

Damen Brook's Letter

My darling Terri, saying goodbye to you today was a huge wrench and watching you leave me again after so long apart left a huge lump in my throat – so huge that I was barely able to speak as you were going. All the things I wanted to say to you were left unsaid, piling up in my brain until I couldn't think which to express first and, of course, saying none of them. I really don't need to tell you how hard it is for me to express my feelings having spent so long leaving them unspoken, do I?

Even sitting alone in my kitchen again, I couldn't put into words the feelings inside me. Only now, sat in the garden where we so often talked into the night, can I break my mental shackles and start to organise my thoughts. It's here, thanks to you, that the cottage I call home finally discovered that I'm not an elective mute. The old place had become so accustomed to the silence but now you've made it more like a family home, just by being here. You brought life into my house, Terri, in all its glory and I know you considered it your home before you left.

These past few weeks these old walls have heard laughter and they've heard tears and they know now that once I had a life filled with both. And you, Terri, were the centre of that life and I know it sounds selfish but you leave me wanting more. When you arrived like a bolt from the blue, I so wanted to pick up where we left off because I'd missed so much of your life but I knew, deep down, that you were no longer the young girl I remember. You'd grown into a beautiful, intelligent, strong woman and we both found it hard at first to relax together. I was trying too hard, I know that now, but we got there in the end, I think. But remember our talk; remember how difficult life can be. That's as it should be. That's what makes life worth the living, knowing you've had to struggle for every moment of happiness.

I can just imagine your laughter, as you read your old man's thoughts like this, pouring onto paper what I couldn't bring myself to say to your face. How

pathetic you must think I am and how you must have hated me all those years we were separated. I know I was a terrible father but I also know I was ill and have learned not to beat myself up about it because I know I can't bring those years back.

You are the one good thing that I've done with my life, Terri, and no matter what happens in the future, I want you to know that I love you and miss you and look forward to when we can be together again.

Your loving father