

Girl Who Cried Monkey

By

Cori Rosen

INT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

SYDNEY DOBSON, 9, strolls down the hallway wearing a MONKEY-SHAPED BACKPACK. She wears a floral dress, sneakers that light up as she walks, and has two curly-q pigtails on the top of her head.

Sydney grasps a pile of BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS in her hand.

The hallway is packed. Sydney goes towards a group of 4th grade girls, all circled around one girl, MEREDITH, 10, a brunette with braids down to her butt.

Meredith holds out her iPhone 5C for all to see.

Sydney walks up to the girls, but they are all too distracted, laughing at a Youtube video of a cat playing the piano on the phone.

She looks down at the invitations in her hand and slowly walks away.

The school bell then rings and everyone sprints off to class.

People rush through the halls, walking right past Sydney. She stands there as people fly past, wearing a look of confusion on her face.

The hallways clear out. As Sydney starts towards her classroom, she slips in a puddle next to the WATER FOUNTAIN.

As she plops to the ground, Sydney's eyes water up a bit.

Then someone taps her shoulder behind her. Sydney turns around to face BRADY, 11.

Brady wears an Abercrombie & Fitch polo shirt and khaki shorts.

BRADY

Looks like you could use a bit of help.

Sydney's cheeks start turning a bit red. Flustered, she can barely get her words out.

SYDNEY

Oh. Um, yeah sure. That would be great.

Brady reaches his hand out and helps Sydney off the floor.

BRADY

It's no big. Looked like a bad wipe out, you okay?

Sydney gives a toothy smile and shrugs.

SYDNEY

I think so! Thanks. I'm Sydney by the way.

Brady puts his hands through his hair and then does a hair flip á la Justin Bieber.

BRADY

Oh, you're the new kid. I'm Brady. Gotta head off to class, but nice meeting you Sydney.

Brady turns around and walks away. He then cocks his head back and hollers.

BRADY

Hey Sydney!

Sydney's voice pipes up.

SYDNEY

Yeah?

BRADY

Try not to fall in any more puddles.

Sydney giggles.

SYDNEY

Will do.

Sydney full-on blushes and her eyes light up.

INT. - ART CLASSROOM - DAY

Sydney stands in the front of the classroom next to MRS. SAVERING, mid-40s.

Sydney is shaking and nervously smiling.

Mrs. Savering places an arm around Sydney.

MRS. SAVERING

Everyone, we have a new student today. Her name's... um...

Mrs. Savering leans into her desk and begins sporadically searching through the pile of papers on her desk.

Mrs. Savering's glasses fall off her face and smack on the floor. As she bends down to get them, Sydney leans in and whispers.

SYDNEY
My name's Sydney.

Mrs. Savering gets up and looks towards Sydney, replying in a whisper too.

MRS. SAVERING
Oh, thank you!

Mrs. Savering turns to the classroom.

MRS. SAVERING
Everyone, this is Sydney. Let's all give her a warm welcome!

No one moves, everyone is fixated on their conversation with their neighbors and don't even give Sydney a mere look over.

Mrs. Savering nods towards an empty chair in the empty corner of the classroom. She looks to Sydney.

MRS. SAVERING
Why don't you go take a seat?

Sydney frowns.

SYDNEY
Over there?

Sydney looks to one side of the classroom, packed where everyone is smiling and chatting.

SYDNEY
Well, okay then.

Sydney waddles past the populated area to her lone section of the classroom, plops down and snuffles.

A series of shots of everyone in the class playing together, drawing silly self-portraits, and making wild animals out of clay.

Then pan over to see Sydney, sitting all alone in the corner.

INT. - SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Sydney's eyes dart from table to table, she has no clue who to sit with. She walks over to a group of kids sitting at a table.

A plump, chubbster, Frankie, 9, pokes Meredith.

FRANKIE

I'll trade you 3 oreos for your fruit roll-up.

MEREDITH

Frankie, do you think I'm a dumb ass? Fruit roll-ups are worth at least 4 oreos.

Frankie leans in to a girl sitting on the other side of him.

FRANKIE

Pst, Tracey! What's a dumb ass?

Sydney looks in and is about to sit. She looks down at the invitations, looks back up at the table, but then scurries off. She wanders off to a table alone in the back of the cafeteria.

