



Remember Miranda

ROWENA AKINYEMI

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Remember Miranda



Cathy Wilson is driving to Norfolk, to begin her new job with the Harvey family. She is going to look after the two young children, Tim and Susan. Cathy meets the children's father, and their grandmother, and their aunt. She meets Nick, the farmer who lives across the fields. But she doesn't meet Miranda, the children's mother, because Miranda is dead.

She died two years ago, and Cathy cannot learn anything about her. Everybody remembers Miranda, but nobody wants to talk about her. (Word count 5,060)



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- ◀ **STAGE 1**
- ◀ STARTER



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STAGE 1 400 Headwords

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Remember Miranda

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REMEMBER MIRANDA

It is Cathy Wilson's first job. She is going to live with the Harvey family, and look after the two young children and the house. Cathy's parents are dead, and she has no brothers or sisters. She wants to be happy in her new home, but she is sometimes lonely. Duncan, the children's father, is often away in London. Cathy likes the children and she likes old Mrs Harvey, Duncan's mother, but she has no friends.

Of course, there is Nick, the farmer who lives across the fields. He has very blue eyes, and a warm, friendly smile. But it is not easy to be friendly with Nick, because Duncan hates him, and old Mrs Harvey gets angry when Cathy goes to dinner with Nick.

But why does Duncan hate Nick? Why does Nick tell Cathy to be careful at Beach House? And why does nobody want to talk about Miranda, the children's mother, who died two years ago? There are a lot of secrets in the Harvey family, and Cathy begins to ask questions.

Soon she begins to find the answers. And she learns why everybody remembers Miranda . . .

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Beach House

The children and their father remember Miranda, of course, and they talk about her sometimes. Miranda's sister often visits us, and she always tells the children a story about their mother. Nick remembers Miranda; I know he does. And in the hospital, Grandma remembers, too. They all remember Miranda.

I never met Miranda, but every day I look at her photograph, next to the telephone in the kitchen, the picture of her with her children. Every day I look at her beautiful dark eyes and her long dark hair.

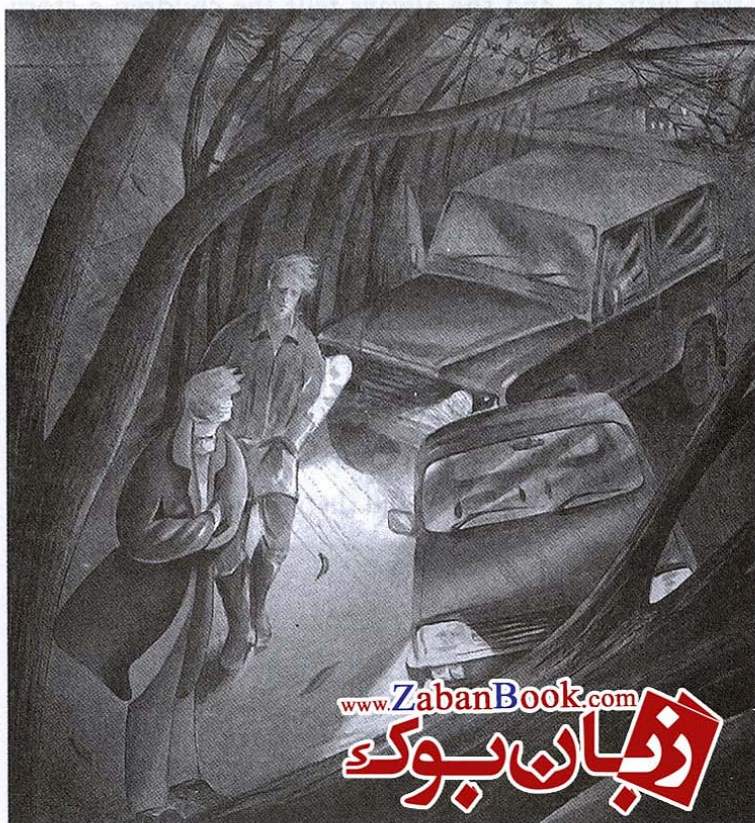
I first saw Miranda's photograph two years ago. It was a cold October day, and I left London for my new job with a family in Norfolk. I drove north, past Norwich, and it began to rain. It was dark and there was a strong wind so



It began to rain.

I drove slowly and carefully. I wanted to see the Harvey children before they went to bed. But because of the weather, it was eight o'clock before I arrived in Cromer. I drove through the town, along the sea road.

Suddenly, I stopped. There was a tree across the road. I got out of my car. It was a big tree, and I couldn't move it.



'What's the matter?'

Just then, a car drove up behind me and a man got out.

'What's the matter? Oh – a tree across the road.' He was a tall man, about thirty years old. 'Where are you going?' he asked.

'Not far,' I said. 'It's a house along this road, near the sea. It's called Beach House.'

