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The sun was shining brightly outside while the cicadas were buzzing loudly under the scorching heat. It was the middle of my summer vacation and I had nothing to do but stay at home all day. All my friends had either gone dating or were travelling overseas. I sighed and turned to look at the worn-out teddy bear sitting on my desk. It was a gift from my childhood friend, Anna. I picked it up and found that its fur was not as soft as it had once been and the seams were starting to peel.

I remembered being with Anna ever since the first day of kindergarten. I was crying at the school gate, pulling at my father's trousers, reluctant to go in, dreading the foreign environment. Then I heard a soft voice and there she was, smiling brightly at me, saying, "Hi! I'm Anna!" Shyly, I also introduced myself. Somehow, I ended up walking hand-in-hand with her into my kindergarten class with a smile on my face. Since that day, we had been the best of friends.

Every day after school, we would hang out in the park and wait for our parents to fetch us home. We would play in the mud on rainy days and play soccer with the boys on sunny days. Mom and Dad would always tell me off for being drenched in sweat and covered in mud all the time, but I would not mind the nagging because I knew Anna was going through the same thing.

We would laugh it off on the next day and our goofy playfulness remained unchanged. We were inseparable and I thought everything would always stay that way.

"JoJo, I'm moving next month." Anna told me during the Spring break of our sixth grade. I was shocked. She explained that she had to move because her father was transferred to another branch of his company overseas. I tried to convince Anna and even her parents to stay but all my attempts failed. Even though we had promised to do so many things together in the future, she still left. On the day of her departure, she handed me a gift. It was a teddy bear, one with strawberry-scented fur and a white ribbon tied to its neck. On its back was a tag on which was written, "Best friends forever." We shared one last hug, and she left. I cried so much that I went to school with swollen eyes for many days.

Looking back on those days, I remembered laughing and crying with her. Anna had never truly left me. She had always been in my sepia-coloured memories, and in this everlasting gift she gave me. Nostalgia always gives us bittersweet moments. My phone rang, pulling me out of my memories. I put the bear back on the table and checked my phone. It was a message from Anna. Indeed, she had never really left me.