

STRAYED

by

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EXT. PARK - DAY

SUPER: RILEY'S STORY

The sun slowly dips into the horizon as it begins to sprinkle. Families pack up their belongings.

RILEY PICKLES, 11, a Punky Brewster type with freckles, sits on a park bench alone, an empty dog leash in her hands.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Riley comes up the driveway. Watches as APRIL PICKLES, 27, girlish in appearance, crams a black trash bag into a bin.

RILEY
What's that?

APRIL
(whirls around, flustered)
Oh, hi honey. How was the park?

RILEY
Bo Bo's gone.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Riley flicks the empty leash's clasp. It repeatedly snaps back against the metal as April rubs her back.

RILEY
It's my fault he left, isn't it?

APRIL
Oh honey, dogs run away. It happens all the time.

RILEY
No, Daddy. It was because of me.

April pulls her into a hug.

APRIL
Don't you ever say that, you hear me? It had absolutely nothing to do with you.

She holds for a moment, almost too tight as she stares off into the distance.

APRIL (CONT'D)
I have something to tell you.

She pulls back. Riley stares at her.

APRIL (CONT'D)

(fidgets)

How can I say this... Do you remember that goldfish that we got at the fair?

RILEY

Jessica?

APRIL

Yes, Jessica... Jessica the goldfish. Well, one day we looked in on her and she was completely grey--

RILEY

Because she died.

APRIL

Yes, exactly. But, it was no one's fault, really.

RILEY

It was my fault, I forgot to feed her.

APRIL

There was a lot going on at the time and... it was a mistake. But, now she's in beautiful place with fluffy clouds and all the water--

RILEY

We flushed her down the toilet, mom. Don't you think I'm a little too old for fairy tales?

APRIL

What I'm trying to say is... Every living thing on this earth has to move on at some point and...

RILEY

You think Bo Bo's dead.

April takes her in. Sighs. Tries to smile.

APRIL

You know what we need right now? A big bowl of ice cream, what do you think?

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: APRIL'S STORY

Riley leads her dog, Bo Bo, through the gate as April watches her out the open window.

APRIL
Just to the park and back.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

April dials on her phone. Puts it to her ear.

APRIL
(into phone)
She sat on that couch for over two hours waiting for you, where were you?
(listens)
Don't give me that. You've picked her up once since you moved out. Once!
(listening)
Oh, why do I even bother? Just forget it.

April slams the phone down.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

April checks her watch. Peers into the darkness. No Riley.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

April gets into her car. Puts it into reverse without looking. Slams into something as she backs out.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

April gets out of the car. Stares wide eyed as she looks down.

APRIL
Wha...

Blood runs down the street and hits her feet. She slowly backs up.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Oh god, what did I do?

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

April finishes wrapping it up in a black trash bag. Begins washing the bloody spot off the street with a large sponge.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

April crams the black trash bag into the bin.

RILEY (O.S.)
What's that?

APRIL
(whirls around, flustered)
Oh, hi honey. How was the park?

RILEY
Bo Bo's gone.

April sees a spot of blood on her own hand and quickly wipes it way.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Phone against her ear, April watches nervously as the trash truck dumps the trash can and drives off.

APRIL
(into phone)
What was I supposed to do? I
couldn't let her come home and see
him in the street like that.

She looks around the corner as she begins to break down.

APRIL (CONT'D)
She's never going to forgive me,
I'm a terrible mother.

April turns to see Riley in the doorway, Bo Bo beside her.

APRIL (CONT'D)
(into phone)
I... I'll call you back.

(feigning cheerfulness)
Well... would you look at that, he
came back. Isn't that great?

RILEY
You don't have to try to surprise
me. I found it... Daddy's wallet,
right in the driveway.

She pulls out a wallet with traces of blood on it. Smiles up
at April.

RILEY (CONT'D)
(excitedly)
Where is he, is he here to pick me
up?

THE END