She takes off her backpack, puts it on her lap. She pulls her backpack close and gives the monkey a squeeze.

She looks down at the monkey.

SYDNEY

At least I have you, Bongo.

EXT. SYDNEY'S HOME - DAY

Sydney jumps off the SCHOOL BUS and runs over to her mom, TERESA, and dad, GERALD, and gives them a hug.

SYDNEY

Hi mom! Hi Dad!

TERESA

Syd, how was the big first day?

SYDNEY

It was okay, I guess.

Sydney shrugs. She tries to hold back her frown, but it peaks through.

GERALD

Did you meet any friends to invite
to your birthday party?

SYDNEY

No, not really.

GERALD

Well, at least there will be one
wild mammal at your birthday bash!

Gerald looks at Teresa and gives a nudge and a wink.

Teresa shoves him a bit and mumbles to him.

TERESA

Hey, not in front of Sydney...
that's for later.

Teresa gives him a wink and gives him a nudge back. They
hold hands.

Sydney squints in confusion, cocks her head and looks at her
mom.

SYDNEY

Mom, what's a mammal?

TERESA

Well, actually a monkey's a type of
mammal!

Sydney jumps up and down and excitedly screams at the top of
her lungs.

SYDNEY

There's going to be a real, live
monkey at my birthday party? I
can't believe it.

Sydney turns around and looks down at her backpack.

SYDNEY

You hear that Bongo? You're going
to have a friend!

Sydney pulls Bongo into her chest and squeezes the backpack
tight.

SYDNEY

Oh my gosh! You guys are the best
parents ever. I'm telling everyone
at school tomorrow wow!

Sydney sprints up her driveway before her parents can stop to say something, singing about how excited she is to finally meet a monkey.

INT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sydney strides down the hallway as if it's a fashion runway. Her sneakers light up with every step she takes and she has a pile of birthday invitations in hand.

Meredith stands by her locker with a slew of other girls, all decked out in Juicy Couture sweatsuits.

All the girls are circled around Meredith, who holds out her iPhone. A Youtube video of a monkey doing the moonwalk plays on her iPhone.

Sydney walks right up to Meredith and gives her a toothy-smile.

SYDNEY

Hi, I'm Sydney!

Meredith looks up from her phone and gives her a half-smile.

MEREDITH

Hey, you're new here right?

Sydney nods.

MEREDITH

We're just watching this Youtube vid of a monkey moonwalking, have you seen it?

Sydney's jaw drops and her face lights up.

SYDNEY

Of course I've seen it! I love monkeys, check out my backpack.

Sydney turns around and shows off her backpack.

SYDNEY

I even named him Bongo.

Meredith giggles and gives a full-on smile.

Sydney turns back around towards Meredith.

SYDNEY

There's actually going to be a monkey at my 10th birthday party this Friday night.

Meredith's eyes bulge.

Sydney stutters a bit.

SYDNEY

Um, do you want to come?

Sydney's hand shakes as she holds out the invitation for Meredith and her friends to see.

Meredith excitedly shrieks.

MEREDITH

There's going to be a monkey at your birthday party? That's so cool! Of course I'll come.

Meredith turns left and right towards her group of friends. All of the surrounding girls excitedly nod their heads.

MEREDITH

We'll all be there! I've always wanted to take a selfie with a monkey- would definitely get me more followers on Instagram.

Sydney and Meredith laugh along together.

Sydney passes out invitations to all the girls. Sydney has the biggest grin on her face.

SYDNEY

I'm so excited. Friday will be really fun! I'll see you guys then.

MEREDITH

We'll see you before then. Come sit with us at lunch today.

Sydney blushes.

SYDNEY

Really? Oh, wow! That would be awesome.

The school bell rings.

MEREDITH
See you at lunch!

INT. - ART CLASSROOM - DAY

MONTAGE:

Sydney sits down next to Frankie in class.

Frankie and Sydney start chatting.

Sydney shows him her backpack.

Frankie laughs.

Sydney passes him an invitation.

Frankie's jaw drops and he shakes his head to say yes.

Sydney and Tracey laughing together.

The two girls play with clay.

They make a monkey out of clay.

Sydney passes Tracey an invitation.

Tracey's eyes bulge and she pulls in Sydney for a huge hug.

Sydney smiles.

INT. - SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Sydney walks with her lunch tray.

