

"Footprints" Episode #250

[Previously ...](#)

- Lauren told Jason that her parents are going away on a cruise for several months. She wished her brother, Trevor, would come home, unaware that he was already back in town and had run into Courtney at 322.
- Diane awoke from her coma in fairly good shape. She was unnerved when Claire told her that there had been a mysterious call from a man inquiring about her condition.
- Sarah apologized to Matt for her volatile behavior. He tried to make her understand how frustrating it is to watch her falling apart over her hatred of Molly and urged her to move on, but she pulled away before things got any more intimate.

BROOKS HOME

Lauren's flip-flops slap against the tile of the narrow foyer. The silence is the same in here as it is in the rest of the house. She just took a stroll around to see things as they're going to be for the next few months -- and, more than anything, the silence is a bit eerie.

She's thought of moving out and getting her own place an awful lot, especially since she graduated. And she's spent tons of hours alone in this house. But there's something different about it now, knowing that she's going to have the whole place to herself for a couple of months.

It'll be good, she assures herself as she gazes at a family portrait up on the wall. It was taken a long time ago -- when Trevor graduated high school, the year before Lauren did. They'd always planned to have another portrait taken a few years later, when Trevor graduated from college, but that graduation never came around and the family never gathered together again long enough to capture the moment in another portrait.

Maybe it's better that way. What would a portrait mean if they were only together long enough to take it, anyway? It'd be nothing more than a lie. Looking at a picture of herself, Trevor, and their parents together and smiling, when obviously Trevor didn't want to be around any of them anyway, would probably be more painful than reassuring. At least the old portrait they have now serves as a reminder of the days when they were all together and happy to be that way.

This time will be good, she reasons in her head. It'll be the fresh start she needs. She'll be working and able to focus on moving up the ladder a little at Willis. Who knows, by the time her parents return, she might even be ready to move into an apartment of her own.

Ding-dong.

The doorbell's familiar chime races through the house. She nearly jumps at having her solitary confinement interrupted so soon. Maybe Courtney got her message and came by to give her some company.

She opens the door quickly -- and then freezes.

"Oh my God," she says. Her face is caught in the middle of a sudden battle between shock and joy. Her eyes widen, her jaw starts to drop, but her lips can't resist flipping up in a smile.

"Trev? What are you doing here?"

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

"There wasn't anything left in the car, right?" Eric asks as he parks Diane and her wheelchair beside the sofa.

"Nope. Luckily being unconscious doesn't require a lot of stuff. Lightest packing job I ever did, I'll tell ya." She inhales deeply and gazes around the suite, seeming to forget him for the moment. It's been days since she was here, but that passage of time is so hard to comprehend now. It really does feel like it never happened.

In a lot of ways, it didn't. She didn't say, do, or see anything in those days ... and probably, despite what Claire tried to make her believe, not a hell of a lot of people noticed or particularly cared how she was spending that time. Except for that one phone call.

She tries to brush it from her mind as Eric speaks again. "I really am glad to see that you're all right, Diane."

"Good. If I'd known what was going on, I would've expected most of the world to let out a gigantic, depressed sigh when I woke up."

"That's not true," he says, though he doesn't sound especially convinced.

"People don't like death, that's why they would've been upset if I died. But I don't think anyone really would've minded if I had."

"Not true. You did have one visitor who was there for quite a while."

That gets Diane's attention. Her attention stops roving around the suite and plants firmly on the tall, handsome attorney. "What?"

"Claire's sister-in-law ... Sarah, I believe."

"Sarah was there?"

"For quite a while," Eric confirms with a satisfied nod. He paces a few steps over the creme carpet. "She was really concerned about you."

"That's good to hear," Diane says after an uncertain pause. "I should give her a call or something."

"Yeah, you should." Eric runs a hand over his shiny black hair. "Can we discuss what happened on the day of the accident? It's been driving me insane, and--"

She stops him with a palm held upright. "Whoa, hold it."

"What? Diane, I don't want to leave this hanging ..."

