

I Remember

by Katy Wise

I was astonished, I could not believe the reaction, she had given me the money, told me to go buy ice-creams with it for me and my sister, and I had done exactly that. What was the problem? But there she was, certainly very cross with me for spending the entire twenty-pound note. All I felt was bewilderment, humiliation and a little exhaustion. I wanted to go back home, mum never got angry at me, she accepted everything, she remembered what it was like.

We were only playing, we were not causing any harm and yet here we stood looking up to some very over exaggerated arm waving, shouting and gesturing. From what I could gather he didn't want us or our belongings on his lawn. But in all fairness a plastic doll surely wasn't going to cause any damage to grass? And when Luke rode his bike into his fence, Luke was hurt more than the fence was... There it was again that feeling of bewilderment.

I sat between the two of them looking from one to another, arguing over... well I'm not entirely sure what they were arguing over, but I suppose just because you can't see it doesn't mean its not important. I tried to distract them, I wanted to show them the exquisite china dog Granny had given me, it was so perfect, I handled it lovingly, I was going to give it a name and pride of place on my book shelf. Granny remembered.

Exhaustion again. Mrs Walters was telling mum that my spelling was not good enough, that I must use my dictionary more. Mum listened, she didn't say much, but on the drive home she told Daddy how ridiculous, 'if she doesn't know how to spell it how can she possibly look it up in a dictionary?' Mum definitely remembered, Mrs Walters did not.

Daddy always remembered; he got just as excited in any of our new ventures as we did. The snail house, he provided the vessel. The guinea-pig Olympics, he donated the prizes. And the tree house we spent hours hiding away in amongst the apple tree branches was then renovated into an aviary when I brought home a pair of fantail doves. And even when he put his foot down at the request of a trio of gerbils, we wrote him a letter and he quickly lifted it again.

Mum read to us, every night, books doused in magic and childhood adventures so she could never forget. My head swam with these stories, I loved them and I lived them, with a dog at my heels I traipsed barefoot across the rolling south downs, gazing in the sun at a familiar horizon and I could be anyone.

Now a different view and a different dog at my side and I sit and contemplate a problem I can't see, a vacant bank account, a complaining colleague, and I look to the horizon, a setting red sun against a now purple sky, and I think all grown-ups were once children... but only few of them remember it. I smile at the dog who rolls joyfully in the grass, shake off the concerns as she does, plug myself into Spotify, and dance back down the hill. I remember.