Meredith, Frankie, and Tracey are all seated at a lunch table together.

They wave to Sydney, indicating for her to sit with them.

Sydney sits right next to Meredith.

Shots of all of the kids laughing together, Sydney making a monkey face and everyone bursting out into laughter, and Sydney trading Frankie four oreos for a fruit roll-up.

END MONTAGE

INT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sydney puts her backpack on and then shuts her locker.

She turns around to face Brady walking up to her.

Sydney quickly pulls her iPhone out of her pocket, using the "selfie" camera she checks herself out, fixes her hair and then speedily tucks her iPhone away.

She looks up to face Brady.

BRADY

Hey Sydney, how's it hanging?

SYDNEY

Brady? Didn't even see you coming over here. Everything's great, thanks!

Sydney starts to blush.

Brady leans in a bit closer.

BRADY

So, I've been hearing this rumor that there's going to be a monkey at your birthday party?

Brady gives a half-smile.

BRADY

I told everyone to knock it off, but they insisted it was true!

Sydney nods her head up and down.

SYDNEY

You better believe it! I'm so excited, you have no idea.

Brady gives a friendly smirk.

BRADY

I would be excited. But too bad I didn't get an invitation.

Brady shrugs.

BRADY

I guess my invitation got lost in the mail or something.

Sydney giggles.

SYDNEY
Of course you're invited!

Sydney hands him the invitation.

Brady reaches out to grab it and their hands touch.

They both nervously giggle.

 SYDNEY
Well, um. I better run, have to go
catch my bus!

Brady grins.

 BRADY
So pumped to meet the monkey at
your party.

 SYDNEY
Can't wait!

EXT. - SYDNEY'S HOME - DAY

The doors of the bus swing open.

Sydney struts off the bus wearing a slick pair of Ray Bans.

The windows of the bus all open and every kid pops their
head out and waves goodbye to Sydney.

Sydney excitedly waves back, hollering towards the children
on the bus.

 SYDNEY
See you all on Friday!

Sydney skips over to her parents, who are waiting for her at
the edge of the driveway.

 SYDNEY
Hey, Mom! Hey, Dad!

 GERALD
Syd! How was school today?

Sydney's face lights up.

 SYDNEY
Dad, it was amazing! Everyone was
so nice. People kept coming up to
me all day. They can't wait for my
party!

Teresa puts her arm around Sydney.

TERESA

And just yesterday you were worried about not having met anyone to invite. I knew you had it in you.

Gerald nods in agreement.

GERALD

That's my Syd, alright!

Gerald squeezes Sydney.

SYDNEY

Well once I told them about the monkey that's going to be at my birthday party, they couldn't wait to come.

Teresa looks at Gerald and gives him a little punch.

GERALD

Hey! What was that for?

TERESA

You told her there was going to be a monkey at the party? What would you do that for?

Gerald's eyes bulge.

GERALD

What are you talking about? I never said that!

Teresa bends down to Sydney's height and faces her.

TERESA

Sydney, I don't know where you got the idea from, but there's no monkey coming to your party.

Sydney's eyes start watering up.

SYDNEY

Wait... no. What are you talking about? This isn't funny. You said there's going to be a mammal, a monkey at the party!?

GERALD

Oh! Syd, that was just me making a joke that your mom's as wild as a monkey.

Gerald pulls Sydney in for a hug.

GERALD

We're really sorry kiddo.

Sydney's face gets swollen and red, tears begin to stream down.

Sydney runs up her driveway and into her house, hysterically crying.

INT. - SYDNEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sydney is curled up in a ball on her bed. She holds Bongo close as tears stream down her reddened cheeks.

Gerald walks in the bedroom and sits down next to Sydney. He puts his arm around Sydney.

GERALD

Syd, don't cry. Everything's going to be alright.

Sydney sniffles.

SYDNEY

How do you know, dad?

GERALD

I just know. Some call me a fortune teller, you know?

Sydney looks up and giggles a bit as she starts to wipe away her tears.

She half-smiles towards her dad.

SYDNEY

Oh really? And who calls you a fortune teller?

GERALD

You know... people.

(beat)

Well actually... just your mother.

Sydney cracks a smile and belts a small laugh.

GERALD

Now there's that beautiful, smiling
face I love to see!

Sydney leans her head on her father's shoulder.

