hoping that her frenzied reaction has not been obvious enough to ruin this stroke of luck. "Brent won't speak to me at all."

"Oh, honey, I am so sorry," Paula says, moving in to embrace her daughter. "I wish this would have worked out for you--"

No sooner have Paula's arms settled around Sarah than are they forced off with the spring of a tennis ball hurled against a wall.

Confused, she meets Sarah's gaze, her arms still not fully retracted.

"Back off!" Sarah cries.

## FISHER HOME

"Don't do this to yourself," Jason says. "You need to move on, for your own good. You need to stop holding out for a happy ending with Brent."

Molly doesn't look at her younger brother. She stares out at the sky, an unblemished blanket of brilliant blue.

"I'm not," she says finally.

Jason responds with a skeptical look -- not accusatory, just disbelieving.

"I swear!" Molly pulls her knees closer to her. Her movement wrinkles the towel on which they are resting, and she readjusts it as she attempts to funnel her thoughts into the right words.

"We both know that I have feelings for Brent, but that doesn't mean I expect to wind up with him. I realize what a strange situation this is," she says.

"Knowing and feeling are two very different things."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Just that ..." He stops to find the proper tone. He wants this to sound compassionate but still severe enough that Molly will take it seriously. "You say that you *know* it's a strange situation, and I believe that. But you admit that you have feelings for Brent, and from what I can tell, they're pretty serious feelings."

He pauses and sighs, hoping that maybe Molly will jump in and make this easier for him. No such luck.

"I'm just saying that if they're put against each other, one is gonna win out," he says. "And your heart or your gut or whatever it is -- it tends to beat out your brain when it comes to things like this, you know?"

"I know," she admits, gazing out now at Paula's garden across the yard. She can't bring herself to look at Jason.

They share the uncomfortable silence for a moment. Then Jason reaches out and places an arm around his sister. "I'm not trying to rub it in or accuse you of anything, Mol. I just think that ... I mean, I think a big part of the reason you haven't gotten involved with anyone else is 'cause of Brent, and I don't wanna see you stuck in a situation like that. I want you to be happy."

"... but you don't think I will be until I pull myself out of this mess."

"Yeah. Look, I understand how rough this must be, especially with how much you must

care about him. But you've gotta let it go, for everyone's sake -- including your own."

"It'll be fine. I'll be fine," Molly assures him, although she is very much aware of the doubt that is clouding her mind like an unrelenting fog.

## **KING'S BAY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

"Shoot," Brent says without hesitation.

"It's not really a favor for *me*, exactly." Andy rises from his chair and paces a few steps toward the end of the bed. He holds his hand to his chin, contemplating whether he can really make this request.

"Then what is it?" Brent finally asks.

Andy stops moving and focuses on Brent. "I ... I was hoping that you would agree not to tell Danielle what my mother did."

A knowing look spreads over Brent's face.

"It's just that I don't want her to feel as though her entire career is only happening because my mother is so manipulative," Andy explains.

"Of course, you're right. It's better for her not to know that."

"Thanks, Brent. I would just rather not see any more people get hurt than already have been."

"Makes sense to me." Brent shifts to adjust his pillow. "So where are you headed? Are you going to spend some time traveling, or what?"

"I'm going to go to Seattle," Andy says. He feels strange saying it -- this is the first time he has vocalized his plan to anyone else -- and is half-waiting for Brent to reject the idea as ridiculous.

Brent's reaction is much more enthusiastic, though. "Ahhhhh. Home of the lovely Maggie, right?"

"Yeah." A sheepish grin toys with Andy's lips. "I want to see her. Especially now that I've had a chance to resolve things with Danielle -- I want to give it a shot with Maggie. I need to."

"Good for you! I've been hoping you would kick it into gear."

Andy's smile widens but then retracts again quickly. "Hopefully it won't be a terrible mistake going there."

"Hey, she's interested. I saw the way she was acting with you the night of the fire. And the way she talked to your mother about you -- she's definitely into you, man."

"I hope so. I also hope that her offer of a job is still good. I would love to have some work to do right now."

"That'll be good for you," Brent says with a nod of approval. "It'll be kind of like a new beginning. You deserve some peace."

The sentiment hangs between them until Andy breaks the sudden spell of silence.

"Come on!" he says, his tone indicating a change to a lighter subject. "Let's get you out of this hospital!"

## **FISHER HOME**

"What in the world is the matter, Sarah?"

"Don't do this," Sarah says, her voice suddenly infused with a raw disgust. "Don't--don't try to pull this comforting routine with me now."

"Sarah!" Paula cries. "What are you talking about?"

