

She Got Away
by Rachel Tan
Huanui College

Morgan and Allie fell in love in spring, beneath the willow tree in the school's garden. Blooming lilies surrounded them, bushes swayed with the warm breeze. Morgan remembered it vividly. His friends had hidden nearby, snapping a picture of the scene—one he kept as his lockscreen.

Morgan pursued sport; football, his passion. Allie was his number one supporter, her cheers his strength. She, however, was an indoor soul—a book nerd through and through. She always complained of stiff limbs, though Morgan never thought much of it. He had never seen her in PE, never in sports.

Lately she had grown restless. Sleepless nights, trembling hands. When Morgan asked, she snapped, "It's nothing." Yet she began to miss school more often. Slowly, she pulled away. She was right there, within reach, but felt so far. Morgan watched in silence, longing for the girl beneath the willow. He threw himself into football instead.

Then the news came, and it broke him. Parkinson's. The signs had been there, and he had brushed them aside. He thought she was untouchable, eternal in her quiet brilliance.

She slipped away slowly, piece by piece. Her voice grew softer, her hands weaker, her body betraying her spirit. Morgan stayed by her side now, every match, every cheer echoing in his memory. He whispered the words she once gave him, hoping they reached her still.

By the time spring returned, the willow tree stood heavy with blossoms. Morgan looked at the picture on his phone—two young hearts in bloom—while the girl he loved rested beneath the earth. He had been too late, foolishly blind.

And Allie was gone. His Allie was forever gone. The only proof that she once roamed the earth was her left-behind belongings and the memories he'd shared with her.