

"Footprints" Episode #304

[Previously ...](#)

- Jason reacted poorly to the news that Ryan is his half-brother.
- Courtney threatened to end her friendship with Lauren because of Lauren's budding relationship with Jason. Lauren and Jason struggled to balance their concern for Courtney with their growing feelings for each other.
- Molly offered Ryan a cordial, if slightly uncomfortable, welcome to the Fisher family.
- Brian Hamilton returned to King's Bay to take a job at Vision Publishing that Diane had secured for him.
- Following the courtroom revelations that Ryan is Paula's son and that Ryan tried to bribe Diane, the judge awarded Diane permanent custody of Samantha, with limited visitation rights for Claire. Afterward, Sarah chewed out Diane for hurting her family so badly.

VISION PUBLISHING

"Morning, Diane."

"Good morning, Marcus." Diane Bishop's response sounds rushed even to her own ears. But she's been holding it in for the last twenty steps, since the stick-thin oddball from the nonfiction department turned the corner and started coming down the hallway toward her.

"Having a good day?" he asks as they pass each other.

It'd be a lot better if you had bothered to shower sometime in the last month, she thinks.

"Yep," she says. She's fairly certain that she's supposed to inquire about his day, but that might mean having to stop and endure more time in his presence, and she's not about to put herself through that.

Instead she keeps walking toward her destination.

It seems to take an eternity to reach Brian Hamilton's office, and she has the suspicion that Marcus Lindley might be watching her the entire way. Thankfully, the door is open, so she steps inside quickly, barely bothering with a quick tap on the door to announce her arrival.

Brian looks up from the open desk drawer into which he is placing his possessions. "Hey."

"Hi. Getting all settled in?"

"Yeah, I'm just trying to organize myself in here," he says as he takes a few more things from a cardboard box and places them into the drawer. "I figure I might as well take advantage of the fact that you haven't given me any work whatsoever yet."

"I'll make sure to get on that ASAP," she says with a smile. Things feel surprisingly comfortable between the two of them; given how hostile their limited interactions over the last two years have been, Diane expected to encounter a bit more resistance in her efforts to sweep the past under the rug.

Maybe arranging this job for Brian did the trick. Or maybe he's willing to let bygones be bygones in the name of having a civil work environment. Either way, she's not complaining.

"So guess what I got?" she asks.

"What?" Brian's response is casual, and he begins arranging a few items on the desk. But a second later, he pauses and looks directly at her. "Oh my God, the custody hearing. You ..."

"Won. Yeah." She's unable to keep a smile off her face. The thought that there's been an official ruling that ensures that she won't lose Samantha has kept her on a strange sort of high since the hearing.

"Congratulations," Brian says. There's something very sincere about it that only makes Diane feel happier.

Feeling more comfortable being in his office, she steps out of the doorway and stands across the desk from him.

"I was getting kind of worried that Claire might be able to swing it in her favor," Diane says, "but I got lucky and came across something that turned the whole thing on its head."

Brian simply looks to her, awaiting further explanation.

"I was already planning on showing how damn dysfunctional that whole family is," she explains. "Anyway, Claire's been seeing this pompous idiot, Ryan Moriani, who somehow thought it would be a smart idea to waltz into my office with a check and pay me to drop the entire custody suit."

"So you won because he tried to bribe you?"

"In part, yeah. But -- this is unbelievable -- I happened to be at Sarah's place--"

"Sarah, as in Tim and Molly's sister?"

"Yeah." She notes the perplexed look on Brian's face and adds, "we've gotten to be friends since I moved back here. She doesn't fit in with that family at all -- which is probably why we get along so well."

Brian grimaces slightly, but he lets the remark slide by without comment.

"Anyway," Diane continues, "there was this file out on the table, and it was open, so I had a little peek--"

"You went through her stuff?"

"No! It was sitting out on the table!"

Brian seems unconvinced, but she plows onward. It's not like she went rifling through Sarah's drawers or something!

"The papers," she says, "all had to do with some court search for a child who'd been given up for adoption in, like, the '60s. So -- listen, you are not gonna believe this -- it turns out that Paula Fisher had a kid before she got married, and she gave it up for adoption."

