



In the late 1920s I was a young girl and recall telling my mother that I would live a hundred years. My young naivete was slightly ambitious but my inherent determination took me to only a few years shy. I think when people meet someone in their 90s, they forget; forget the things I have lived through, forget the deep love I have felt, forget that time has allowed me to grow in wisdom and grace, and forget that I know my own mind better than anyone else.

I know I am in the early stages of dementia, I am ok with that, but I desperately want to hold on to 'me'. When I reflect on the years, I have been so lucky. I loved my husband deeper than I thought possible, our lives were fully intertwined, and I wanted for nothing. We were married for over 60 years, decided not to have a family, and rarely spent a day apart. True love does exist in this world and I was lucky enough to live it for such a long time. When I lost my love, my life was never the same. I filled the giant void that remained with lunch clubs, social outings and a very busy diary. I was becoming increasingly reliant on my diary, not only for memory but it had become my lifeline. I know that might sound silly but knowing that there was something in there each day gave me the distraction I needed to want to live.

Lockdown life in my mid 90s introduced a whole new way of thinking. In the absence of all the distractions I had built up over the years, I felt alone and confused; somewhat cut off from the world, and drowning in a large, empty house. My thoughts once again returned to those of longing for my husband to take me. I felt

increasingly like a lady in waiting, waiting for my wish to come true. I felt no fear of death or of dying, in fact the opposite, the very thought of being with him again was enough for me to feel comfort and longing. People might think that as you grow old you have less of a need for human contact, and for love, but the desire for companionship remains as strong as it was in my youth. I have always known my own mind and what feels right but as your vulnerability increases so too does the level of control other people like to have over your very being. The current pandemic has not made me sick, but it has caused me to reflect, and to decide.

I will stop. I will stop taking the medicine that I have always felt pollutes me. I will stop fuelling my body with sustenance as I no longer wish to drive. I will stop living each day by a busy diary to distract myself from what I really feel inside.

I will ask. I will ask that you support me in respecting my wishes. I will ask that you do not be sad. I will ask that you take comfort in knowing I had a wonderful existence.

I will go. I will go with dignity and pride. I will go feeling that I had a choice. I will go and finally feel at peace and reunited with the love of my life.