

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

She holds for a moment, staring off in 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

(forces a smile)

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  
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! Oh, why do I even bother?  
Just forget it.

April slams the phone down.

INT. HOUSE - LATER

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

EXT. HOUSE

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

She gets out of the car. Stares down, wide-eyed.

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 quickly wipes a spot of blood off her hand.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

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

APRIL  
(into phone)  
Well, what was I supposed to do? I  
couldn't let her come home and see  
him in the street like that.  
(breaks down)  
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)  
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 bloody wallet. Smiles up at April excitedly.

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

THE END