GERALD

Syd, I know you're upset, but you
have to tell the kids at school
tomorrow there isn't going to be a
monkey at your party.

Sydney's eyes start to water once more.

GERALD

We're new to this town and I don't
want the other parents wrongly
thinking your mom and I are crazy
enough to have a wild animal at a
10 year old's birthday party!

Sydney breaks down into full-blown hysterics.

SYDNEY

But Dad, no one is going to come to
my party now. The only reason
they're coming is for the monkey.

GERALD

I'm sure they will still come! I
promise it will be a great party,
even if there is no monkey.

Gerald leans in and gives Sydney a kiss on her forehead.
Sydney closes her eyes as her father kisses her.

INT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sydney's eyes are still puffy from the night before. She
slowly walks up to Meredith and the rest of the girls, who
stand against their lockers.

MEREDITH

Hey Sydney, what's up?

Sydney looks down at the ground and taps her foot nervously.

SYDNEY

Nothing really.

(beat)

But, um... there's something I have
to tell you.

MEREDITH

Wait! There's something I *need* to show you first.

Meredith turns around and opens up her locker. She pulls out her NEW MONKEY-BACKPACK and puts it on her back.

MEREDITH

Look! I got a monkey backpack just like you! I think I'll name him Sparky.

Meredith twirls around, showing off her new bag.

MEREDITH

I'm going to bring it to your birthday, so I can compare what it looks like next to a real, live monkey!

Sydney's eyes bulge and her hands start shaking.

SYDNEY

Oh, well, about the monkey...

Sydney takes a deep breath in and straightens herself up.

SYDNEY

There, um... uh there isn't going to be one.

Sydney's eyes are full of tears.

SYDNEY

I really thought there was! I swear I wasn't lying. I just... I just...

Sydney's about to breakdown into tears, so she sprints away rubbing her tears.

Sydney leans against her locker, but then slides down and plops herself on the floor. She tucks her head into her knees and sobs.

Sydney hears footsteps.

BRADY

Sydney, what's wrong?

Sydney looks up to see Brady standing over her. Sydney quickly rubs the tears out of her eyes.

SYDNEY
It's really nothing.

Brady then takes a seat next to Sydney.

BRADY
You can tell me what's wrong.

Sydney takes a deep sigh.

SYDNEY
You know how I kind of, sort of
mentioned that there's going to be
a monkey at my party?

Brady nods.

SYDNEY
Well, now there's not going to be
one. And no one is going to come to
my party once they find out.

Brady cocks his head.

SYDNEY
I think I should just cancel the
party, save myself the
embarrassment.

Brady places his hand on Sydney's shoulder.

BRADY
Sydney, you know none of that's
true!

Sydney squints in confusion

SYDNEY
What do you mean?

BRADY
People are still going to come.
Yeah, it would be totally rad if
there was a monkey. But no one
really cares about that, they are
coming because it's your party,
they want to be there for your
birthday. And I'll even wear a
monkey-suit if that will make you
feel better.

Sydney rapidly shakes her head in disagreement. She begins
to sniffle again.

SYDNEY

That's really nice of you to say
and all, but let's face it, no
one's going to come now.

INT. - CHUCK E CHEESE'S - DAY

Sydney sits alone with a frown on and a party hat tilted on
her hat as she leans on her hand.

She pokes her birthday cake with her finger. She then smears
the word "happy" on the "Happy 10th Birthday Sydney" on her
cake.

Then all of a sudden, someone taps Sydney on the shoulder.

Sydney's eyes bulge and her jaw drops.

MEREDITH

Happy Birthday, Sydney!

It's Meredith and everyone from school.

SYDNEY

I didn't think you were going to
come!

Meredith squints in confusion.

MEREDITH

Huh? What made you think that!

SYDNEY

Because there's no monkey...

Meredith flashes a smile.

MEREDITH

We're not here because of the
monkey, Sydney! We're here for you.
We came here because it's *your*
birthday party, not a monkey's
birthday party!

Brady walks up and puts his arm around Sydney.

BRADY

I told you so.

Brady leans in and gives Sydney a kiss on the cheek. Sydney
blushes.

She looks around the room and everyone's there: Meredith, Brady, Tracey, Frankie, her parents, and everyone else from school. Sydney's face lights up and she smiles.