

Time to Say Goodbye

When Assisted Dying became legal, Harry Mason thought about his departure. He knew it might be imminent anyway, they'd given him 6 months at his last medical. Now, he had the chance to be in control, to set his own deadline, an apt description, and leave on his terms.

He smiled thinking of organising and attending his goodbye event. No black clothes, no pious eulogies, just laughs and lots of hugs, tears optional.

At his infant school, when he was eight, little Audrey, had read the lifeline on his hand and predicted he'd live to 80. Now 90, he had more than met her forecast and he'd had a good life.

Before he could decide on his departure date, he had to decide what was left to do. His physical capability didn't allow for outside adventures. He rarely left his bed in the care home. Of course, he'd like to put his financial affairs in order, say personal goodbyes to those he really loved, and listen to the last two Jack Reacher novels. He set himself a deadline of three months, leaving on New Years Eve and *Auld Lang Syne* sang with nostalgia.

He wondered who would miss him. He'd lost his wife and outlived all of his school and university friends so it was only his children that were in his life now. His old golf club mates would probably spend just five minutes remembering him.

He'd checked the web for info on preparing for Assisted Dying but it was all factual stuff about medical assessment, exit methods and place of departure. He wanted the fun goodbye stuff.

He knew he couldn't really discuss this yet with anyone in the care home or his family but he did have a personal adviser by his bed.

"Alexa, what's needed for a successful goodbye event?"

She was quick to answer. "Some entertainment, good food and some interesting topics for the attendees."

Why weren't funeral directors spotting this new market opportunity, a double whammy, a fun goodbye event, perhaps no expense spared, and a follow-on funeral. And these events could be self funded from savings.

Harry, a retired accountant, never stop thinking about money. In his case, going three months early released perhaps 10 weeks of care home fees worth £15k. And what about all the medical interventions in his last weeks? Maybe, another £15k.

He'd allow £5k for his final injection, which left £5k for food and £20k for a star to sing him out. He probably couldn't get the Rag'n'Bone Man, or Elton but maybe the lovely nurse who sang when she made his bed. She could dress up like Agnetha. Perfect.

He'd pick some suitable ABBA songs. Certainly *Money, Money, Money* and *Thank You for the Music*.

"Why are you smiling Mr Hudson?" asked Sally, his nurse, when she brought his tea.

"I was imagining you dressing up for me," he said.

"Aren't you satisfied with my nurse's uniform anymore?"

Harry smiled. His goodbye would be fun.