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NEW ZEALAND Reader's Digest

RD TALKS OUR STORIES AS PODCASTS

BEST OF THE BEST TRUE STORIES *From Our* ARCHIVES

BRAVERY!
- **The Day A Miner Turned Rescuer**
PAGE 52
- **Awake During Brain Surgery**
PAGE 30

When KRAKATOA BLEW
PAGE 78

CHURCHILL'S
Passion For Painting
PAGE 46

KINDNESS OF STRANGERS
A Man, A Dog, And A 500-Mile Penniless Walk
PAGE 118

WE REDISCOVER
- **Murray Ball's Footrot Flats**
PAGE 24
- **Julia Child's Cooking**
PAGE 88

WONDER
World's Most Expensive Book
PAGE 100

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CONTENTS

JANUARY 2022

Features

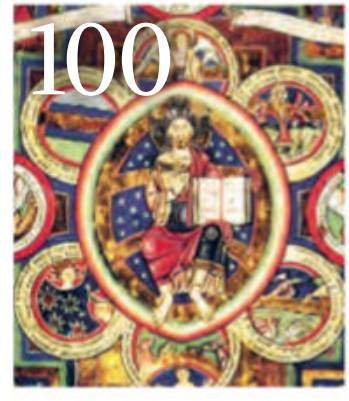
24

30

ON THE COVER: TRUE STORIES FROM OUR ARCHIVES

CONTENTS

JANUARY 2022



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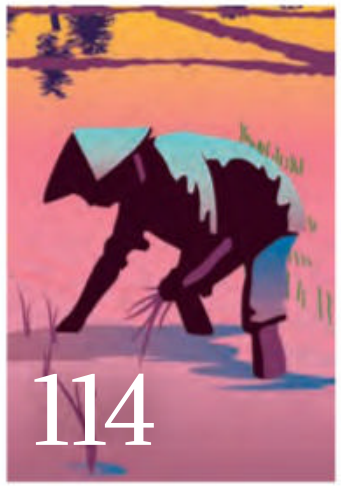

114 RD TALKS

MAY 1985

Crawling In The Paddy Fields

Hard work taught this author the meaning of 'You reap what you sow'.

YU YUH-CHAO

118

OCTOBER 1999

Bonus Read: My Penniless Journey

Most of us won't leave home without money – never mind set out on a 27-day-long walk.

PETER MORTIMER

FROM THE BOOK *BROKE THROUGH BRITAIN*

RD TALKS SOME OF THESE CLASSIC READS HAVE BEEN RECORDED AS PODCASTS FOR YOUR LISTENING PLEASURE. TO HEAR THEM, GO TO **www.readersdigest.co.nz/podcasts**

Departments

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Depth Of Reflection

EVERY YEAR, OUR JANUARY ISSUE takes a different approach. We step back and reflect on the writers and story-telling styles of the past that have helped make Reader's Digest a unique publication.

We revere and enjoy the mystery of the 'old ways' that are different to what we experience today. While Reader's Digest still upholds genuine focus on detail-driven reporting and story-telling, there is a simple beauty and value found in the articles of past decades that are therapeutic to both readers and editors alike. The turn of phrase, the depth of reflection and semantic accuracy provides a wonderful lesson in the English language – while imperial measurements in some stories set the tone.

My favourite article, 'When Krakatoa Blew Up' (page 78), features no human heroes. In this portrayal of the world's biggest volcanic explosion, keep an eye on the wise characters that appear towards the end of the story, particularly the spider. The appearance of that tiny creature is a sign of hope for the reader. It also highlights the inspiring capacity of nature, animals and ourselves to recover and rebuild after suffering a devastating setback.

Volcanoes, miracles, adventures, hidden secrets of the human mind, heroic men and women and a spider – this year's Classics compilation celebrates extraordinary behaviour, extraordinary lived experiences and lessons learnt along the way.

Happy reading!

Louise

LOUISE WATERSON Editor-in-Chief

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

NEW ZEALAND Reader's Digest

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LETTERS

Reader's Comments And Opinions

The Joy Of Reading

I read October's My Story ('A Child Reader' by Jenny Canty) with a sense of wonder. Her experiences of reading as a child closely mirrored my own, even though I lived on a different continent. Just like Jenny, one of my most treasured childhood memories was also the *Reader's Digest Junior Treasury* which I inherited from an older cousin. To this day, my dog-eared copy of the *Treasury* brings recollections of a happy childhood spent growing up with its stories. My own children are now reading the same book, tenderly turning the now yellowed, fragile pages and finding the same joys I found three decades ago.

MICHELE CHOO

Living With Face Blindness

I can relate to the article 'Do I Know You?' (October). I too suffer from face blindness. They say it can be hereditary – in my case it was: my father certainly had it, as do all of my siblings.

Someone will talk to me who clearly knows me and I have absolutely no idea who they are or how they know me. When we go to parties or get-togethers my husband has to greet people using their name so that I know who they are. If someone smiles at me, I never know if it is a friendly stranger or someone who actually knows me. To help me I have made notes in

Let us know if you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 8 for how to join the discussion.

my phone about people's looks. I can sometimes be OK with people in context, for example, at the gym, but if I see them elsewhere, in street clothes and not activewear, I have no idea who they are. It's also a struggle to follow movie plots because I don't recognise the main actors in them.

