

## "Footprints" Episode #281

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

- Brian Hamilton returned to King's Bay to talk with Diane, but their encounter dissolved into an argument about her sense of responsibility. He informed her he'd be staying in town for a few weeks and left, promising to resolve things later.
- Molly agreed to join her boss, Camille Lemieux, at the new design firm that Camille is opening.
- Matt made romantic overtures toward Sarah, but she became unnerved after learning that he has a living brother and was a key witness in a suicide investigation nearly a decade ago.

### **SARAH FISHER'S APARTMENT**

Sarah rubs her thumb and forefinger back and forth over the glossy fax paper as she rereads the text yet again. There has to be something in here that will tell her something more.

But for the life of her, she's not finding it right now. She sets the stack of papers down on her desk and lets out an enormous sigh, rubbing her face with both palms. She's been studying the various documents for hours, trying to sort out what happened and how it all fits together. Now she's put the pieces together enough to know that there are some very crucial ones missing.

Matt's statement in the investigation into Nicole Spencer Gray's death offers precious little, except to establish that Nicole seemed extremely distressed in the weeks preceding her death. It was a suicide, an overdose on sleeping pills and booze. Matt was the one who found the body, nearly twelve hours after the recorded time of death -- and Sarah is uneasily taking the investigators' word that Matt's involvement wasn't worth looking into any further.

So what relevance does it have? From the looks of the public records that she's managed to pull up, Matt left Pennsylvania three months after Nicole's death. He moved around upstate New York for a few years, finally settling in an area not far from Andrea Yang's mansion, where Sarah and Brent first met him a few years ago.

And by that time, he had cut his brother out of his life entirely.

It all has to fit together, she realizes that. The way all the facts add up -- they're pointing to some sort of very ugly entanglement. But she has no specifics, and these records aren't going to give her the type of information she needs now.

Of course, the next step is staring her in the face: She needs to contact Jake Gray. She could do it right now if she so chose ... but an acute reluctance snatches her hand back every time she even thinks of reaching for the phone.

There is another way. She *could* ask Matt. But somehow, she doubts that he'd be completely forthcoming. And even if he were, could she believe it, after all the avoiding he's done?

She doesn't think so, and that realization sends a chill through her body.

## **VISION PUBLISHING**

The fourth or fifth buzz in no more than fifteen minutes sounds just as Diane is about to put her pen to paper to make a note, and the pen goes flying as her hand slams down on the desk. She grunts in annoyance.

"Ms. Bishop, you have a visitor," comes the obnoxious voice through the speaker. Diane's eyes shoot daggers into it. She's had more than enough of that voice and all its reminders and notes and cute little observations.

"Send 'em in, April," she responds, proud of herself for maintaining some modicum of civility. How the hell is she supposed to get any work done with that damn voice interrupting her every two minutes?

A moment later, the door to her office opens and all thoughts of April vanish. Brian jams his hands into his pockets as he comes inside and shuts the door.

"Hey," he says. His eyes begin to peruse the office.

"Hi." She waits for him to announce the reason for his visit.

"How were your holidays?"

"Fine. Not very exciting."

"Yeah, mine neither. But it was good to see my parents." Then comes a long pause.

"It's so strange that you're back here," he says finally.

Diane simply nods and waits for him to get wherever he's going.

He strolls over to the window and examines the view; the window forms a frame around

a slice of downtown King's Bay. Diane admires it from her chair. She fought for this office tooth and nail the last time she worked here and missed out on it, but when she was rehired, she was lucky enough to worm her way in here. God knows she's not letting it go anytime soon -- not as long as it's the office that everyone seems to want.

"I'm going back to L.A. tomorrow," he finally announces, still looking out the window.

"Oh."

Now he turns to look at her. "I thought maybe we should, you know, *talk* at some point."

She folds her arms in front of her chest. "I guess."

"You guess? Diane, please! Give me more credit than that. It's not like I have absolutely no idea what's going on inside your head."

Her eyes burn into him. "Then enlighten me. What am I thinking, Brian?"

"You're thinking ... no, you're *hoping* that I came here with a fresh outlook and I'm ready to forgive and forget. Right?"

"No, you made it abundantly clear last time that we wouldn't be doing things that way, remember?"

"Yeah, I did," he says. "And I'm glad you haven't forgotten that. Because I want to make this work. I want nothing more than to come to some sort of understanding and get back to the way we used to be."

## **CHARLENE POWERS AGENCY**

"How's it coming?" Molly asks as she strolls into Camille's office.

"It's coming," Camille says, looking up from one of several cardboard boxes with a groan. "Slowly, but it's coming."

"I'm almost done. One of the blessings of a cubicle, I guess."

"At least you don't have years worth of *stuff* in there." Camille holds up what looks to be a paperweight, though she doesn't seem to have any confidence that that's what it actually is. "I swear, I haven't got a clue where some of these things came from."

She tosses it into an open box and Molly laughs. "So you'll just bring it with you?"

"Might as well."

"See, I always think of moving as an opportunity to take inventory and simplify a little. You look at stuff, admit that you have absolutely no use for it, and dump it ... which frees up space for more junk."

Camille stares at the supposed paperweight, resting on top of a pile of other items, and then looks at Molly. "Well, if you like, you can help me figure out what stays and what goes when we start moving into the new office."

"I'd be glad to," Molly says. "Gosh, I can't believe we're actually heading someplace else."

"Neither can I! As many years as I've been here--the thought of going anyplace else and calling it 'work' seems very strange."

