

"Footprints" Episode #244

[Previously ...](#)

- Diane rebuffed attempts by both Eric and Sarah to get her to open up about what happened in Los Angeles.
- Courtney and Jason practiced skating together and, after Jason called her on her overreaction to the Alex situation, Courtney began to soften towards him.

FISHER HOME

Jason settles down into the swivel chair and gives it a spin as he waits for the Instant Messenger to connect. His eyes fly by the screen on his first round and see that it is still waiting; on the second time by, it is getting close, and by the third time he gets around, his Buddy List is showing up.

"Thank God for cable modems," he mumbles, chuckling a little at the fact that he's talking to himself about computers.

He scans his Buddy List, clicks on a name, and types a quick message before turning his attention to his music and trying to select a song.

BeastieBoy1108: Yo bro

His eyes dig through the playlist of mp3 files on the screen and finally settle on Shakira's "Whenever, Whenever," just as a reply pops up.

AMarshall78: Hey hey. What's up?

BeastieBoy1108: not much, just chillin. Court's coming over in a little bit

AMarshall78: what?? really? how'd that happen?

BeastieBoy1108: we kinda made some progress at the rink, actually

BeastieBoy1108: she was pulling the whole being-difficult routine and then I just sorta called her on it and I somehow got through. so maybe there's some hope there

AMarshall78: Good! You guys can get through this, I know you can

BeastieBoy1108: yeah, I hope so...we're getting there, I think. it'll be cool

AMarshall78: awesome

AMarshall78: ugh, my mom and her boyfriend or whatever are watching some stupid movie out there. I don't even wanna go out there and deal with them

BeastieBoy1108: so basically you're trapped in your room

AMarshall78: Pretty much, yeah :)

BeastieBoy1108: Well I'm here for a little while, so I'll keep you amused

AMarshall78: thanks ... I cannot wait til the day I move out of here! Living with her makes me nuts

BeastieBoy1108: dude, you should just get your own place!!

AMarshall78: I want to, totally. Maybe that'd be motivation enough for me to go out and get an actual job

BeastieBoy1108: yeah, you might wanna work on that one...I think I need to do the same thing

BeastieBoy1108: who knows where skating is going, anyway? I need to start thinking about what I'm gonna do for the rest of my life

AMarshall78: Same here. I swear I'm gonna finish writing this damn book and get it published, but that's probably not the best hope for getting started out, huh?

BeastieBoy1108: no, probably not :) I think we actually have to face reality and get jobs

AMarshall78: Ahhhhhhhhhh :)

BeastieBoy1108: I feel the same way

BeastieBoy1108: I probably have to stop mooching off my parents soon - and I don't think I wanna live here for the rest of my life, you know?

AMarshall78: absolutely

The player changes to a Dave Matthews Band tune and Jason sits back from the

computer, focusing on the song as he waits for Alex to respond. A full minute passes before the next message pops up on the screen.

AMarshall78: Hey! I have an idea! It's a little nuts, maybe, but just go with me here ...

CHASE HOME

"Hey." Lauren announces her presence with a light knock on the already-open door. She steps into Courtney's bedroom with all the ease of a good friend returning to familiar stomping grounds.

Courtney looks up from her usual position on the bed, with the latest *Cosmo* splayed out in front of her. The first thing she notices is how weary Lauren looks. "Hey, you ... How ya doing?"

"Fine," Lauren answers. "Good." She sighs weakly and brushes back her long blonde hair with both hands.

Courtney examines her for a moment, trying to evaluate how concerned she should be. It's not that she doubts that something is wrong, but Lauren has a way of getting more wrapped up in problems than she needs to be.

"What's the matter?" Court asks carefully.

"Oh, nothing, really," Lauren says. She acts a bit surprised, as though she is alarmed that Courtney picked up the fact that anything was troubling her.

Courtney smiles internally at the behavior. It always goes the same way -- either Lauren comes in and breaks down completely, or she plays coy until Courtney gives her the proper prodding to spill; either she needs no prompting or the total package. It's a routine of which Courtney has grown quite fond, in a strange sort of way.

Lauren takes the few steps over to the bed slowly. Courtney scoots over so that Lauren can sit beside her. Then, in a big exhale, Lauren says, "I talked to Trevor this morning."

"Shouldn't that be a good thing?"

"Yeah, I guess. It's practically a miracle that we got to talk at all, the way things have been lately."

"So ... What'd he say? How's he doing?"

"I dunno, honestly. He, like, didn't really tell me a damn thing. He said he's fine, things are fine, blah blah. But something's up, I swear."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because." Lauren shrugs and glances down at the floor. Courtney can see the wheels turning as she tries to process the thoughts that have obviously been thrashing around in her head since she spoke to her brother.