Face blindness impacts my life most days. It is so embarrassing because people think that I am being rude when I don't acknowledge them. **JULIE PHILLIPS**

Stop Dreading The Dentist

'7 Common Causes Of Dental Anxiety' (September) would resonate with many of us. Consuming unhealthy foods high in sugar is not uncommon these days, neither are oral health problems from an early age. So it's

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PILOT

FISHY BUSINESS

We asked you to think up a clever caption for this photo.

What a laugh! They expect us to give our seal of approval to their half-baked conservation plan!
DAVID STEVENS

Mum, can we go to the dive-in movie?
RAJ SANEJA

Seal of disapproval.
CYNTHIA BRINKMAN

Let's seal it with a kiss!
ROB WALKER

Oh no, darling, not garlic prawns again last night?
RUTH FELLOWS

Congratulations to this month's winner, Rob Walker.

CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win $100. To enter, email *editor@readersdigest.co.nz* or see details on page 8.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

important to address and overcome our anxieties – such as fear of pain, embarrassment, loss of control – early. Fear of pain was the cause of my mother neglecting her dental health until it was unavoidable.

But it's important to remember, oral health is not a cosmetic issue, it is a health issue, which needs the right treatment from the get go.

DR ANJALI GARG

Goodbye Allergies

After suffering from coughing bouts for many years (Health, September) which would last for weeks and often result in secondary infections, my GP arranged for a pathology test. The test failed to reveal the cause and I realised that I had the worst symptoms during springtime.

Staff at my local pharmacy mentioned that something in my garden was probably triggering an allergic reaction. I finally realised that my allergy was probably coming from the pollen that bees collected for their honey. I stopped putting honey in my tea and my coughing ceased. SANDRA SHEEHAN

Happily Ever After

As always the October issue was filled with interesting, informative and entertaining content. I really enjoyed 'She Finally Said Yes'. For the cynics out there, when it comes to true love, you just know when you've found it. DEIDRE HALE

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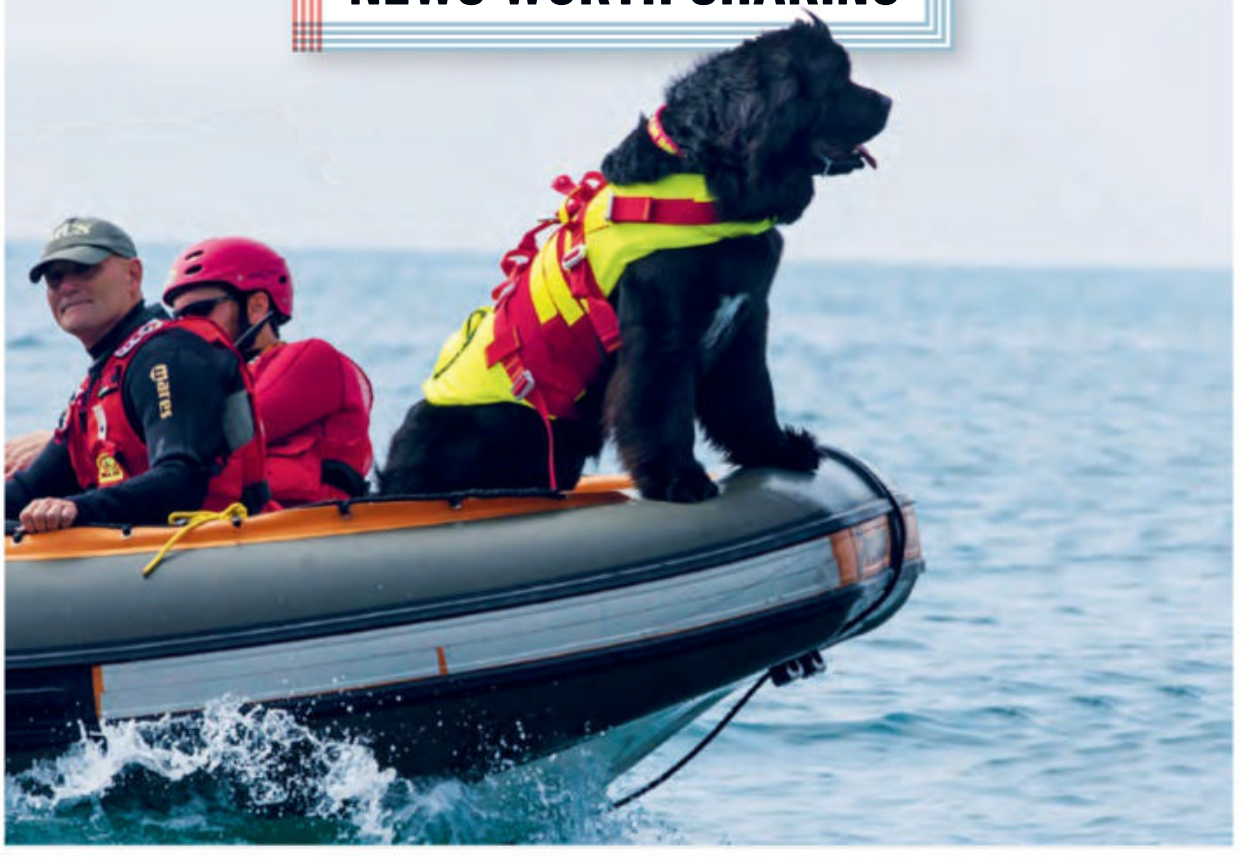


