

"Footprints" Episode #292

[Previously ...](#)

- Lauren and Jason met at the Fisherman's Pier. She assumed that he was going to say that their kissing was a mistake, so she beat him to it, but he got her to admit that's not how she really feels. She was thrilled to hear that he's interested in pursuing something between them.
- Dylan could tell that something was bothering Courtney, but she wouldn't say what. When they arrived at the Fisherman's Pier, they spotted Jason and Lauren together.
- Ryan informed Claire that he found a place of his own and would be moving out of Nick's home shortly.
- Camille convinced Nick to invest in her new company.

THE FISHERMAN'S PIER

Lauren Brooks sits across from Jason Fisher at a small table in the restaurant's bar, trying to convince herself that what she's hearing is actually true.

"But what happened the other night," Jason says, "that was something good. I really felt like it was. And I wanna see what comes of it -- if that's what you want, of course."

"That's exactly what I want." Lauren finally feels herself relaxing. To think she got herself so worked up over this and was expecting things to go so badly ...

An awkward silence settles over her and Jason. *What are we supposed to talk about now?* she wonders as her mind grasps for anything semi-acceptable.

It's still grasping when she sees the familiar figure out of the corner of her eye.

Her first instinct is to wave to Courtney Chase, but then she realizes that she's sitting here with Courtney's ex and they're talking about the fact that they kissed. Her body goes into panic mode -- jittery hands, wiggling stomach, hyperactive brain. Not that Courtney has any idea what they're discussing, but still ...

She looks pissed.

The girls stare at each other for a very long moment, until Lauren is able to bring her hand up for a wave. But before she can even make the gesture, Courtney is storming over to their table, and something tells Lauren that she should forget the wave.

For the first time since she spotted Court, Lauren looks at Jason. He's watching the whole

thing, eyes bouncing back and forth between Lauren and Courtney. And he looks a few shades paler than he did a minute ago.

"Unbelievable," Courtney says when she's just a few steps from their table.

"What?" Lauren forces herself to ask.

Courtney turns her gaze on Jason. "*You*, I might expect this from, after everything that happened. But you?" Her eyes move to Lauren. "I can't believe you would do this."

"Do what?" Jason asks, but there's a stammer in there that all but gives them away completely. Lauren watches Courtney intently. She's sure they're about to see her head explode, or a slap at the very least.

But after letting her stare burn into both of them for a painfully long time, Courtney simply turns on her heels.

"Unbelievable," she repeats, this time more to herself than them, as she hurries out of the bar.

"Courtney, wait," Jason says, standing, but it makes no difference.

Lauren watches as Courtney grabs Dylan Carrington -- who looks strangely amused by the whole scene -- by the arm and practically drags him out of the restaurant.

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

The conference room, one of several housed in the luxurious downtown hotel, buzzes with activity. The group assembled is small -- no more than maybe twenty or twenty-five individuals, Nick Moriani notes as he stands in the doorway -- but is clearly comprised of people who already know each other. *Camille must have reeled in some very big hitters*, Nick notes, simultaneously recognizing several faces in the room.

"This is quite a group," Ryan Moriani says from Nick's left side.

"Mm-hmm." Nick nods but continues surveying the assembled investors. It's almost exclusively an older group, no doubt a collection of Camille's connections from throughout the years.

"Let's find a seat," Nick says to Ryan, but when Nick goes to move, he realizes that Ryan remains planted by the door.

"Wait a second." Ryan keeps his voice low, but his tone makes Nick realize what this is

going to be even before Ryan speaks. "I just want to make sure that you're clear on why I came."

"I'm clear," Nick interrupts before Ryan can say anything further, adding a slow, heavy sigh to show how much he doesn't want to get into this yet again.

"Good. Because this doesn't mean I'm going to get involved in running jobs for you or dealing with your money or anything else. I'm an investor, that's it."

"I've got it," Nick says wearily. "Mr. Independent."

Ryan's face reacts to the dig, but instead of responding verbally, he says, "Let's go sit down."

Wordlessly Nick begins to walk toward the rows of chairs set up for the investors, but he pauses when a female voice calls out his son's name.