Brian removes a few more items from the cardboard box on his chair but simply holds them in his hands while he stares at Diane, awaiting further explanation.

"Brian. It's *him*."

"What?"

"Ryan Moriani." She pauses, waiting for Brian's stunned reaction. But he doesn't seem to get it. "He's Paula Fisher's son!"

The concept seems to dawn on Brian very slowly, but Diane can see the gradual build of recognition in his expression ... and in the way that two boxes of pens tumble from his hand and onto the desk.

It takes him another few seconds to get out any words.

"How the hell did that happen?" he finally stammers, his jaw literally hanging several inches lower than normal.

"Fate. Luck. Whatever." Diane clasps her hands together. "I don't care! We pulled that out in court, and the whole family might as well have exploded."

"So because of that, the judge gave you custody?"

"It just showed what a mess they are," she explains. "The only downside is that Sarah's pissed at me now."

"Well, you did get the information from her personal files--"

"She doesn't actually *know* that."

"So what are you going to tell her?" Brian asks. "Or was this worth ruining your friendship with her?"

CAMILLE LEMIEUX'S PENTHOUSE

Molly Fisher sits out on the balcony of Camille Lemieux's spacious penthouse apartment, focusing all of her attention on the sketchbook in her lap. She cocks her head to the side to get a slightly different perspective of the design she's working on and can't help but to sigh inwardly. Briefly looking up from the sketch and out onto downtown King's Bay, her thoughts quickly trail back to Camille's enticing words just a few days ago.

"A gala evening, a fashion show, hopefully lots of buyers in attendance ... I can hardly wait." Those words have etched themselves in the forefront of Molly's memory. They encapsulate everything that she's dreamt of since childhood -- and everything that she has hoped to watch grow to fruition since she left Charlene Powers to follow Camille in her solo venture.

Still, she can't help but find herself even more disconcerted now that she's allowed her mind to wander. She had hoped that recalling her mentor's words would inspire her to finish tweaking her current project, but she instead finds her swirling thoughts trained on and around just one person: Ryan Moriani.

Her half-brother.

Frustrated, she tosses her sketchpad onto a nearby chair and tries to clear her mind; it takes her a few seconds to realize that Camille is actually out on the balcony with her. The older woman removes the sketch and takes a seat, handing Molly a tall glass of iced tea.

"This is quite good," she begins cheerfully, giving Molly's drawing the once-over. "I don't know about the sleeves or the neckline, though."

"I know," Molly agrees, staring straight ahead and taking a sip. "I'm sorry. I'm just not concentrating today or something." A pause. "Or maybe I'm not cut out to go into business with you in the first place."

"Molly, I've been in fashion for more than two decades. Do you really think that I would've asked you to come with me if I didn't see a great deal of potential in you?"

"But what if you're wrong?" Molly turns to face her would-be mentor for the first time, letting any and all lingering doubts that she's had about this venture surface -- just as she has several other times since deciding to pursue this opportunity.

"My dear, you don't stay in fashion for as long as I have by making critical errors. I know people. And I know talent when I see it." Camille places a finger over her lip for a moment, then continues. "No, something else is definitely troubling you, and I know exactly what it is."

KING'S BAY ICE ARENA

Jason Fisher exhales heavily as he pushes out of his spin. Hands on his hips, he glides over to the wall to catch his breath. He's always had a bad habit of holding his breath in the middle of spins, which makes working on them for half an hour especially exhausting.

Not to mention that I'm completely out of shape, he thinks. It's the same scolding that's been working its way through his psyche for weeks.

His breath recovered, he is about to skate away from the boards and move onto his flying sit spin when a familiar blast of music jolts him. He recognizes it as the beginning of Courtney and Dylan's long program. He leans against the boards to watch.

Almost immediately, a little girl doing -- or, rather, attempting -- what Jason thinks might be a double Salchow flies directly into the path of Courtney and Dylan's routine. But they dodge her and make their way through a series of complicated steps toward the other end of the ice.