"Drop it, Eric! I know where this is going and I don't wanna hear it!"

BRENT TAYLOR'S APARTMENT

"Whoa." The exclamation slips past Brent's lips before he can catch it. "Sarah ... what are you doing here?"

He stands in the open doorway, his hand still on the doorknob as if ready to shut the door at any moment if need be, drinking in the sight of her. He hasn't seen her since that night on the pier outside the restaurant, somehow, but her words and her presence have haunted him every day. Seeing her in the flesh now is more than a little bit unsettling. It only serves to make real again all those things that he's been trying to convince himself may simply have been a figment of his imagination.

"I needed to see you," she says after a long pause, which he's sure she inserts partially for its dramatic effect. "I've needed to come see you for a long time, actually."

"Why?" Realizing how harsh the simple question sounded, he adds, "I think we said everything we needed to say last time, don't you think?"

"Maybe." She reaches a hand up to brush her cheek. "Can I come in? Just for a minute."

"Uh, sure, yeah." He steps aside to allow her entry, but watches her as she comes in. He closes the door carefully, unsure that he wants to be alone with her anymore.

Sometimes the thought that he's still married to this woman, that this is his wife, the woman with whom he's supposed to share so much -- that at one time, they did share so much -- rattles him. This is one of those moments.

"I need to apologize," she says. "For the way I acted on the pier that night. I really got out of control, and I'll be the first to admit it. There was no need for me to--to react to Molly being there the way that I did. I'm sorry I made such a scene."

"I'm glad to hear you say that."

"So am I. I needed to hear myself say it, to be honest."

"Then I'm glad you were able to do it." An even heavier awkwardness floats in, and Brent says, "Is that why you came by?"

"No. Well, sort of. Actually, I have something for you."

Some kind of friendly joke seems to be in order, but Brent doesn't think he could even be that relaxed with Sarah right now. "Yeah?"

"Yeah. Something I meant to give you a while ago." She takes a few steps away from him, towards the window overlooking the rain-drenched courtyard. "I just couldn't bring myself to do it until now."

"What's changed?"

He sees her shoulders shrug from the back. She continues staring out the window, though she is standing several feet from it. "I don't know. Maybe I just needed time ... maybe I needed a new perspective. I've been finding that lately. Matt's been helping me."

"Good," Brent chokes. The mention of Matt Gray is not something he wanted right now. Something about that man still sets him off, even though he knows that Matt's tryst with Sarah was far more complicated than Matt simply taking advantage of Brent's wife.

"So here you go," Sarah says, reaching into her purse. She turns around slowly, still digging through her bag for whatever it is she's meaning to present to Brent.

He sees the edge come up in her fingers and freezes in disbelief. He knows what it is before he sees anymore.

No way.

The divorce papers.

BROOKS HOME

"Happy to see me?" Trevor grins, his dimples cutting a sparkling trench from ear to ear.

"Yeah!" she cries out, throwing her arms around him. He seems a little overwhelmed by her reaction but eases into it and returns the embrace.

"What are you doing here?" she repeats as she draws off of him.

"What, I'm not allowed to come visit?"

"No, of course you are! But ... why? Why now?"

"I've been dying to see you," he says, scanning the inside of the house over her shoulder.

She sees his searching and realizes that she should get out of the way and let him in. The foyer, for some reason, is barely wide enough for more than one body, so she steps to the side.

"Some timing you've got," she comments. "You are not gonna believe this, but you just missed Mom and Dad. They're gonna be on a cruise for, like, the next couple of months."

He seems ready to react with surprise, but then his shoulders drop. "I know."

"What?"

"They told me when I called a couple weeks ago. I--I kinda timed this whole thing so I'd miss them, actually."

For the first time since his reappearance moments ago, she feels her guard going up. She's felt increasingly strange speaking to him over the phone during his sporadic calls, as if there were some distance between them that she couldn't quite understand but that somehow placed them on opposite sides of some sort of fence. When she saw him in front of her, in the flesh, none of that even dared near her mind. But now he speaks with a kind of distaste that makes her step back.

