

Brigid and I (2)

Easter is coming. The weather changes every hour so we dress in layers that can be taken off and put back on in no time.

Brigid has a very elegant black coat, a size larger so she can wear a roll neck and cardigan under it. Spring dressing as advised by old ladies like us.

So after we take off our different layers we are ready for our afternoon coffee and chat.

Today Brigid is very upset about the language used to describe people with dementia and Alzheimer's. As she says, language is made of words like houses are made of bricks, but what an ugly house made with these bricks - words all so sad and depressing and at times, quite alarming.

We are discussing the Oxford Dictionary description of Dementia: Mad, Crazy, out of one's mind. Chronic or persistent disorder of the mental processes marked by memory disorders, personality changes, impaired reasoning, etc, etc.

How can you expect Society to treat us with kindness and dignity while our 'disease' is described in such a way?

I agree with Brigid. She is to me, my friend who always looks elegant and with whom I can discuss anything. One day we talk about our families, another we remember what we used to read years ago.

I don't see her as "an old lady suffering with Alzheimer's."

Brigid has been reading again Jane Austen's Emma and we are in awe of its timeless look at society.

For Brigid, Society is Emma, we are Miss Bates but there isn't any Mr. Knightley to defend us.

But I think, as my reasoning isn't yet impaired, that somewhere in the Press a Mr. Knightley will come and explain us to Society and request the kindness and dignity we need and deserve by explaining the different stages of dementia.

'yes' I say, so you mean that Society will then be able to understand that many of those words refer to the middle and late stages of dementia and not to the first stage that millions of us are in?

'Yes' she says.

I agree with Brigid.