'Oh, I know Beach House,' the man said. 'It's the last house along this road. But you can't drive there tonight, with this tree across the road.' He stopped for a minute. 'I'm Nick Watson, and I live at the farm along the road. We can go back to my house, and then walk across the fields to Beach House. Are you visiting for the weekend?'

'No, no. I'm going to work in the house and look after Mr Harvey's children. Their mother died two years ago, and their grandmother has arthritis in her legs and can't walk much now. So I'm going to look after the children and the house,' I told him. 'I met old Mrs Harvey in London, six weeks ago, and she gave me the job. Do you know the Harveys?'

The man laughed. His laugh was warm and friendly. 'Oh, yes, I know them,' he said.

We drove back down the road and into the farm. Then we walked across the fields. It was dark and windy and cold. After ten minutes we arrived at a big white house. The lights were on downstairs, and the house looked friendly. I had no home because my mother and father died

a long time ago, and I had no brothers or sisters. This was my first job and I wanted to be happy in this house.

A man opened the door. He looked tired and there was no smile on his face.

'Hello, I'm Cathy Wilson,' I began. 'I'm very late, I know. It's because the weather's so bad.'

'There's a tree down across the road,' Nick said. 'So Cathy left her car at the farm and we walked here.'

Duncan Harvey looked at Nick. 'You always want to help,' he said coldly. 'And you're always there at the right time, ready to help.' His face was angry and I didn't understand why.

'The wind's very strong . . .' I began.

'It doesn't matter,' Nick said. He smiled at me and his eyes were very blue. 'Goodbye, Cathy. Come and get your car tomorrow.'

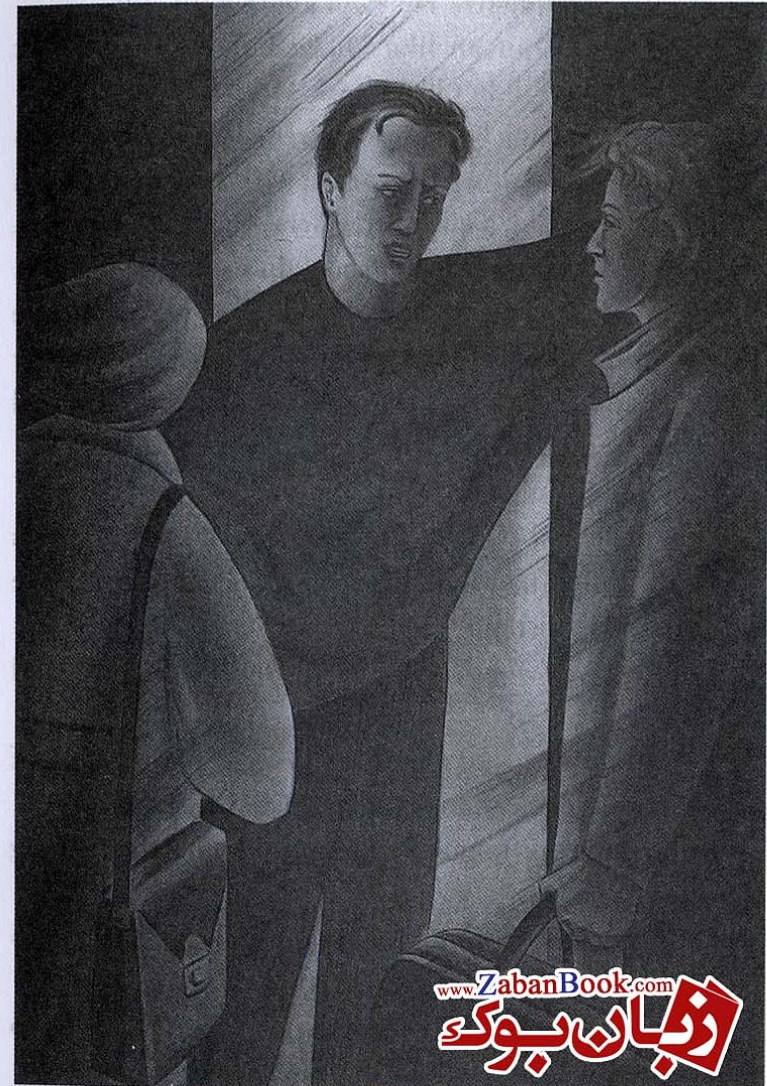
Duncan said nothing. I went into the house and he took me through into the kitchen.

'Mother, here's Cathy,' he said.

Old Mrs Harvey sat near the window. 'Hello, my dear,' she said warmly. 'What a wind! Come and have something to eat.' She stood up and walked slowly across the room. Her hair was white, and she had a stick because of her bad legs.

I sat down and began to eat.

'Duncan is angry because he doesn't like Nick,' Mrs



'You always want to help.'