"Why?" she asks carefully. "You don't want to see Mom and Dad?"

"It's not that I don't want to see them, it's just ... I don't think I could deal with it right now. They'd just be hounding me about everything."

"Oh." She helps pull the leather bag he brought with him fully inside so that she can close the door, partly so that she can gather her thoughts. "So, uh, how's school? You gonna finish this year?"

"Doesn't look like it," he says dismissively. He's beginning to wander into the rest of the house. Lauren can only imagine how it must feel to be here after being gone for so long.

"Hey, I ran into your pal Courtney," he calls out.

She follows him down into the family room. "Oh, yeah? Where?"

"That 322 place. Didn't think I'd ever see her waiting tables." He cracks a smile again.

"You already stopped to eat?"

"It was a couple days ago. I got in and ... I dunno, I needed some time to get my head together. I've just been poking around town and laying low."

"Better than getting into trouble, I guess," she shrugs. "I'm surprised you even remember Courtney."

"She was around a lot when you -- we -- were in high school. She's definitely grown up a lot."

Lauren isn't sure if she sees something else in his evaluation of Courtney, but she decided to ignore it for now. "Well, it's been, like, years and years. Of course she has."

"Seemed like something was up with her. I asked her if everything was okay and she gave me this whole attitude thing and took off."

"She's had a weird couple of weeks. She broke up with her boyfriend," Lauren says, shaking her head. "Long story. I'll fill you in later."

"Sounds fun."

"Yeah, tons. So how long are you here for?"

"I don't know. I wanted to see you, and I've got time, so if Mom and Dad are gonna be gone, I could stick around for a while."

"Good! I could use the company." She turns towards the kitchen. "Have you had dinner yet?"

"Nope."

"All right, let's try to whip something up. I was a little worried about my first night alone in the kitchen anyway."

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

Eric takes a step backward. "What are you talking about?"

"Just because I knocked myself out in a car crash doesn't mean I'm gonna forget what got me there!" Diane blasts. "What do you think I am, some sorta idiot?"

"No! Diane--where is this coming from?"

"Where is this coming from? Please!" She wheels herself closer towards him and sees the glimmer of fear in his eye. "All I was trying to do was be a little romantic and celebrate my job interview going well, and you treated me like some dirty whore who was out to ruin your day!"

He drops his chin and narrows his gaze at her. "Don't twist reality around like that."

"I'm not twisting anything! Don't patronize me. If you've got a problem with the way I operate, fine. But don't pretend otherwise."

Eric seems ready to defend himself, but the effort dies on his lips.

"Just go," she says, her disgust palpable.

"What is with the sudden attitude? You must've hit your head harder than anyone realized."

"Oooh, low blow."

"Don't be so childish."

"As I recall, you were the one who was so uncomfortable with adult situations." She rolls forward another few inches, forcing Eric back towards the door.

"Cut it out!" he fires suddenly. The volume of his voice doesn't rise much, but it carries a wild sternness that she's never heard before. "The attitude is getting incredibly old."

"*My* attitude?"

"Yes! I don't feel like being your distraction anymore. Obviously you're completely preoccupied with whatever happened in Los Angeles--"

"Hey!"

"It's the truth! You clam up whenever anyone mentions it. Either suck it up and face it, or put it behind you. Whatever it was, I'm tired of living in its shadow, and I can't imagine that many people would be willing to do it for very long."

She doesn't say anything until she's certain that his next move hinges upon her response. "Are you through?"

"Am I--Diane, would you for once just face the issue?"

"No! You know what? I don't feel like it!" She continues wheeling herself right at him until she's backed him right out the door. "Get the hell out."

Before he can answer, she rolls back just enough so that she can slam the door hard in his face.

