

The Weeping Willow

by Amena Becton

One afternoon as they strolled through the park, a little girl and her grandmother saw a willow tree. The little girl stopped and turned to her grandmother and said, "Grandmother, what kind of tree is that?"

Her grandmother replied, "That is a weeping willow tree." "Why is it called a weeping willow tree?" the little girl asked. The grandmother replied, "Because its branches are very flexible, and when the branches bend, the tree looks very sad." The little girl stared at her grandmother in awe as she continued to tell her about the willow. "The tree also grows flowers ever spring, and it only grows in wet soil or beside a creek, just like the one over there." "Why?" inquired the little girl.

At once the grandmother realized that the way to answer all of her questions would be to tell her a story. The grandmother and the little girl clasped hands and walked to a bench across from the tree. Once there, the little girl climbed onto her grandmother's lap while her grandmother told the story of the weeping willow.

There was once a woman named Lillian who loved to plant flowers in her garden. Everyone would always speak of the beautiful flowers and visit

her garden. A man named Simeon was passing through and had heard of a garden, which was to have the most beautiful flowers in the world, and so he decided to see for himself just how beautiful these flowers were. Upon arriving at the garden, he noticed a woman kneeling on the ground planting seeds, and he thought she was very beautiful. In the moment, the wind blew Lillian's scarf from her head, forcing Lillian's attention away from her planting. As she looked up, she saw Simeon standing across the garden and thought that he was very handsome. The two fell in love simultaneously. Simeon walked over to Lillian, greeted her, and introduced himself. Lillian bashfully returned his greeting and gave Simeon her name. After that day, Simeon and Lillian began to meet in the garden everyday.

Neither Simeon nor Lillian realized that they were being watched. Miranda, the evil witch, loved to come to Lillian's garden because she too thought it was beautiful and had spied on Lillian and Simeon every day since their first meeting. Miranda watched them because she was jealous. She loved Simeon. She loved him from the first time she had seen him that day in the garden. As she sat in

a tree on the far end of the garden so she would not be noticed, she came up with a plan to get rid of Lillian in order to have Simeon all to herself.

That night Miranda cast a spell, which made her voice sound like Simeon and made Lillian see Simeon every time she looked at the witch. Afterwards, she went to Lillian's cottage and tiptoed into her room. Once there the witch said, "Lillian. Lillian. Wake up, Lillian." "Simeon," Lillian asked groggily, "Is it you?" "You look like yourself, but you do not seem to be yourself." "Yes, it is I. Come with me, Lillian, my love" Miranda replied. "Where?" inquired Lillian.

Miranda responded, "Follow the sound of my voice." Lillian followed Simeon's voice deep into the woods. Once there, Miranda reversed the spell that she put on Lillian and told her that she is going to spend the rest of her life as a tree. Lillian begged Miranda not to transform her into a tree, but she would not listen. Instead Miranda asked Lillian where she would like to be placed and Lillian replied, "I would like to be rooted amongst other trees, so that I will not be lonely." Miranda cackled and granted Lillian her wish.

After Lillian had been

transformed, Miranda went to see Simeon. When Miranda saw Simeon, she told him that he could no longer love Lillian because she was a tree. Simeon asked Miranda how Lillian became a tree and she told him that she had transformed Lillian into a tree. Simeon was furious. He asked Miranda, "Why?" Miranda replied that it was because she loved him. Simeon told Miranda that he could never love her because he loved Lillian and also that she was too evil for him to love. Miranda did not know how to respond. She knelt down before Simeon and begged him to understand her undying love. In that instance, Simeon realized that he could use the love that Miranda had for him to his advantage. He told Miranda that if she transformed Lillian into her old self again, he would love her. Upon hearing this, Miranda was overjoyed. She and Simeon went back to the woods where Lillian had been placed and Miranda immediately transformed Lillian. When Lillian saw Simeon, she began to run to him, but Miranda intervened. She told Lillian that Simeon was now hers, and she could not have him because he loved her now. The expression of pain on Lillian's face so wrenched Simeon's gut that he stepped from behind the witch and told Lillian that it was a lie. Simeon embraced her and told her that he loved her, and Lillian forgave him. Miranda was so hurt by Simeon's betrayal that she began to weep. Miranda wept and wept until she began to melt. After Miranda melted, Simeon and Lillian walked away unplagued by her untimely fate. They were married and lived happily ever after.

Now there was a tree that was positioned next to Lillian that witnessed the scene between the three visitors. The tree felt Miranda, though evil, did not deserve Simeon's betrayal and from that day began to mourn her. The tree began to cry. It cried so much that the soil became moist around it and created a river. During that time, the tree's leaves became narrow. Its branches were like flexible twigs, drooping down from its large body, earning the name "weeping willow," and every spring the tree would grow flowers called Catkins, in memory of Miranda.

Everybody is Blind to the Good Things at Home

My mother always told me the best things in life start at home.

If you decide to travel to visit different states

remember you'll always be alone.

Home to you may be your house and things you own,

but if you don't appreciate home all things will be gone.

You can't take for granted what you have,

and then go to a friend to take their things and make it last.

Your spouse may be blind to what he has at home,

but always remember you can leave his butt alone.

When you became his wife,

he promised he'd love you for life.

Now every time you look down,

he's always trickin' around.

While he's acting hateful,

you're being faithful.

You're always saying, "I love him,"

but that's what he's telling them.

When he decides to come home,

all he'll find is that you're gone.

He'll think you did him wrong,

and start to sing another sad love song.

So, DON'T be blind to the good things at home,

because if you blink again it may just be

GONE.

— Deondra Simone Brown