

Elsie's Letter

To whom it may concern,

I've never been known for my attention span.
In fact, my husband thinks I'm gormless.
But I'm losing my memory,
one story at a time,

and at the moment I'm getting away with it
in a forgetful kind of way.
I'm trying to keep things in the front of my mind
and I've only left the gas on a couple of times
so far, that I'm aware of,
today.

Now, it just so happens
that I spent a good chunk of my life
working as a nurse in dementia care,
so, although I've no idea where it is my brain's going,
I'm under no illusions
as to what's waiting when it gets there,

So I'd thought I'd better write this letter
for later on in my dementia,
and if you're the sorry sod who's reading it,
then my arse is your career.

I have half a sugar in my tea
and I'm very partial to custard.
I can't abide fisherman's pie,
especially when it's pre-digested.

You can swear in front of me
and I probably won't mind.
Don't worry if you're careless now and again,
as long as you're gentle and kind.
You can even take the piss a little if you like,

'cause I'll be giving you plenty of mine,

but don't treat me like an embarrassment
even when I'm embarrassing.

Just keep me nicely medicated
and clap your hands if you see me singing.

Please don't manhandle me,
unless I hit you first.

Try and make sure I have clothes that fit me
and don't worry about being a brilliant nurse.

Just give me a lie-in now and again
and, if I've filled my nappy
but I appear quite happy,
change the other people first.

And please be gentle with my husband.

We've been married since 1963
and every pore in his body
is going to want to stay with me,
and, although he'll be full of anger and pride,
he'll be quietly going to pieces inside,
so try and involve him as much as you can,
because he does try his best
and he's only a man.

So thanks in advance

for all your hard work and dedication.

I hope I can make you smile as my senses slide,
and I hope that I'm a model patient.

I am aware

the fact I'll lose my memory
won't stop me feeling things emotionally,
so smile a lot, have fun
and lie to me.

When I finally lose it all,
please give me somewhere soft to fall,

so I can decompose with a modicum of dignity;
and, if you have an ounce of compassion,
try and slip me the occasional whisky.

I think that completes the briefing.
I wish you well in all you do,
and if you're ever in my position,
I hope someone does the same for you.

By Rob Gee

From the solo show **'Forget Me Not: The Alzheimer's Whodunnit'**

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