

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

To My Descendants & Heirs:

My dear children ... Now that the three of you are grown up and have kids of your own, you're old enough to realise that I won't live forever. Not that you need to panic. I mean, my grandfather almost hit the century, and I've clearly inherited his genes. I have the body of an athlete, a razor-sharp mind, rude health (according to my doctor), and enough fish-oil in my system to keep me going until at least 120 (thanks to your mother). But life is a fragile, finite thing. And even mine can't be extended indefinitely ...



You'd prefer not to talk about it, I know, but it's important that we plan this event. After all, I'd like it done properly. Plus I don't want you worrying. Plus I overheard the three of you debating who will get my new *Stihl* leaf-blower. (A bit thoughtless, I feel, given that you obviously believe I won't outlast a small petrol engine?)

Anyway, there are things we must sort out.

Word of my passing will undoubtedly leave you shattered, heart-broken and short of breath. So allow yourselves to grieve properly before gleefully selling my house and rushing off on a round-the-world cruise. Otherwise people might talk.

Don't hurry to arrange a funeral. It takes time for news like this to reach all corners of the world. And my friends will need to have counselling,

WHY IS IT CALLED "AFTER DARK" WHEN IT'S REALLY "AFTER LIGHT"?

compose speeches, cancel meetings, book flights and rebuild their lives. The Government may want to get involved, women's magazines may clamour for an exclusive, schools will probably close, and the Army will likely offer a 21-gun salute.

No, I don't want a great fuss made, but I suspect you'll be powerless to stop this outpouring of sadness and loss.

I'll understand if you feel driven, by love and devotion, to erect a monument in my memory. But please avoid unnecessary expense. A temple or a Taj Mahal is truly not necessary. And a tomb like China's Emperor Chi, with 8000 terracotta soldiers, is a bit over the top. But I wouldn't say no to a small pyramid that the grandchildren could visit each Sunday. You might charge tourists a fee, sell postcards and t-shirts, and train the kids to sing songs about their granddad.

I'm of two minds about what you should do with my remains. Cremation is probably the tidiest, and the event could be televised live. But there's something appealing about being buried with the things I love most: my wedding

photo, my elephant carving, a full set of Grapevine magazines, that black velvet jacket I bought last week, and my Andre Rieu DVDs.

Get my face put on a stamp if you wish. And write a book on my life if you must. But avoid using photos of me side-on, along with any that make me appear short or double-chinned.

I'll leave you to dispose of my assets. Divide my travel photos fairly amongst yourselves, and don't fight over my ties. My grandsons can have my shoes. My suit can go to the Sallies. And my laptop, power-tools and nostril-hair trimmer can go to the museum of your choice.

In storage under the house are my Power-Rider, my Don Oliver weights, and my mini-tramp. By all means claim one each in remembrance of me.

Finally, please, look after your mother. And don't forget to feed the dog.

Your loving father ...



GRAPEVINE'S EDITOR IS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS SECOND ADULTHOOD, AND HAS A STRONG DESIRE TO DIE YOUNG AS LATE AS POSSIBLE.

THORT



***The good things that
come to those who
wait are probably
the things those
who got there first
didn't want.***