

Ice cream has so many flavors, and each one describes different feelings. To be specific, chocolate is the sweetness of the lovers; mint is the freshness of young people; coffee is the maturity of the adult relationship. However, there is one flavor people often regard as plain and common, but it lasts forever and this flavor always first occurs in their mind, and that flavor is vanilla. Vanilla represents the company of the one who loves you quietly and who is always by your side.

Ann and Gilbert have known each other for sixteen years. They grow up together, go to school together, and they have never missed each other's important life events, such as birthday, family trip or any contests they joined. Ann is a girl with imagination who likes to write short stories, while Gilbert enjoys sports, science and student union. However, Gilbert is always the loyal reader of Ann's stories, giving her constructive suggestions whenever he reads her stories. Everything seems so right between them; their family, friends, and classmates all think they are perfect for each other. However, to Ann, Gilbert is her best friend and someone she trusts. She has never thought of the romance. To Gilbert, he thinks Ann and him have a connection and chemistry, and this thought challenges their relationship. The first crisis happens in their sixteen-year friendship.

On Tuesday afternoon, Gilbert walked with Ann on their way home. As usual,

Ann was talking happily about her new short story, asking Gilbert to be her reader. Gilbert accepted her request, but he seemed to have something on his mind. However, Ann did not find out because she was already deeply immersed in her story. After a while, Gilbert asked Ann to go to a movie with him, and Ann said yes without hesitation. While Gilbert felt happy, Ann added, "Why do you ask a silly question like that? You're my best friend. A brother..." Gilbert interrupted Ann before she continuing, "Sorry, Ann, but I think you didn't know what I want. Maybe you should find a new reader." Gilbert then went away, leaving Ann alone. This is the first time Ann saw Gilbert being so mad and impatient. She did not know what irritated the gentle Gilbert.

Ann stood on the street, thinking Gilbert might have some problems of his schoolwork or clubs, so she wanted to ask him for the answer. Along the street towards Gilbert's home, she passed by so many places they used to hang out together when they were little. Suddenly, Ann realized she was in front of Gilbert's home. She knocked on the door, and she heard someone's steps. She hoped it would be Gilbert and then she could ask him what happened. Someone opened the door, but it was Gilbert's mom, Mrs. Blythe. "Hi! Ann, may I help you?" Ann thought she could still find Gilbert by asking his mom to tell Gilbert that she came. She asked Mrs. Blythe whether Gilbert was home, but the answer disappointed her. Mrs. Blythe told Ann that

Gilbert was busy doing his science project and he said he did not want interruption.

Hearing that, Ann could only say goodbye to Mrs. Blythe. She went back home with frustration. At that night, Ann could not sleep well and she could not help thinking Gilbert's words. She was afraid of losing Gilbert and their friendship.

Next day, Ann saw Gilbert talking with his buddies joyfully on campus; she thought Gilbert was not mad anymore, so she walked toward him. However, when Gilbert saw her walking toward him and his friends, he showed a little awkwardness on his face. As Ann stood in front of them, Gilbert soon requested his friends to leave. They finally could talk about what happened yesterday, but Gilbert was still strange. Ann started, "Gil, something wrong happened?" She thought she should be attentive, but Gilbert only said no to her. This made Ann mad because she had been worried about him since yesterday, and Gilbert did not know anything of her worry. Ann raised her voice, "What? You got mad yesterday, pretending you were busy doing the stupid project. And now you say we don't need to talk." In Ann's mind, she thought Gilbert changed and he did not want their friendship anymore, so he could be so indifferent toward her. She presumed Gilbert thought being a friend of a girl was childish and something not manly. As she tried to walk away, Gilbert stopped her. "Ann, of course I cherish our friendship and that brings me joy, but I want to be more than that. I don't want to just be your friend, or family; what I want is to be your

boyfriend. I love you.” After his confession, Gilbert released a smile, but a bitter smile.

Gilbert's confession shocked Ann, for she had never thought of the romantic relationship. In her mind, she wanted Gilbert to be with her forever as a listener and a guardian but not a boyfriend. Tears came out from Ann's eyes, blurring her view; all she could say to Gilbert was sorry. This was the first time a girl like Ann shuttered.

Seeing she crying, Gilbert gently patted Ann on her head and said, “Ann, no matter what you think, I won’t change my feelings toward you. And if we can’t be friends anymore...It’s my problem, not yours.”