"Don't pretend that you're sorry things aren't going well with Brent. I know you're really thinking that this is all my fault and that I ruined it for myself--"

Paula's face is creased not only by confusion but by hurt. "I'm not thinking those things! I want you to be happy."

"Yeah, because then you won't have to listen to me complain anymore or get upset over the things I do, right?" Sarah shakes her head and her dark blonde ponytail wags behind it. "Don't even pretend, Mom."

"Where is this coming from? Why are you acting as if I don't care?"

"Because I know how it is. This whole thing comes down to Molly or me, and I know

how's it gonna be -- exactly the same as it always has. Molly's right and I'm wrong. I don't want to hear it."

"Sarah--" Paula wants to reach out a hand to her daughter but, for reasons she isn't quite understanding, the movement now seems inappropriate. She draws her hand back. "Dear, what does this have to do with Molly?"

"Everything! You know." Sarah shoots to her feet. "Look, Mom, I know that I've made a lot of mistakes. I'm not denying that. But Molly isn't without blame, either."

"Would you please tell me what is going on? Why is Molly such an important part of this situation?"

"Because she made herself one!" Sarah spits.

"Sit down, dear," Paula says. "Explain what's going on. You confused me enough with what you said at the dinner party--"

The thought of exposing Molly is a delicious one, but the potential joy only flashes through Sarah's mind for an instant before it is countered by the grim possibility that Molly would retaliate by telling about the hospital incident. Sarah knows that she shouldn't even care what they think at this point ... but she does. And that concern is enough to make her keep her mouth shut.

Seeing that her daughter is wrestling with something, Paula says softly, "Sarah, I can tell that *something* is going on. If you're trying to conceal that, you're not doing a very good job."

"Forget it." Sarah clamps her arms together in front of her body and turns her back to Paula. "What the hell does it matter, anyway? Everything is ruined. Brent won't even talk to me."

"This marriage has brought you nothing but pain for far too long," Paula says after a moment of helpless silence. "Maybe it's time that you tried to move on. You--There's more to life than Brent. You have us. We're here for you, if only you would let us be ..."

Sarah's gaze washes over the mantle as her mother's words sink in. Years of photographs -- from family gatherings, graduations, sporting events, weddings -- fill the mantle. The scene as a whole affects Sarah more than she thought it could. Six people, forming a whole, huddled together to smile and celebrate ... Those photographs seem like they are from a different world.

"Thanks for taking Victoria for the weekend," she says suddenly, adjusting her purse on



her arm. "I'll see you when I get back."

She makes a beeline for the door, not bothering even to glance back at Paula. In her mind she can see her mother, an index finger held in the air as she opens her mouth to call for Sarah not to leave--

She bustles out the door before Paula can get a word out. And she heads straight down the steps, across the sidewalk, and into the car.

It seems that she doesn't breathe again until she is blocks away.

## **FISHER HOME**

"There is one thing I've been wondering about," Jason says, wanting to move to less disturbing territory but not ready to abandon the subject altogether.

Molly turns to him, now blocking the sun from her own eyes with a hand. "Yeah?"

"Why didn't you tell Mom and Dad about Sarah hiring the guard to keep you out of Brent's room?"

"Because I didn't want to turn this into some childish battle," Molly says without missing a beat. With a sigh she adds, "At least, not any more than it already is."

Unable to hide his cynicism, Jason asks, "So what, that's it? You're just gonna drop it?"

Molly seems to be choosing her words carefully. "If there's one thing I've learned from this whole mess, it's that these sort of things just don't get dropped. Until they're addressed completely, they're always hanging in the middle of things."

"So you're gonna have it out with Sarah ... ?"

"Kind of." Molly is about to say something else when her lips catch, half-open, and she is drawn into heavy reflection. Sarah never let on that she saw Brent and Molly kissing ... she let that linger and destroy lives for years. She lied about her pregnancy and about Victoria's paternity and only brought them out in the open when she would be benefitted, and when she could turn them around to hurt Molly.

"Well, what are you gonna do?" Jason asks, seeing his sister so wrapped up in thought. "I don't want to watch this fester any longer. If there's some way you can resolve it--"

"I'm hoping that it will be resolved," Molly says firmly. "I don't want to--I can't let this go on any longer."

Jason's expression begs for more information but Molly's tone makes it clear that that's the last she will say about the matter -- for now. Something remains in her eye, though, that makes Jason just a little bit nervous.

## **END OF EPISODE #222**

*Did Sarah's reaction to Paula surprise you? Why was Molly acting so secretive with Jason? Your predictions, questions, and any other reactions are welcome over at the Forum!*

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