Canine Lifeguards Paddle To The Rescue

The Italian School of Water Rescue has been patrolling the country's beaches for more than 30 years – with man's best friend. Some 400 fully trained 'lifedogs' – Labrador retrievers, Newfoundlands and German shepherds – save about 30 lives a year. Founder Ferruccio Pilenga, a 61-year-old former photographer, began operations with his own Newfoundland dog, Mas, saving several people during the first few years.

Pilenga uses the 'dolphin system', which involves a handler on a boat holding the dog's harness as it swims out to the person in distress. Over the years, Pilenga added different boats to his missions as well as trained dogs to leap into the water from rescue boats and helicopters. Newfoundlands and other water dogs are especially good at lifesaving, Pilenga says, because of their natural strength, water-resistant coats, and ability to navigate currents.

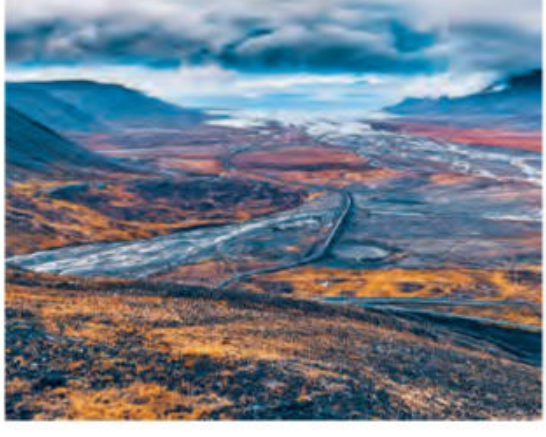
COMPILED BY VICTORIA POLZOT

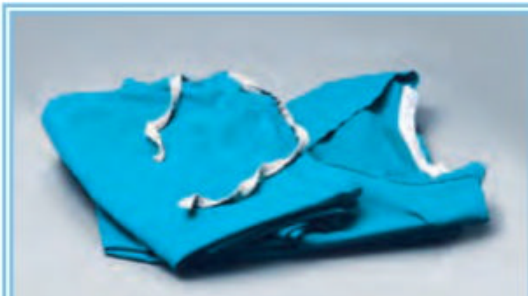
PHOTO: COURTESY FACEBOOK

Turning a Coal Mine Into A National Park

With many countries abandoning fossil fuels for renewable sources, what are they to do with the now-toxic landscapes left behind? Norway has one very good idea. It's turning its last Arctic coal mine, located on the Svalbard Archipelago between Norway and the North Pole, into a nearly 3000-square-kilometre national park.

The new Van Mijenfjorden National Park, named for one of Svalbard's largest fjords, will help unify the wilderness area of the 61,000-square-kilometre Svalbard Archipelago. The archipelago of glaciers, islands, fjords and mountains already has six national parks, 15 bird sanctuaries, one geopark and six reserves. Some 20 million birds nest on the islands in late summer, while about 3000 polar bears use its sea ice as hunting grounds.





Repurposing Unused Medical Supplies

When theatre nurse Claire Lane learnt that packs of unused medical supplies were being thrown out, she was prompted to take action. Although clean and unused, the packs containing drapes, gowns, masks and other medical supplies, can't be recycled or re-used in Australian hospitals because of Australian standards.

The realisation that these supplies were going to landfill led Lane and her former partner to create the not-for-profit organisation Save Our Supplies. The charity collects clean, unused medical supplies and redistributes them where they are needed. Even though they have passed their expiry date, "they are still perfectly clean and can be used in a lot of other environments," Lane told ABC Radio Brisbane.

Volunteers collect, sort, pack and deliver the supplies to where they are needed. So far they have assisted wildlife and homeless charities, universities, and have been sent to Papua New Guinea.

PHOTOS: (NORWAY) THOMAS HAGENAU/SHUTTERSTOCK; (MEDICAL GOWN) GETTY IMAGES

STAFF PICKS

We enjoyed putting this issue together for your reading pleasure. Here are some of our favourites

'DODIE'S DARLING DALMATIANS' Like many of us, I grew up loving the Disney film *101 Dalmatians* and its various off-shoots, but knew little about the book that inspired the film, and even less about the story behind it. It was fascinating to get a glimpse into the life of author and playwright Dodie Smith and her own beloved Dalmatians who provided the inspiration for this heartwarming tale.

ZOË MEUNIER, MANAGING EDITOR

'MY ADVENTURES WITH A PAINT BRUSH' is Winston Churchill's account of how taking up painting enriched his life. It sharpened his focus and made him aware of colours and details in the landscape he would previously have not seen. His story opened my eyes to the wonders of nature, and the different hues of light and shade in plain sight that we are too busy to see.

DIANE GODLEY, SENIOR EDITOR

'DON'T LOOK DOWN!' What a gripping true life account this is! My adrenaline levels literally rose as I read this extraordinary tale. Deep underground, trapped miner Mario Cockrell attempts to save the lives of his fellow workers. And time is rapidly running out...

