

Aged 9-12 category winner:

Daisy Fleetwood (Aged 11) From Lord Scudamore Academy.

The ceaseless rush of the hospital streaked before my eyes. My surroundings were blurred: although I continued to stare blankly into the opposite wall. I don't know what I was expecting - but it was unsurprisingly the same as all the rest. Mere seconds later, fatigue consumed me and tears began to crawl down my cheeks. My eyelids were so heavy, yet I couldn't close them for if I did, I wasn't sure they would ever reopen. But I couldn't resist.

On the day I met Amélie I was 14 years old, a boy who cared for nothing more than himself. Little did I know all that was about to be replaced. She sat next to me in my English class and, as the teacher's words became but an incessant babble in my ears, I gazed longingly at her. From that moment, there was nobody else.

We became close companions, one of my most poignant memories of us together was being under a Great Oak tree as the colours of the day began to soak into the deepness of the night. We watched the summer sunlit grass and leaves swirling in the breeze transform into the winter snow falling, like soft voices whispering a thousand conversations I could not grasp hold of. When she smiled, her teeth resembled stringed pearls and lit up the room. Though I tried many times to convince myself I was not in love with her, the feelings, which began as a trickling stream, now surged over me like a tsunami.

A soulmate is like having roots within another being, you're entwined, a life carved together, the walls in our home rich in colour and laden with pictures. I would observe Amélie's fingers run across the keys of her grand piano: music filling the air like smoke with rich notes and harmony. Her favourite - Nocturne No.2 in E-Flat Major - whenever she played it her glittering eyes caught mine, and she'd smile. "You can learn, you know!" I vowed that one day I would, and as we sat side by side while my laboured hands prodded the keys I praised her on her talent and unfailing patience. She used to chuckle and in reply say, "I think you just need a little more practice."

But as fast as they flooded in, the memories faded away. I knew I was still in the hospital because of the smell. Antiseptic, bitterly bringing me back to reality. Ward 29. My wife. She looked so frail now, but still possessing delicate beauty like the Sweet Peas I'd put next to her bedside. I nodded to my daughter and she pressed play. Nocturne No.2 glided across the room. Even through my watery eyes I could see a glimmer of that smile. That was all I needed. As the melody drew to an end, her hand slowly loosened from my tender grip. It had always been her favourite song.