"Ryan!"

Nick turns, as does Ryan, to see a very attractive, dark-haired woman in her early 30s walking toward them. She looks familiar to Nick, but he is unable to place her.

"Molly," Ryan says, and it clicks for Nick. Molly Fisher. Claire's sister-in-law.

"What are you doing here?" Molly asks Ryan. "Are you--"

"An investor, yeah. Are you?"

"No, actually, I'm working with Camille. I'm one of her designers."

"Really? Wow."

There is an uncomfortable pause, the sign of two acquaintances realizing that they've said their hellos and have no idea what else to discuss. Nick stands off to the side watching them.

"How did you wind up investing?" Molly asks.

"Camille -- she and my dad go way back." Ryan nods his head in Nick's direction. Nick offers a friendly smile, but all he gets from Molly is a wary glance.

Very interesting turn of events, Nick thinks as he stands by, trying to look casual as he listens to their conversation.

THE FISHERMAN'S PIER

Bill Fisher hurries from the back of the restaurant over to the bar. Jason and Lauren are still at their table, Jason on his feet and Lauren looking up at him in utter confusion. For his part, Jason looks just as puzzled.

"What was that all about?" Bill asks as he arrives at their table.

"I have no idea," Jason says. He continues staring toward the door, following visually the path that Courtney took out of the restaurant moments ago.

"I was coming out of the kitchen and figured something must have happened," Bill says. "She looked furious."

Jason sits back down, but carefully, as if he's expecting the chair to be pulled out from him. "She *was* furious."

"And you have no idea why?" Bill asks.

Lauren and Jason share a look of total bafflement, though each seems to be hoping that the other might have some kind of clue.

"Do you think ... ?" Lauren begins, focused totally on Jason. Bill has no idea what she's talking about, but it's obvious that there is *something* that they know that might have set Courtney off.

But Jason doesn't seem to think it's a possibility. "How? She left way before that. She'd been gone forever."

They settle back into quiet, both Lauren and Jason trying to figure out some logical explanation and Bill trying to make some sense of what seems to be a pretty dramatic twist.

Finally he pats his son on the shoulder and says, "As long as everything's all right ..."

"Yeah, everything's fine," Jason says, looking up, "at least as far as I know."

"Well, let me know if there's anything I can do," Bill says. "Maybe it has nothing to do with you two, and Courtney's just having trouble with something else. I could talk to Don and Helen--"

Jason shakes his head. "Don't. We'll deal with this. But thanks."

Bill steps back from the table. "I'm going to go back into the kitchen, then. Have a good lunch, both of you. And Jason, come pop your head in there before you leave."

Jason responds with a nod. Bill heads back to the kitchen, wondering what kind of trouble Jason has gotten himself into now.

DYLAN CARRINGTON'S CAR

"Where am I going?" Dylan asks as he puts on his blinker to turn out of the restaurant's parking lot.

Courtney's response is curt, clipped, and definitely more an order than a request: "Take me home."

He looks over at her to see if she's serious, but she's too busy staring out the windshield to catch it.

"So can I ask what just happened back there?" he says once they've driven another block.

"It's pretty obvious, isn't it?"

"Uh ... not really. Or have you forgotten that my clairvoyant abilities are only at their peak during a full moon?"

The little joke doesn't get so much as a smirk out of her.

"All right, Courtney," he says, hardening his tone to make it clear how annoyed he's getting, "come on. If I'm gonna drive you all over the damn city, I wanna know why. What was the big deal about those two having lunch together?"

"They weren't just *having lunch*," she snaps back.

Dylan eases the car to a stop as they approach a red light. "How do you figure?"

"Because."

"Because what? I know you're all wound up today, but I don't really think that two people eating together means--"

"I saw them kissing!" she interrupts, raising her voice enough to shut him up.

"You what? When?" He watches the traffic light out of the corner of his eye, but this new development is infinitely more interesting.

"After the party," she says, quieter, sounding as if she's going to cry now. "I left early because I was in a bad mood ... but I forgot my purse. Whitney took me back to get it, and when I went into the kitchen to find it, I saw Lauren and Jason outside. They were out on the deck, kissing."