BRENT TAYLOR'S APARTMENT

Note: This scene contains lyrics from the No Doubt recording "Simple Kind of Life," written by Gwen Stefani. These lyrics have been used solely for creative purposes and their usage is meant in no way to imply consent or cooperation on the part of No Doubt, their record company, or any associates parties. "Simple Kind of Life" can be found on No Doubt's album *Return of Saturn* (Trauma/Interscope Records - 0694904412). You can listen to the song while you read by clicking [here](#), if you have RealPlayer. (Audio from the official site www.nodoubt.com.)

Brent accepts the papers carefully, with trembling fingers that don't seem quite sure of what they are taking. He risks an initial glance at them -- they really are the divorce papers. Then he looks up at Sarah for confirmation that this is really happening.

"There you go," she says. She stands, waiting.

He can read the sign, because he offers exactly what she was hoping for. "Thank you."

"I had to. For both of us."

He nods.

"It's really hard for me to do this," she says. "Signing the papers was just--horrible. It took me forever. But I have to let go, I know that."

"I'm glad you've reached that point."

"I don't want to see it as ... as admitting defeat. But whether we want to admit it or not, this is over and has been for a long time. We're not gaining anything by clinging to it."

"Exactly." He steals another look at the papers. "Thanks for doing this, Sarah."

She swallows hard. "You're welcome." Quiet moves in on them and she looks down at her watch. "I need to get going. I just didn't want to let this drag on anymore." She moves quickly for the door.

"All right. I, uh, I'll see you later."

"Yeah." She takes a deep breath, already turning to leave, and blinks hard. For some reason, good memories have chosen this moment to creep up on her. "Bye."

"Bye," she hears him choking out from the doorway. She is already halfway down the stairs.

She doesn't dare look back at him, but she doesn't hear his door close as she cuts a determined path to her car, either.

*For a long time, I was in love
Not only in love, I was obsessed
With a friendship that no one else could touch
It didn't work out, I'm covered in shells*

It's hard for her to believe that she just did that, that she just granted Brent the freedom that she's tried for so long to deny him. But spite isn't getting either of them anywhere.

*And all I wanted was the simple things,
A simple kind of life
And all I wanted was a simple man
So I could be a wife*

Imagining the beginning of all this is like stepping into an alternate universe now. There was a time when thoughts of Brent were full of hope and possibilities -- not desperate ones, grasping to repair chasms and wounds, but genuine possibilities for a wide-open future.

*I feel so ashamed, I've been so mean
Don't know how it got to this point
I always was the one with all the love*

You came along, I'm hunting you down

*Like a sick domestic abuser
Looking for a fight
And all I wanted was the simple things
A simple kind of life*

It's amazing now to think that she could have had that sort of future with Brent. She's tried so long to cling to the idea of it, but it's not happening. Truth be told, the idea of working so hard to make it happen had almost become painful. But she needed it to happen, just to prove that she could have her happy ending.

*If we met tomorrow for the very first time
Would it start all over again?
Would I try to make you mine?*

*I always thought I'd be a mom
Sometimes I wish for a mistake
The longer that I wait, the more selfish that I get
You seem like you'd be a good dad*

She keeps wondering where they went wrong, but now she can see that it happened on that very first night -- the night she talked Brent into eloping. The marriage began with Molly; of course it was always about her. The pattern had begun before the marriage even had. Damn Molly.

*Now all those simple things
Are simply too complicated for my life
How'd I get so faithful to my freedom,
A selfish kind of life?*

But she doesn't need that anymore. She doesn't need Brent and she doesn't need to make herself sick over Molly's constant presence. She has Victoria, she has a career ... and she has Matt. And even though she's not sure where they stand or what they mean to each other, it's crept up on her while she was worrying about Brent. And maybe that's the way the real thing is supposed to happen. She always used to hear that; maybe it's true.

*When all I ever wanted was the simple things,
A simple kind of life ...*

END OF EPISODE #250

How do you feel about this resolution between Sarah and Brent? What do you

think the future holds for both of them? What would you like to see Trevor do while he's in King's Bay? Come over to the Footprints Forum and join in on the discussion!

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