HUGH HANSON, ART DIRECTOR

'THE MYSTERY OF MINNIE' is part love story, part mystery but mostly a feel-good testament to the power of community and kindness to others. I cannot think of a better way to be immortalised than how Minnie was.

VICTORIA POLZOT, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

'LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE' The humour pages show that a good joke, while often charmingly reflecting the context of its time, has as much power today to make us smile as it did when it first appeared.

MELANIE EGAN, CHIEF SUB EDITOR

PHOTO: ALAMY

WIN

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SMART ANIMALS

Most creatures enjoy receiving a bit of extra attention

A Unique Bond

TANYA PATTEN

I never imagined that my routine Sunday walk would turn out so inspiring. It was the first weekend in spring last September and the sun was shining vibrantly in a cloudless blue sky. Instead of facing the familiar morning crowd of early risers strolling through the John Davidson Park in Strathpine, Queensland, I was greeted with something far more peculiar. Clambering casually towards me was this adorable fuzzy plump koala.

My first reaction was to second guess myself. I had never seen a koala so close before, let alone finding one wandering along the ground. I was amused that it chose to use the concrete footpath rather than the grass. I stopped in my tracks and watched in awe.

The cute fuzz ball clicked away on the path with its curved black claws, completely unfazed by my presence. It stopped for a moment, spotted a large nearby gumtree, and then looked over at me. I honestly thought

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute.

ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

that it was seeking my approval of its chosen tree. I nodded my head, smiling in response. Maybe the koala understood because without further ado, it diverted off the track and latched itself onto the tree trunk.

I edged in closer, mindful not to alarm the animal. Its cute furry ears, pea-sized eyes and black oval matted nose made for a picture-perfect moment. I snapped away on my phone while this furry marsupial patiently posed, innocently blinking at me. When I was satisfied with my photos, it gave me one last dreamy blink, then made its way to the top of the tree, wedging itself in between the fork of two branches.

I was very lucky to have had the opportunity to share this special bond with a koala that day. It reminded me of how precious these cuddly creatures are.

The Great Pretender

BRIDGET TOOHER

Our rescue dog Bree, an eight-year-old Staffordshire bull terrier-Shar-Pei cross, recently visited the vet for her annual check-up. She was given a clean bill of health but we were surprised when the veterinarian mentioned that her kneecap was healing well after being dislocated. We felt terribly negligent for not being aware of her condition, particularly because we had noticed that she limped at times. We had put the limp down to ageing as it did not

seem to bother her and there was no pattern to when it would set in.

A few weeks passed and our beloved Bree started to limp again. We made a big fuss of her, spoiling her as we would any injured or sick family member. Thankfully, another check-up at the vet revealed that she was fine.

The limp, which continues to randomly take hold, is thought to be 'pins and needles'. Our clever dog, however, has associated her limp with the extra affection and attention (and treats) we showered her with. Now, whenever she feels as though she needs affection or treats, she begins to limp. We fall for it every time. Then, as soon as we've given her what she wants, she takes herself off with an even and normal stride.

PETS

Solving Litter Box Issues

Trial and error resolves most common problems

BY *Dr Katrina Warren*

Our regular pet columnist, Dr Katrina Warren, is an established and trusted animal expert.

OUR FELINE FRIENDS are spending less time roaming outside and more time indoors as owners increasingly recognise the benefits of keeping cats contained. This, however, leads to one of the biggest issues faced by cat owners – litter box problems. Many cats are surrendered to animal shelters because of undesirable toileting habits – either cats refusing to use their trays or owners who don't want to deal with the smelly litter. Either way, kitty litters and their associated problems are a reality of cat ownership.

CHECK FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS FIRST If your cat has started going to the toilet outside their litter box it is a sign that something is bothering them. Be sure to rule out underlying medical conditions first. Take your cat to your veterinarian for a check-up to rule out a bladder infection or other health issue that's causing them to toilet away from their box.

TYPE OF LITTER BOX Some cats don't like an enclosed hooded type of tray. Some will prefer small trays while others like larger trays. Cats are very individual, so try offering your cat a couple of different options of litter box to see what they feel most comfortable with.

TYPE OF LITTER Cats can be very fussy with their litter choice and you may need to experiment with different types. If you're changing to a new type or brand of litter, do it very gradually. First offer both and slowly phase out the previous one to make sure it doesn't cause upsets.

Cats usually develop a preference for the type of litter tray and litter used

CLEANLINESS As cats have a highly refined sense of smell, problems might be the result of a litter tray not being sufficiently clean. Try using less litter in the tray and discard it daily, washing out the tray every time and replacing the litter. At the very least, spot clean the tray each day, removing any solid matter.

MULTI-CAT HOUSEHOLDS Cats generally don't like to share their toilet, so if you have more than one feline friend be sure to provide one tray per cat, plus a spare.

MANAGING A MULTI-CAT HOUSE

- Each cat should have their own litter tray, food and water bowls.
- Offer at least one climbing tree.
- Provide scratching posts.
- Don't force interaction between cats.

PRIVACY Be sure to place the litter tray in a nice quiet spot well away from the cat's eating area.