Jason can tell before they even lift off that they're going to execute the triple toe loops cleanly. They rise from the ice in perfect unison, rotate with seeming ease in the air, and come down on their right blades at the same instant. There is something beautiful about it -- the ease, the unity, the timing with the music -- that sparks a distinctly motivated feeling within Jason.

And the moments don't stop. The clean executions and the clear sense of enjoyment that Courtney and Dylan are feeling continue for the rest of the program's four minutes. When they come to a stop in the middle of the ice, right on the last note of the music, most of

the other skaters and the parents in the stands seem to have noticed how good a program has just been performed.

Jason watches as Sandy skates over to Courtney and Dylan and begins debriefing with them. From the broad smiles on all three of their faces, he's sure that there isn't much criticism going on.

He forces himself to skate away from the wall and try the flying sit, but the effort is futile. The program was long enough for the cold to sink into his muscles as he stood still.

He contemplates whether or not to scrap the practice and call it a day, but he drifts back over to the wall and watches the teenage girl who's now doing her program with a bit too much flair and not enough control of her body.

He doesn't even notice that Sandy is by his side until she speaks.

"That was a good program they had, huh?" she asks, though it's not really a question.

Jason can't help but nod, his attention still fixed on the girl flailing around the ice with a gigantic smile plastered on her face. "Yeah. They really look ready for Regionals."

"They are," Sandy says quietly. A moment of silence passes between them before she adds, "You miss that, don't you?"

"Miss what?" comes his instantaneous reply. "*That?*" He gestures at the girl now concluding her program by splatting on the ice a final time.

Sandy snorts an amused little laugh. "No. Training. Doing the competition thing."

Over the last few months, he has prepared a thousand protests against that allegation: working at the rink and training to complete his tests is enough; he's too old to put the energy into that kind of skating anymore; he doesn't want to deal with finding another partner. But suddenly, none of those things matter at all.

"Yeah," he admits. "I do. A lot."

VISION PUBLISHING

Diane drums her glossy, perfectly crafted fingernails along the edge of Brian's desk. "I've got it covered."

"How?" Brian asks, his skepticism unconcealed. "She had the information and you wound up with it."

"I'll tell her we hired a PI. She's one herself. She knows that there are some sleazy ones and that there are ways to find out stuff that isn't supposed to get out. And I can tell her that my lawyer insisted on doing it."

"And you expect her to forgive you for turning her whole family upside-down?"

As much as she'd like to have another bulletproof counterargument, Diane knows that that part of it isn't going to be so easy.

"If that's what it takes for me to have my daughter," she says, her left shoulder rising in a shrug, "then I'm willing to accept that."

"I guess I can't argue with that," Brian says.

"Besides, I understand Sarah better than anyone in that family does. She might not be happy with what I did, but she needs someone like me in her life."

"I don't know if she's going to take such a level-headed approach. You did kind of publically thrash her family--"

"And she can barely tolerate them most of the time," Diane says. "Once the initial shock of the whole thing wears off, she'll come around."

"You sound awfully sure of that."

She can't tell whether he intends the statement as a warning or if he's simply impressed by her confidence about the whole thing. But at least he's not reaming her for being a terrible person. That's a step back toward where they once were.

"It might take some time," she says, "and it might take some clever work, but I'll make sure that Sarah doesn't hold this against me for too long."

CAMILLE LEMIEUX'S PENTHOUSE

Molly swallows hard. Could the news about Ryan have swept across King's Bay this quickly? Taking another long sip of iced tea, she attempts to collect her thoughts. In truth, she has taken the news relatively well, unlike her father and brother. And she fully understands that this is undoubtedly even more unsettling and life-altering for her newfound half-brother. Regardless, she can't help but wonder how Camille has already heard.

"How did you know that something was distracting me?" Her reply is more an admission

that Camille had been correct in her assertion than an actual question.

"Because I know these things," Camille answers. "So, let's have it. Tell me what's happened with Brent."

"Brent? Uh, things between us are fantastic." Molly can't help but find relief in her employer's inaccurate intuition. At least her mother's scandalous episode on the witness stand hadn't found its way to the press as of yet. Plus, she would much rather think about Brent than her muddled family situation.

