

The Autumn of My Years

Transcript of the section of Sandie's letter to Alex heard at the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Tackling Loneliness Collaborative

SANDIE'S
VOICE:

My dear Alex,

I told you that all good things come to an end. But I wish the end hadn't come quite so soon. Let's think about all the good things, though. About the night we met at *Hay Fever*. Who would have thought that a chance encounter like that would lead to such a friendship? It just shows that older people have to keep getting out and about, making an effort. You never know whom you might meet.

I have so much to thank you for, Alex. Thank you for letting me come to the private view. To the cabaret. For helping me choose my cane. Thank you for inviting me to Chatsworth. It was magical. This has been the autumn of my years. If only, for once, the autumn had lasted slightly longer. But most of all, thank you for keeping me company since I have been in this hospital. I truly do not know how I would have managed without you. Night after night, when you could have been out having fun with your *young* friends, you have sat with me and laughed with me. It's ridiculous to have been around for 82 years and to have come across the kindest person you've ever met in your last two months. I have had more fun with you than at any time I can remember. I have been so lucky to share my final days with you.

The world is full of lonely old people. Think what a better place it would be to live in if every young person reached out to just one old person. We can take an interest in their careers, ambitions, friends, their love lives. Speaking of which, you must do something about that. You don't want to be drifting by for much longer without a girlfriend. Find one who can do the crossword. You need a bit of help in that department.