Forget to Remember  Alan Maley

Summary

Jan is 54 years old, divorced and without regular employment. She lives with her dropout daughter Cindy but has been spending a lot of time with her mother, Sarah, who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease and is becoming increasingly forgetful and confused. Feeling unable to deal with the situation on her own, Jan decides to phone her younger sister Kate to ask for some help. Kate is a wealthy lawyer who lives in relative luxury with her husband Hugh, a financial investor. Kate visits Jan and, after discussing the matter with her husband, agrees to have her mother to stay at their house for a short while to give Jan a break. However, Sarah embarrasses Hugh when she appears in her nightdress at an important business dinner party at their home and starts singing a hymn. Hugh says she has to leave, and so Kate takes her back home. Jan is left angry and bitter, especially as she has been offered a good job which she would like to take. In some desperation, Jan decides to turn to her daughter Cindy to ask if she’d be prepared to look after Sarah. Cindy initially says no, but then changes her mind and agrees to do it until a better solution can be found. She finds it difficult, but soon grows to understand her grandmother’s ‘crazy’ ways and to love the time she spends with her. On her 80th birthday, Cindy takes Sarah to Brighton for a day out. They have a wonderful time and have lunch together in an Italian restaurant. Cindy is attracted to the young Italian waiter called Giovanni. That same day, Kate visits Jan to discuss her husband’s proposal for solving the problem of Sarah’s care needs. He has suggested that they give £1,500 a month to pay for Sarah’s care on the understanding that she and Hugh will, in return, get Sarah’s house when she dies. Jan is shocked by Kate’s readiness to put money and the idea of profit before concern for her mother’s comfort and security and throws her out of her house. Next day, Sarah dies peacefully in her sleep. The funeral is a small affair, and Kate and Jan are very distant with each other. They do not speak either when they go to the solicitor’s for the reading of the will; Kate learns that she will get her mother’s house and Jan £50,000. In the meantime, Kate has found out that Hugh is having an affair with the wife of one of his business associates, and she throws him out of their house. His business world then collapses, and they also lose the house, so Kate decides to move into the house she has inherited from her mother. The story closes with Jan attempting to make up with her sister, Giovanni asking Cindy to marry him, and Jan’s boss Dave asking her to marry him.

Before reading

1.  It shows Brighton Pier. A pier is an iron structure from the nineteenth century, used for entertainment and breathing the sea air. Brighton is a famous seaside town on the south coast of England. The weather is sunny and bright.
2.  Student’s own answer.
3.  Jan and Kate are sisters. Their mother is ill. Jan looks after her, but can’t cope any more.
4.  Jan has problems looking after her mother; she’s poor and has a difficult daughter. Kate is a rich and successful professional woman.
5.  The author’s mother had a problem with her memory. Buñuel says that memory is essential to being a person.

Check your reading

Chapter 1

1.  a) She has been looking after her mother all the time.
    b) She has a lot of parties and trips.
    c) She cannot remember anything.
    d) She is not with her husband; she says he was a ‘stupid idiot’.
2.  Meet for lunch the following Sunday.

Chapter 2

1.  a F;  b T;  c F;  d T;  e T;  f T
2.  Student’s own answer.
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Chapter 3

1. Jan: a / d / g / i / j; Kate: b / c / e / f / h
2. Have a live-in nurse at her mother’s house; put her in a care home; make a flat for her in Kate’s big house.
3. Talk to her husband Hugh about things.

Chapter 4

1 c; 2 e; 3 a; 4 g; 5 f; 6 b; 7 d

Chapter 5

1. The Philippines.
2. a) as a ‘perfectly normal old lady’. b) angrily, as if Corrie is a waitress. c) as a friend who knows her father. d) in a warm and friendly way.
3. She is nervous about it.

Chapter 6

1. a) Sarah to Corrie; b) Corrie to Kate; c) Sarah to Kate and Corrie; d) Sarah to the dinner guests; e) Hugh to Kate; f) Kate to Hugh.
2. They are clean, so he didn’t play golf. He says he was at the office, but Kate isn’t sure he’s telling the truth.
3. She phones Jan to say she’s taking Sarah back home the following morning.

Chapter 7

1. Jan’s daughter Cindy.
2. She has bright green hair and rings everywhere; she’s very pale.
3. She gets very irritated by her confusion and repetition.
4. She has got a job as assistant to a sales director.
5. She lets the milk pan burn; she falls down and breaks her wrist.
6. She wants her to look after Sarah full time.
7. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 8

1. She was deciding whether to kill Sarah or not.
2. By giving her too many pills.
3. Because her mother finds it difficult to remember whether she’s taken her pills or not, and the police would think she’d taken too many accidentally.
4. Cindy phoned her to say she’d look after Sarah.

Chapter 9

1. True: a / e / f / g
2. She is the beautiful wide of a Greek businessman; she always dresses very well; Kate had noticed her looking at Hugh at a dinner party at their home.
3. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 10

1. a) Because Sarah says funny, illogical things and uses strange words. b) Because she feels sorry for how Sarah has been ruined by her illness.
2. Some old photographs. They help Sarah to remember her past and to tell Cindy about it.

Chapter 11

1. About the phone calls and why he hadn’t played golf.
2. Because he wanted to talk about her mother’s future.
3. Hugh and Kate would pay £1,500 per month to arrange care for Sarah, but Jan would agree to their getting Sarah’s house when she died.
4. Everybody wins, nobody loses.
5. No. Jan wouldn’t get her part of Sarah’s money and property when she died.

Chapter 12

1. a / c / e / f
2. a
Chapter 13

d – b – f – a – e – g – c

Chapter 14

1. Because Sarah wasn’t there and she’d brought her birthday presents.
2. Because it seemed a heartless investment to make a profit.
3. She threw her out of the house.
4. Student’s own answers.

Chapter 15

1. At an Italian restaurant in Brighton.
2. Warm, friendly, kind, happy.
3. Fish and chips. Yes, but Italian style.
4. She had drunk four glasses of wine with her lunch.
5. That they didn’t have to pay the bill.
6. There was a lot of traffic coming back from the seaside.

Chapter 16

1. a / c / d / f
2. That he’s having an affair with Melpa.
3. To get a divorce.

Chapter 17

1. Peaceful, natural, easy.
2. He drove her home and also came to the funeral.
3. Giovanni and his father, Paolo, from the Italian restaurant.
4. She was cremated.
5. Cold, distant and formal.
6. Jan got £50,000 and Kate got the house.

Chapter 18

1. Clerides has found out about his affair with Melpa; Clerides and the others have taken their money out of the investment fund; Hugh has lost the house; other people want their money back; the police might get involved.
2. She was angry about the house, but told him not to phone her again.
3. In the house in Lewisham that she had inherited from Sarah.
4. They met by chance in the supermarket.
5. They scattered them in the garden as Sarah had wished.

Chapter 19

1. a) They become more friendly.
   b) Giovanni asks Cindy to marry him.
   c) Dave asks Jan to marry him.