"I see. Is that it, then? Are we talking about a walk down the aisle?" Camille's overly made-up eyebrows rise. She seems even more excited at this prospect.

"Not really," Molly responds, then takes a moment to ponder this new line of questioning. She and Brent have been spending so much time together that they've fallen into somewhat of a routine -- nothing confining or less exciting, just a period of something ... good. She hasn't even really entertained the notion of taking their relationship "public," much less marrying her sister's ex-husband anytime soon. If the Ryan reveal didn't break the Fisher family apart internally, that wedding certainly would.

"This is something different entirely," she says contemplatively, weighing the pros and cons of letting Camille even further into the details of her personal life. "Do you have a while to listen, or are you busy?"

"My day is totally open. I needed some time to relax after all the potential investors I've been in contact with over the past few weeks. I'm all ears."

Molly takes another sip of iced tea before launching into all of it. Camille listens, wide-eyed and clearly suppressing a smirk at all of the scandalous details from the past few days. When she's finished, Molly lets out a sigh in spite of herself.

"So, that's mainly what's got me 'troubled,' as you so succinctly put it."

"Fascinating," Camille answers, clearly still mulling all of this new information over. "Who would've thought that Nick's adopted son turned out to be your mother's missing child? I never could've imagined anything so complex if I tried! I completely understand why you've been so out of sorts today."

"Right," Molly adds. Something about the mere mention of Nick Moriani is unsettling to her, though she isn't exactly certain what or why. But before she has time to dwell on the matter, Camille rises from her seat.

"Well, I'm going to get a glass of tea for myself. Did you want another one?"

"Thanks, but I'm all right," Molly replies.

"Suit yourself. Why don't you try to put all of that business out of your mind for awhile and concentrate on finishing this?" She hands Molly back the sketch, which has been resting, forgotten, on the floor of the balcony for some time now. "I know you're going to do great things with me, Molly -- just try to doubt yourself and your abilities less, even when you're trying to deal with personal matters. Your work should be your refuge."

"I know, I know. And I will try to focus and finish this."

"Terrific."

Molly watches Camille head back inside and curiously head for the cordless phone on the end table of her large living room rather than the kitchen. Shrugging, she looks down at her sketch and does her best to focus on making the necessary adjustments.

KING'S BAY ICE ARENA

Jason steps off the ice and pauses to wipe the excess snow from his blade. He flicks it from his hand and picks up his skate guards from their usual position on the floor, right beside the door to the ice.

He is pulling the plastic guards over his blades when he hears someone else stop by the door and step off the ice. As though the sudden frigid tension in the air weren't enough to make the identification for him, he recognizes the boots, despite their striking resemblance to every other pair of white skates in the building: They're Courtney's.

He lingers over his blades for an extra few seconds before looking up.

"That was a really good program," he says.

Courtney continues putting her own guards on her skates, but she's a little too focused on the task. Jason can tell that she is trying her hardest to ignore him.

He rubs his hands together to get rid of the last traces of moisture.

"Do you know how many pairs you're competing against?" he asks. "The field was really small last year."

"I don't know," she mumbles gruffly.

Sighing heavily, he tells himself to walk away and stop trying. But before his body can take the advice, his mouth leaps back into action.

"Are we ever gonna be able to be civil around each other?" he asks. "A little bit of conversation wouldn't kill us--"

Courtney's head, until now focused down on her blades, snaps up. Her dark ponytail whips along behind it as her gaze settles upon Jason with a coldness that chills him much deeper than his two hours on the ice ever could have.

"If you want conversation -- and God knows what else -- go see Lauren," she snaps. "I'm here to practice, not to deal with your bullshit."

She storms off before Jason can even conjure the beginnings of a response. He watches her go, briefly considering whether he should call out to her, before he lets his head fall back against the rink's plexiglass barrier with a groan.

END OF EPISODE #304

To what lengths will Diane go to restore her friendship with Sarah? Is Jason as over Courtney as he acts? Join us in the Footprints Forum to share your thoughts on this episode!

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