STRESS Toileting problems are often a sign of stress. Moving house or the arrival of a new baby or additional pet can cause upheaval in the daily routine and stress for your cat. Try to give them a calm and consistent environment, and perhaps even a dedicated quiet room to chill out in.

OUTDOOR TOILETING Some people simply don't want to deal with the smelly task of cleaning the litter box or they can't tolerate the smell indoors, so they let their cats roam outdoors and do their business outside. This is not a good strategy as it can put the health of the cat at risk. Research indicates that indoor-only cats live an estimated ten years longer than cats with outdoor access.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

HEALTH

6 Health Risks That Can Occur After Menopause

Now is the time to maintain healthy habits and check in with your doctor

BY *Susan Jara*

OSTEOPOROSIS Unfortunately, the longer your body goes without a menstrual period, the higher your risk of osteoporosis and fracture. Oestrogen plays a big role in maintaining bone density. Some 20 to 30 per cent of bone loss in women occurs in the first five years after menopause. "Postmenopausally, fractured hips and problems related to bone density are very likely," says gynaecologist Dr Kevin Audlin. What's worse, many postmenopausal women are in denial about their personal risk, according to a survey of women in 11 countries. And this means they don't take steps to safeguard those bones, including eating a calcium-rich diet, performing weight-bearing exercises and strength-training, and limiting too much sodium.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

GUM DISEASE Oestrogen can impact those pearly whites. The same process that leads to bone loss in the spine and hips can lead to the loss of the alveolar bones of the jaw. The result: loose teeth, tooth loss and periodontal disease, which women are more susceptible to after menopause. In addition, many postmenopausal women note dry mouth, pain or burning in the gum tissue as well as altered taste for salty, peppery or sour foods, says Dr JoAnn V. Pinkerton, executive director of the North American Menopause Society (NAMS). Now more than ever, good oral hygiene counts.

SLEEP APNOEA Sleep apnoea is pretty common for postmenopausal women but, unfortunately, nearly 90 per cent of women are not diagnosed, says Dr Pinkerton. Unlike men, women may not have the hallmark signs of the sleep disorder – snoring, pauses of breath and excessive daytime sleepiness. Instead, they may experience such atypical symptoms as insomnia, morning headache, fatigue, tiredness, depression and anxiety, she notes.

DIABETES If you began menopause before age 46 or after 55, you're more likely to develop type 2 diabetes. It's hard to separate the effects of menopause from the effects of age and weight. But low oestrogen, known to increase insulin resistance and trigger cravings, does play a role. Experts recommend women get tested every three years starting at age 45, especially if you're overweight.

HEART DISEASE A marked reduction of oestrogen after menopause can increase the risks of heart disease. One in eight women between the ages of 45 and 64 has some form of heart disease, and this increases to one in four women over 65, according to the US National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute. "What's more, the most common heart attack symptoms in women can be confused with everything from stress to a backache," says menopause expert Ellen Dolgen. Luckily, being heart-smart (not smoking, eating a plant-based diet, exercising 30 minutes per day) has big preventative pay-offs.

BREAST CANCER Breast cancer is more likely to strike postmenopausal women than younger women. But in this case, you can blame your birthday instead of your oestrogen levels. For a 30-year-old woman, the chance of developing breast cancer over the next ten years is one in 227. By age 60, the risk jumps to one in 28. Weight gain after menopause is a crucial factor that you can avoid. To reduce your cancer risk, health authorities recommend 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise every week.

HEALTH

Reasons You're Not Losing Weight

BY *Julie Cook*

NOT EXERCISING ENOUGH Even if you regularly go to the gym or walk, if you're generally sedentary or in a sit-down job, you probably aren't getting enough exercise. The key to losing weight, says personal trainer Laura Williams, is to fit exercise into every part of the day. "The best type of workouts to do in five minutes are things that get your heart rate going," she says, such as jumping, skipping and exercises that use several muscles, like push-ups and lunges.

EATING TOO MUCH GOOD STUFF We're told that fruit, legumes and grains are healthy. But they can keep the fat on if we over consume. A lot of fruit, such as mangos and grapes, is full of fructose and if eaten in large quantities can contribute to weight gain. According to studies, more than 100 grams of fructose a day can cause weight gain. Instead, choose lower fructose fruit such as bananas, strawberries and blueberries.

LARGE PORTION SIZES Sixty years ago food was more expensive, scarcer and portions were smaller. Studies show portion sizes have grown as much as 98 per cent since the 1990s, and this contributes to unwanted weight gain. Controlling your portion sizes by using smaller plates is one way to help keep the weight off.

YOU'RE NOT SLEEPING ENOUGH Not sleeping enough can make us feel lethargic which leads us to craving sugary or carb-laden snacks to 'wake up'. But too little sleep also triggers a rise in cortisol, the stress hormone. This signals to your body to conserve energy to fuel your waking hours. Because of this, you will hang on to fat. Try to get more sleep to allow your body to let go of excess body weight.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Support Your Teen to Cope with the Pressures of Teen life

Sleep is often last on the priority list for 9 to 19 year olds and research shows lack of adequate healthy sleep is contributing to increasing rates of teen stress, anxiety, self-harm, depression, behavioural disorders and even alcohol and drug abuse. Sleep deprivation also negatively impacts teens' academic performance, wellbeing and ability to thrive.