"He wouldn't really answer me when I asked if he was gonna come home anytime soon," she says finally. "Maybe it's school, I don't know. He's supposed to be finishing up and graduating finally, but he keeps stalling for 'one more semester'. I wonder if he's ever gonna get out of there."

""So maybe it's school that has him down. If he doesn't know what he wants to do after he graduates ..."

"Yeah, maybe." Lauren doesn't sound convinced that it's so simple. "I just miss how close we used to be. And I'm worried about him. I really wanna figure out what's going on with him."

This is always the hardest part for Courtney. She knows that she's done everything she can; there are no more assurances she can give that will mean much, and she certainly can't give Lauren the answers that she wants so badly.

ERIC WESTIN'S OFFICE

"Knock, knock," coos the flirtacious voice from the other side of the freshly cracked door.

Eric peels his attention away from the paperwork on his desk, a sea of formalities that he has spent the better part of the afternoon working through.

"Special delivery," Diane announces with her trademark grin as she sweeps into the room.

"You brought me a gift?"

"Myself. Isn't that good enough?"

He rolls his eyes, despite his amusement with her entrance. "What brings you by in the middle of the day?"

"Well," she says slowly, pausing to shut the door -- and lock it. "I have some good news."

"Of what sort?"

She folds her hands together and waits. She relishes the suspense -- or, more accurately, being the one who can create the suspense and keep him on the edge of his seat. "I just got back from a job interview," she says finally, with all the gusto of a champagne bottle being uncorked for the first time.

"Ooh. For what job?"

"An executive position, at Vision, actually. It's on a lower level than the one I had when I worked there before, but I'll be able to work my way back up in no time, right? And it'd be pretty damn nice to find a job that'd let me stay in King's Bay."

"Yes, I think I might enjoy that as well." His dimples crush the smooth, tan skin of his cheeks as he smiles. "So how do you think it went?"

"Very well. And c'mon, they loved me there. That whole mess with Tim and me is such ancient history anyway. Besides, I'm so overqualified for this gig ..."

"A little confident, are we?"

"Do I operate any other way?"

"Point taken." He leans his weight back in the leather chair and draws his hands up behind his head. "When do you find out whether you got it or not?"

"They said two weeks. Hopefully the decision won't take that long, though." She begins to stroll around the side of the desk and then joins Eric behind it. "No point in waiting to celebrate, though, right?"

She swoops into his lap and immediately her hands are at the back of his neck, her lips diving into his. She can feel Eric melting back into her, getting lost in the moment--

And then he stops.

"Not now," he says tersely.

"Aw, c'mon, the door is locked," she says, managing to keep it from sounding anything like a whine.

"I'm working, Diane."

"It doesn't have to be a huge production. Fifteen minutes won't kill ya, right?"

His only response is a scowl.

"I know you're into quality and all, but a quickie can do wonders for your workday," she smirks.

He's not buying it. "Come over for dinner tonight, and we can celebrate then."

"Are you trying to get rid of me?"

"No!" He looks as though he is going to continue down that harsh path, but then softens. "Diane, just not now, okay?"

The look that she shoots him is all daggers. "Well, I'm sorry I don't fit into your schedule, Mr. Westin!"

"Oh, come on, Diane!" He springs up out of the chair, but it is too late: She has already blown back out the door.

FISHER HOME

Jason waits with baited breath for the next *blip* from his speakers and the flashing of the little box that will indicate Alex's next statement. There is something about the whole thing -- the way Alex made it sound like such a big deal, the way he took forever in even typing that he had this idea and is now taking forever in explaining it -- that has Jason very intrigued.

Finally it comes.

AMarshall78: Okay, so I know this probably sounds a little nuts, and I totally understand if you think it's a bad idea

A few more seconds pass and then Jason's fingers are scrambling over the keys.

BeastieBoy1108: just spit it out! you're killing me here

AMarshall78: sorry :)

AMarshall78: What if we got an apartment together? I mean, got jobs and then found a place so we could split rent and stuff

Jason tries to absorb the idea, reading the line over a few more times before his fingers even make an attempt at responding.

BeastieBoy1108: yeah, I think that might be a good idea! I can't wait to have a place of my own

BeastieBoy1108: (or at least not my parents'!)

AMarshall78: So you really wanna do it?

Jason can almost see the disbelief in Alex's face. He's never quick to trust anything anyone says -- at least anything supportive -- no matter how many times he is reassured that they mean it.