"Whoa." Dylan finds himself genuinely caught off-guard, and as he searches for something to say, a thought hits him. "I know it's kind of surprising and all, but why does that bother you so much?"

"Because!" Courtney sounds totally infuriated and a little bit incredulous. "She's my best friend -- or she's supposed to be. And Jason ... I thought what we had was important enough that he wouldn't go trampling all over it."

"So if you'd seen him with any other girl, it wouldn't bother you?"

"No. He can do whatever he wants." She pauses and unfolds her arms, which have been locked up against her chest the entire drive. "But for the two of them to do that -- and behind my back ..."

Dylan sees the light turn green, and he sets the car in motion again. "To do that behind your back ... ?" he prompts her.

"I just thought there was a line there that wasn't to be disrespected. You know." When Dylan doesn't say anything, Courtney adds, in a louder voice, "I really thought my friendship with Lauren -- and what Jason and I had -- meant more than some stupid little fling. But apparently this is worth throwing all that away."

"Is it just a stupid little fling?" Dylan asks, unable to resist. "How do you know this hasn't been going on for months and months?"

Courtney seems ready to answer but stops in her tracks. "I'd think Lauren would have said something by now ..."

"Or she's been hiding it from you the whole time."

Clearly this isn't a possibility Courtney had considered, but her expression goes from furious to absolutely livid right before Dylan's eyes.

"If the two of them think they're gonna get away with making an idiot of me," she says, "they've got another thing coming."

KING'S BAY METROPOLITAN HOTEL

Nick's hands rest in the pockets of his trousers as he walks out of the conference room, Ryan by his side.

"That went very well," Nick says. "It seems Camille really has a clear vision of how to make this venture work."

Ryan nods. "I thought so, too."

Nick waits until they are further away from the dispersing crowd of their fellow investors to say anything else. When he speaks again, they are nearly at the hotel's front doors. "That woman you were speaking with before the meeting -- she looks familiar."

"She's one of Claire's in-laws," Ryan says, suddenly sounding a bit uncomfortable. "Tim Fisher's sister."

"Ah." Nick does his best to sound surprised by this. "Small world, hmm?"

"Yeah, really. She's one of Camille's designers. I knew she was working in fashion, but I had no idea she was connected to Camille."

Nick opens one of the hotel's doors and steps out into the warm June day. "It's interesting, the people you run into when you least expect it."

Interesting indeed, he thinks, unable to keep at least a hint of a grin off his face.

Back in the conference room, the last of the investors are making their exits. Camille Lemieux stands at the head of the room, organizing the papers that have been strewn over the table in front of her and waving to the investors as they leave.

Molly approaches her.

"Nice work," Molly says. "The presentation went really well."

"Thank you! I'm relieved to have it over, to be honest," Camille says, leaning in conspiratorially. "I had nightmares last night of being thrown all sorts of impossible questions and being utterly tongue-tied."

"You did very well. I think everyone's feeling very confident about getting this off the

ground now."

"I'm glad to hear you say that. I'm not quite sure I believe it yet!" Camille picks up a stack of papers and straightens it out before placing it inside a file folder. "I'm just excited for all this preliminary business to be over with so we can get to the fun stuff."

"Yeah," Molly agrees. She can hardly wait to get to that phase, either, but it's fascinating to see all that goes into the behind-the-scenes preparation of just getting to that point. "Hearing you talk about your ideas for the opening got me really excited."

"It's going to be an event to remember," Camille says, her usual wistfulness washing over her words. "A gala evening, a fashion show, hopefully lots of buyers in attendance ... I can hardly wait, Molly."

A broad smile crosses Molly's lips as she nods in agreement. It looks like they're off to quite the start -- and if their progress so far is any indication, things should be quite exciting from here on out.

END OF EPISODE #292

What do you think about Courtney's reaction to Lauren and Jason? Why was Nick so intrigued by Molly's involvement in Camille's company? Come share your thoughts in the Footprints Forum!

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