With covid teens are also struggling to cope with an ever changing, un-predictable new world and consequently the number of teens suffering mental illness has doubled since the pandemic began.

With this in mind, the professional research team at SleepDrops® has created TeenSleep & Stress®, a therapeutic strength supplement containing scientifically validated levels of specific ingredients that play an important role in supporting teens' sleep, mental health and emotional resiliency. TeenSleep & Stress capsules are an effective way we can ensure they continue to do well or bounce back if they have seemed a little out of sorts lately.

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News From the

WORLD OF MEDICINE

FREQUENT INTERNET USE: NOT ALWAYS BAD

Spending chunks of your day on the internet can be helpful or detrimental for your mental health, depending upon what you do there. A 2020 Canadian review linked social media use to mental distress among teens, in part because it can bring a feeling that others look or live better than you do.

On the other hand, in a 2021 British study, seniors who went online at least once a day during the lockdown tended to feel less depressed compared to those who accessed the internet only once a week or less. Benefits included communicating with family and friends, finding inspiration for offline activities, and enjoying a quick, feel-good distraction on a rough day. (Cat video, anyone?)

EATING OUT A LOT IS A HEALTH HAZARD

In a new US study, people who ate restaurant food twice a day had a 49 per cent higher risk of mortality at any point in time, compared to people who dined out less than once a week. Previous studies might help to explain why: one of them, a 2015 analysis published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, reports that even though some establishments provide healthy food, restaurant fare is usually less balanced than home-cooked meals. It tends to contain more kilojoules, saturated fat, cholesterol and salt.

A NEW WAY TO SLOW PROSTATE CANCER

A healthy diet may slow the progression of prostate cancer, initial evidence suggests. This is good news for patients who choose to monitor their disease rather than opt for immediate tumour removal surgery, which can cause sexual dysfunction and loss of bladder control.

In a US study of patients with tumours that weren't yet large or aggressive enough to make surgery a strict necessity, those whose meals resembled the low-fat Mediterranean diet had a lower risk of cancer progression.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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NW PAK'n SAVE CHEMIST WAREHOUSE life Unichem Health 2000

THE SQUIRE OF FOOTROT FLATS

Farming life is brought to the world by Murray Ball, creator of New Zealand's most beloved comic strip

BY *James Hutchison* AND *Margo Pfeiff*

PHOTO AND CARTOON (MURRAY BALL): COURTESY OF DIOGENES DESIGNS LTD

On a farmhouse at the foot of steep, green hills behind Gisbourne on North Island's balmy east coast, an alarm clock shatters the 4.30am stillness. Murray Ball slides from his bed in the pitch black and brews a cup of tea before heading out back to his office, a barn-like building besieged by a Noah's Ark of livestock.

There, he sits at an inclined drawing-board to create another daily slice of mirth and mayhem for millions of New Zealand and Australian newspaper readers. By daybreak, the zany characters of *Footrot Flats* – Wal, Cooch, The Dog, a cat named Horse and all the others – will have sprung to life beneath the skilful pen of our best-known cartoonist.

From a modest beginning ten years ago, *Footrot Flats* had rocketed into a cartoon-strip phenomenon appearing in 20 New Zealand and 100 Australian newspapers, with book sales currently topping the four-million mark. Success, however, has wrought few changes in Murray Ball's lifestyle. At 46, he looks just as lean and fit as he did in his younger years as an All Black trialist, and stoically maintains his long-standing six-day-a-week work routine.

The first of his daily quota of three cartoons roughed out by 7am, Murray heads off to hand-milk Nan, the cow, before joining his family for breakfast. From 8.30 to 10 is 'think time', when he sketches cartoon sequences to be filed in his ideas book for future strips. After the day's cartoons are inked in, usually by 1.30pm, Murray naps until his children return home from school.

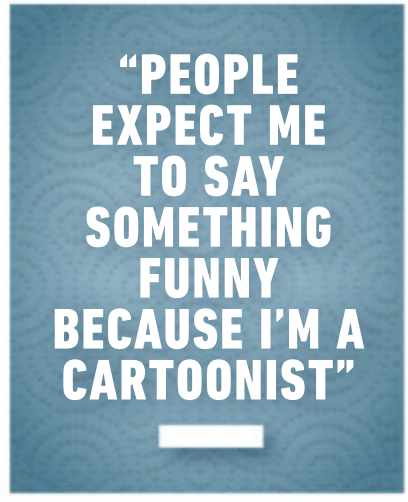
A dyed-in-the-wool Kiwi, Murray would far rather show you his farm, Mikos, than talk about himself. On a bumpy bicycle tour of the 50-hectare property, he proudly points out the nut trees, the neighbour's Clydesdales ("models for the strip"), his own cows and sheep. His wife Pam and their three children, Mason, Gareth and Tanya, share Murray's enthusiasm for the land.

Mikos provides much of Murray's inspiration and insight into New Zealand rural life. He also draws heavily from childhood experiences on his uncle's farm – Pam says he has an incredible memory – plus other real-life characters, events and situations.