Ann fell into the memory where Gilbert and she were children playing around the town. Whenever she got hurt or felt bad, Gilbert would comfort her until she stopped crying. This interaction made them close to each other because they knew they could trust each other. Ann contemplated for a long time, starting to observe Gilbert and found out Gilbert did change. Gilbert is taller with a lean body, his eyes are brown, and his hair is curly and blond. Gilbert is good-looking, but Ann had never paid attention to it. She only noticed that Gilbert is more mature than her, always willing to help people. Gilbert is a fine person who she is proud of. Ann was amazed by the truth that they are no longer children, and started to feel mad at herself. “Why am I so stupid? I must have hurt Gil's feelings...” Ann forgot the existence of Gilbert, falling into her deep thought. Gilbert broke the silence and said, “Ann, you're the first

girl that I ever loved. I will always love you.” Spontaneously, his mind went back to their childhood where everything was simple. He looked at the girl in front of him, and he was astonished although he has always thought Ann was the most beautiful girl in the world. Ann's blue eyes reflect all her thoughts and cleverness, and her auburn hair symbolizes her energy. To Gilbert, Ann is the perfect girl. Ann always shared her story with him, making him laugh whenever he read a funny passage. Honestly, he enjoyed being her loyal reader and he never wanted someone else to replace him. Suddenly, he thought of the afternoon they spent together enjoying the delicious vanilla ice cream. Ann loved vanilla ice cream so much, but after they grew up, they seldom ate ice cream together anymore. Maybe, they all forgot how sweet the ice cream tasted, and the time they ate ice cream together.

The time froze as these two gazed into each other's eyes. Ann blushed and quickly looked away, and Gilbert saw how Ann reacted, feeling a little happy. “Gil, thanks for telling me the truth. I like you but not in the same way as you do. You're the most special person in my life.” After hearing Ann's confession, Gilbert felt warm even though that was not what he expected. “Then... Goodbye, Ann.” Gilbert walked away but he thought he still stood a chance. “Bye, Gil.” Ann waved her hands, watching Gilbert leaving. This was the last day they were together. From that day on, Gilbert always found excuse to stay in school late, hoping Ann would go

home earlier. He only met Ann in some courses; as for Ann, she tried hard to meet Gilbert by waiting for him outside the classroom but she always failed. It seemed that they were not intimate as before, and Ann's mother found out what had happened. Ann's mom, Ms.Cuthbert, is a lovely lady who cares about her daughter and Gilbert so much. What have happened recently made her feel concerned.

“Ann, may I come in?” Mrs.Cuthbert knocked on Ann's room door. Ann opened her door to let her mother in. Ms.Cuthbert went into the room with an album on her hand. “Ann, I guess I know what happened between you and Gilbert...” Ann interrupted her mom, “No, Mom, nothing happened.” Ms. Cuthbert knew Ann tried to pretend she is fine, so she stopped and left the album on Ann's bed. “Ann, you're a smart girl. I believe you'll find the answer soon.” Ms.Cuthbert left Ann's room. Ann opened the album after her mom went downstairs, not knowing what she would see from it.

In the album, there were pictures of Ann's family. However, there was always one boy in the photos. “Gil was always with me, but now, everything is different.” Ann sobbed. As Ann was in her mood, her phone rang. The ringtone of the phone broke the atmosphere. It was Gilbert. Ann picked up the phone with pleasure because Gilbert has not called her since that day. “Ann, it's me. Come to the park we used to hang out when we were kids.” Gilbert said rapidly. Ann had no clue but she wanted to

see Gilbert so bad, so she headed to the park hurriedly.

On her way to the park, Ann felt nervous; she was afraid that Gilbert would end their friendship forever, or even his feelings for her. Upon worrying, Ann passed by *True Heart's*, a famous ice cream store in their town. Ice cream sold in *True Heart's* is always sold out after they open. If you are not lucky enough, you are not able to taste the flavor of their ice cream. Ann went into the store, trying to test her luck. Luckily, she bought one, and the clerk said that she was the second customer today. Ann was so happy, and she thought she could share her ice cream with Gilbert. Soon she arrived at the park, seeing Gilbert standing there with something on his hand. When she went closer, she saw what written on the thing. It was *True Heart's*. "Gilbert was the first customer. I can't believe it." Ann felt warm because her Gilbert still knew her so well. Ann ran to Gilbert and she could not hide her excitement. "Ann, I knew we haven't eaten ice cream together for so long. But, I never forget vanilla is your favorite." Ann cried with joy, and she hugged Gilbert. Gilbert blushed, seeing the ice cream on Ann's hand. "Gil, I was wrong. Life without you is boring. I can't believe you and I have the same idea. I wanted to share the ice cream with you, so I bought it. I guessed I always love you, but I was too stubborn to admit it."

Gilbert hugged her back, and he wanted this moment last forever. Ann slowly looked up, staring at Gilbert; then, she kissed him. This moment belonged to them.