Molly sighs and studies the now-bare walls. For the first time, it looks like any old office; there's hardly a trace of Camille's distinct energy anywhere. The pictures and knick-knacks and framed articles have been removed, replaced only by the white of the walls.

"This is going to be incredible, though."

"I know," Camille says. "Molly, you have no idea how long I've dreamed of opening my own company and marketing my own line. We are in for quite a ride."

"I just hope it doesn't take us over a cliff or something," Molly says, only half-joking.

"It is going to be a lot of hard work ... especially in the next few weeks. But once we're organized, then the fun really begins. And think of how amazing it's going to be when we debut our first collection."

"I can hardly wait." Molly has to take a deep breath just to assure herself that this is reality, because she swears she had a dream about something like this happening when she was younger and she wants to be sure this isn't just a repeat of that.

But it's not. It's real. She's actually going to be part of the launch of a new design firm -- one with a promising future, if Camille's track record is any indication.

"I can't thank you enough for this opportunity," Molly says.

"You're more than welcome, dear. If not for you--I'd have misplaced my brain sometime this past year, I'm sure. You're going to be an integral part of this company. I wouldn't have thought of opening it without someone I trust so much by my side."

Molly just smiles, unsure of what to say. The only thing she knows is that she's lucky -- lucky that Camille rescued her from that horrible first day of work last winter, lucky that they've bonded so well, and lucky that she's managed to establish such solid footing in the only industry in which she's ever really dreamed of working. There's no doubt in her mind that this is going to be one heck of an experience.

## **SARAH FISHER'S APARTMENT**

Sarah lifts one ear above the din of the vacuum at the sound of the ring. It comes again before she can flip the vacuum off, but by the third ring, she has scrambled into the kitchen and has her hand on the phone.

"Hello?" she asks, reaching down to toss aside the cord that nearly sent her tumbling.

"Hey," Matt's familiar voice greets her. "What are you up to?"

"Cleaning the apartment. Jealous?"

"Very. Listen, you wanna do something tonight? I was thinking maybe we could leave Victoria with your parents or something and go out for a nice dinner--"

"I'd love to," she interrupts. In spite of all the worries that are eating away at her, she still feels the need to soften the blow. "But I've got a meeting with a client."

"Oh." He sounds disappointed but not entirely surprised. "Well, how about tomorrow?"

The question comes too quickly, and she feels herself tripping over her response. "I, uh-- I've got plans with Diane, actually."

There is a long pause before either of them speaks again. Sarah spends every nanosecond of it trying to figure out how to free herself without being completely cruel to him.

But Matt is the first one to say anything. "All right. Have fun, then. I'll, uh, give you a call about seeing Victoria this weekend."

"Absolutely. Yeah."

"Talk to you later."

"Yeah," she says, feeling the need to add, "Sorry, Matt" before she hangs up.

She places the phone back in its cradle with a heavy hand. Is this actually happening? He sounded so disappointed--he really wanted to spend time with her.

She knows she had no choice but to say no, but still ... it's still Matt. She's wanted to be with him for a long time. And now the road is free and clear, and they both actually want it, and she can't.

The road isn't clear, of course. The cloud of Matt's past was hanging over every millimeter of that conversation; she could feel it, bearing down upon her, blurring every inclination she had to accept his offer of dinner.

But she still has those inclinations. Everything she's learned so far hasn't been enough to change the way she feels about him ... it's just changed the way she *has* to look at him. And if not for her sake, then for Victoria's. This has to be resolved.

For now, though, she returns to the vacuum, flipping the switch and hoping that the fog of noise will be enough to distract her from thinking about him.

## **VISION PUBLISHING**

"Then let's just do it," Diane says. She kicks back from the desk and her chair rolls backward. "Let's go back to how things were, Brian. You and me--"

"No! Diane, I--I'm not gonna do that to myself. Not anymore." He stares at her defiantly, proudly, looking almost surprised with himself.

She just rolls her eyes. Not this routine again. "Please. Tell it to Dr. Phil."

"*That* is exactly the problem! Everything's a damn joke with you."

"Sorry, I thought you enjoyed having fun."

"I do! God, we had some incredible times together, didn't we?" He doesn't wait for a response. "But I'm not about to go back to being your henchman whenever it suits you."

"I didn't realize I was such a notorious villain," she says, tapping her dark red fingernails together.

All that elicits from him is a sigh. He returns to gazing out the window, though she's pretty sure that it has more to do with not looking at her than with admiring the view.

"Look, Brian, so maybe I did go a little far. But Serena wasn't good for you. I was just trying to make you see that."

"That wasn't your call to make!"

"I was looking out for you!" she shouts, springing to her feet.

He's heard it before--when they first had this fight back in L.A.--but she can tell that it still affects him. Good. At least that's one thing he can't just dismiss. Slowly he turns back to face her.

"Were you really just 'looking out' for me?" he asks. The shout has been reduced to a quiet but very intense level now.

"Yes! Why is that so hard to believe?" She shakes her head. "Whatever. I can only plead my case so much here. Maybe I overstepped my bounds a teensy bit by interfering with you and Serena. And maybe I shouldn't have claimed that I discovered her when you were the one who actually did. But I can't change that stuff now."

"No ... but you can realize why it upset me."

"I understand," she says. "I really do. What I don't get is, what do you expect me to do about it now?"

There is no immediate response, and from what Diane can tell, he's quite dumbfounded.

"How do you really want this to turn out, Brian?"

### **END OF EPISODE #281**

*What's going on between Diane and Brian? Is the story of what happened in L.A. clear to you? Do you think you know what happened in Matt's past? Visit the Footprints Forum to share your opinions and speculation!*

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