Footrot fans probably imagine the strip's creator to be a comedian, but actually Murray has a rather serious view of life. What he mostly pokes fun at is himself. "People expect me to say something funny because I'm a cartoonist," he says apologetically in a hybrid New Zealand/South African accent. "I'm a bit of a hermit really, and cartooning gives me the

opportunity to work alone."

Murray Ball was born on January 26, 1939, in the small, rural North Island community of Feilding. His family moved to Australia when he was eight, and then on to South Africa when he was 11. He grew up there. Drawing was always a favourite hobby. "My brother and I were sport fanatics," he says. "We'd listen to rugby on the radio, and I would illustrate the matches in cartoons. If the Springboks were playing, I'd draw springboks; for the All Blacks, I'd draw kiwis."



DODGEM CARS

At 19, he was on the move again, back to New Zealand to pursue his ambition to become an All Black rugby player, as his father had been. He worked in the evenings as a cadet reporter for *The Dominion*, Wellington's morning paper, until he found he hated to ask questions; more often than not, he came back from assignments with doodles on his pad instead of facts. After three months, he gave it up and went back to Feilding, hoping for a job as a cartoonist.

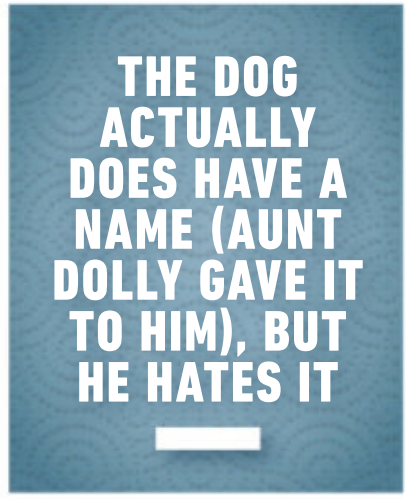
Murray was lucky. He got a job drawing for the local Manawatu newspaper, *The Times*. This subsidised his rugby career until, as an All Black trialist, he made the finals but failed to make the team. Disheartened, the 21 year old rejoined his family in South Africa – but not for long. He and his brother Barry set off on a three-month adventure that landed them penniless in Britain. Murray headed back to New Zealand, where he found a job doing feature satire cartoons for his old employer, *The Dominion*.

In 1963, he was back in South Africa, called home because his mother was dying. He had a job operating dodgem cars at an amusement park owned by his father when he met a young Englishwoman on a working holiday. They hit it off immediately. "It was a bit of a shock for my parents to learn their daughter was engaged to an unemployed cartoonist working as a dodgem-car operator," Pam recalls. Nevertheless, they married in 1964 in Surrey, England.

The newly-weds headed for New Zealand, expecting that Murray's job with *The Dominion* would be waiting for him. It wasn't. Murray took a crash course in teaching at Hamilton; he had to make more money than the four pounds a week that came in from the odd few cartoons he sold. While at Hamilton Teachers' College, he wrote his first book, an illustrated

satire about rugby called *Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest*, which was sent to the publisher the same day his first child was born. Though Murray dismisses all of his early work as "terrible", the book received good reviews and sold well.

From 1966 to 1969, Murray was a teacher at Whitianga on the Coromandel Peninsula and wrote his second book, *The Peoplemakers*, about teaching. Then, because there seemed to be little hope for a career in cartooning here, the Balls decided to go to Britain. After shipping their furniture overseas, they had three months before their own departure, so they moved to the Manawatu country of Murray's childhood, into a ramshackle old farmhouse that would later be the model for Cooch's house in *Footrot Flats*. "It was one of the happiest times of my life," he reminisces. "We used logs for seats and hung our clothes on willow branches. The wall-cavities were full of possums."



THOR THUMB

After arriving in England, with their second child due any day, they bought a cottage with money borrowed from Murray's father. That first year they scraped by on their savings and occasional small sums of money Murray's father sent from South Africa, while Murray freelanced, an almost impossible way to make a living in the competitive British cartooning trade. Today, Murray tells hopeful young cartoonists that the two things they need to survive are "luck and a rich father".

In April 1970, Murray finally managed to sell *Punch* a collection of cartoon strips called *Stanley*, the misadventures of an underdog caveman. *Stanley* became one of *Punch*'s longest-running cartoons, and opened the door to a steady stream of work illustrating comic books.

"I'd get the scripts and instructions in the mail, then do the drawings and send them off," Murray says. "They'd come back pencilled over and crossed out. I would have to do them again. It was real purgatory. But I was lucky. These people were old hands and knew their trade backwards. It taught me to be professional."

Work began to pour in. Murray developed his own comic-book character, Thor Thumb, did political cartoons for the *British Labour Weekly* and another strip for *Punch*.

The Balls had been in England nearly six years when they adopted a

girl from Malaysia. With three noisy young children underfoot, Murray developed his early-morning work routine to take advantage of the quiet hours. But they had outgrown their cottage and it was time to move again. Murray had always wanted to do a New Zealand cartoon strip, so when his agent, Bardon Press Features, said that he could continue his British work through the mail, they set off for home – and bought the farm that today is Mikos.