BeastieBoy1108: yeah, let's...I think this is the kick in the ass I need to get moving

AMarshall78: wow! awesome - this is exciting

AMarshall78: hey wait ... one thing. I don't know if it's a big deal, but ...

BeastieBoy1108: yeah?

AMarshall78: Okay, well - are you sure you'd be comfortable with the whole thing?

BeastieBoy1108: dude--I've told you a million times that I totally support you and everything. we're pals, end of story

AMarshall78: thanks

AMarshall78: but still - like, it's one thing to be friends and it's another to live together. There was that whole thing that happened at your birthday party ...

BeastieBoy1108: Alex, that was forever ago! I think we've come a long way since then

AMarshall78: I think so, too ... I'm probably just being dumb, worrying so much.

AMarshall78: But I don't want it to be awkward for you

BeastieBoy1108: it won't be, I promise

AMarshall78: okay, cool

AMarshall78: You know, I'm amazed at how cool you've been with this whole thing. Especially after the way you found out

BeastieBoy1108: I told you, it was a long time ago! we've come a long way

AMarshall78: Yeah ... not that many guys would be so okay living with a guy they'd had that kind of ... experience with.

BeastieBoy1108: it was a one-time thing, I know that

BeastieBoy1108: and you were drunk, and I was probably drunker than you! so whatever... I was hung up on it for a while, I'll be honest, but we are cool now, I swear

AMarshall78: Thanks Jay. That means a lot

BeastieBoy1108: no prob, really!!

BeastieBoy1108: anyways--that's an awesome idea, we'll have to start hunting for a place soon. I gotta run

BeastieBoy1108: Court will be here soon

AMarshall78: okay, have fun! Good luck with that

BeastieBoy1108: thanks bro

BeastieBoy1108: later

AMarshall78: Bye

Jason bounces to his feet, on his way to the bathroom for one last appearance check. Actually, it'll probably just be one of many, but he can fool himself for now. Hopefully everything *will* go well with Courtney ... but he actually has a good feeling about it, better than he's had in a long time.

CHASE HOME

"I'm really sorry," Courtney says, breaking the quiet that has befallen the bedroom.

Lauren glances up at her and flashes a half-smile. "Nothing you can do about it. Or that I can do about it, for that matter. It's up to Trevor to make a move if he wants us to be close again."

Courtney reaches her arm around Lauren's shoulders and gives a comforting squeeze.

"Sorry to just burst in here and start moping," Lauren says. She shakes her head as if shaking off the depressing subject matter. "I guess I just wanted to vent a little bit."

"That's what I'm here for."

"Thanks." Lauren readjusts herself on the bed. "So how are things with you? Anything new with the whole Jason thing?"

"Actually, yeah. I'm supposed to go over and see him today."

Sudden concern washes over Lauren's face. "I'm so sorry! I come in here all caught up in my crap and you're supposed to be working things out with Jason!"

"It's okay, we can hang for a couple minutes," Courtney says nonchalantly. Even so, her brow remains furrowed in a sort of permanent state of uncertainty over what to expect from her visit to see Jay.

"So what happened at the rink?" Lauren asks impatiently when Courtney doesn't offer any further information.

"I'm not really sure," Court offers after a moment of consideration. "Something good, I guess. He sort of gave me a different angle to look at this whole thing from."

"Good!" Then comes the pause, rife with that same uncertainty that is written all over Courtney's face. "You think things are gonna get back to normal now?"

"I hope so. I mean ... there's still stuff we need to get clear, I think. But if he's willing to claim some of the responsibility, then I can, too."

The comment hangs in the air, but both girls' eyes have been drawn to the window. Almost simultaneously they rise and scurry over to it, sounding as excited as they did fifteen years ago in the same situation.

Outside, the first heavy flurries of the year have begun to coat King's Bay in the purest

white.

DIANE BISHOP'S CAR

"What the hell does he know, anyway?" Diane grumbles as she casts a glance back at Samantha in the rearview mirror.

She refocuses on the road ahead. The snow has really started to come down since she picked Samantha up from the babysitter -- all of a sudden, the roads are covered in it.

"Damn Eric," she mutters. She begins to toy with the radio but gives up when none of the annoying DJs seem to be saying anything of even remote interest.

Oh well. He can go to hell. Not like I need a damn thing from him anyway, if I'm such a damn distraction--

Her hands grip the steering wheel instinctively, before she even really knows what is happening. But the car is already out of her control, and there is nothing she can do to regain it. She freezes in those excruciatingly endless seconds before the twisting of metal fills her ears.

END OF EPISODE #244

What's going to happen to Diane and Samantha? Are Courtney and Jason on the road to reconciliation? Join us in the [Message Forum](#) to share your thoughts!

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