Less than a year later, panic struck. Due to postal problems, his supply of work failed to arrive from Britain for over two months. "I was going grey worrying over the mortgage, so I thought I might as well begin the New Zealand strip I hadn't had time for with all my other work," says Murray. "A farmer and his sheepdog seemed like a good idea." *Footrot Flats* was born.

From the strip's first appearance in *The Evening Post*, New Zealanders took the characters to heart as part of their national identity. Wal typifies the no-nonsense farmer, somebody all Kiwis know. "Cooch [Wal's eccentric neighbour] I drew from a friend of mine who lives on an island off the Coromandel Peninsula," Murray explains. "Wal tries to break the land, Cooch lives with it."

And, of course, there's The Dog. The Dog actually does have a name (Aunt Dolly gave it to him), but he hates it, and Murray says his pen is for ever sealed for fear of upsetting his canine pal. *Footrot*'s most popular character, The Dog gets his fair share of fan mail. "We get a stack of cards around October the 13th for The Dog's birthday," says Pam, "and lots of kids write to ask his name, promising they won't tell anyone else." Some letters arrive addressed simply to Footrot Flats, New Zealand.

ANIMATED FILM

Even the bureaucracy gets caught up in the strip's humour. The Whangarei city dog ranger served hydatids-dosing and registration papers on Wal and Murray, claiming The Dog breaks every law in the book.

Pam, Murray's toughest critic and indispensable business manager, handles a thousand daily details that he gratefully acknowledges would drown him in a week, including a new line of *Footrot Flats* products – soft toys, T-shirts, hats. Murray's time is devoted to producing *Footrot* strips, calendars and two books a year. A musical based on the strip has been staged in New Zealand and Australia, and a feature-length animated film is due to be released in mid-1986.

If you're looking for Murray Ball among the characters of *Footrot Flats*, you will have to look hard. "There's a little bit of Murray in all of them," says Pam, "but The Dog is as close to him as you can get on four legs." R

JULY 1964

AWAKE THROUGH A BRAIN OPERATION

The gripping story of a patient's faith — and a surgeon's skill

BY *Annette Anselmo*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

In the autumn of 1953, Annette Anselmo of Salt Lake City, Utah, travelled to a well-known neurological institute to seek help from Dr Jones (not his real name), a renowned brain surgeon. For 30 years, ever since the age of four, Annette had suffered epileptic seizures with devastating frequency. Anti-convulsant drugs and a brain operation had banished the severest seizures. But she still suffered smaller convulsions, sometimes as many as 65 an hour.

Dr Jones studied her case history, made exhaustive neurological tests, took brain X-rays and electroencephalograms, then gave his decision. "We believe an operation will help you," he said. "But I do not promise a complete cure. And you realise the risk: you may be paralysed."

For Annette, the possibility was worth the risk. Here is her account of the operation as she experienced it.

"EARLY THAT MORNING a barber came into my room and shaved my head so that it resembled a large billiard ball. Then my bed was wheeled into the hall where Dad and my sister kissed me, trying hard not to cry. "Don't worry," I said. "I'll be back." My feeling was, "Today is the beginning of the end of my 30-year war against epilepsy."

In the X-ray room, a doctor said to me with a smile, "This is a big day for you." In one hand he had two wires, each about a metre long; in the other a glass of water. "I'm going to insert a wire in each of your nostrils," he said. "I want you to take a drink and swallow when I tell you to." The wires were to go down into my stomach. Each time the doctor said, "Swallow," a few more centimetres would disappear, until only about 40 centimetres remained in view. Then the doctor took an X-ray to see if the wires were in proper position. Three times they were not, and he would say, "Let's start over."

Finally the wires were in place. As he taped the ends to my chest, he explained that these electrodes would provide a reading of stomach movement – the sensation I often experienced with the onset of an attack. When electrical stimulation of the brain came close to the point from which my attacks originated, the stomach sensation would be produced.

Now my bed was wheeled into the anaesthesia room. I knew that I was to remain fully conscious throughout the operation so Dr Jones could be guided

by my reactions. The anaesthetist was to give me injections to deaden the feeling in my face and scalp.

He asked me to open my mouth and, with his thumb, located the hinge bone connecting the upper and lower jaw. Into it he inserted a needle – so far upwards that it seemed to reach my skull bone! I felt a searing pain. But these injections were the only way to deaden the feeling in my scalp and facial skin.

Each time he picked up another needle, I glanced at the remaining pile. It seemed to grow larger instead of smaller.

Dr Jones now entered, and I could feel him tracing a design on my scalp. "This is the skull opening I want," he said to the doctors with him. One replied, "Yes, a full butterfly flap."

The anaesthetist said, "She is about ready for the operating room."

"I'm not afraid," I said, "but do me a favour. When my skull is about to be opened, will one of you tell me a joke?" I thought it would help to mask the moment of intense pain I anticipated.

Out in the hall the doors of the operating room opened to allow my bed to pass through. I had reached the point of no retreat.

Inside, I looked at the wall clock: 8.05am. I could see the glassed-in gallery where doctors, nurses and students were waiting to observe. Each of the six doctors who were to take part in the operation wore special glasses, for the room had ultraviolet lighting instead of glaring overhead bulbs. I heard one doctor say, "We'll be lucky if we get out of here by suppertime."

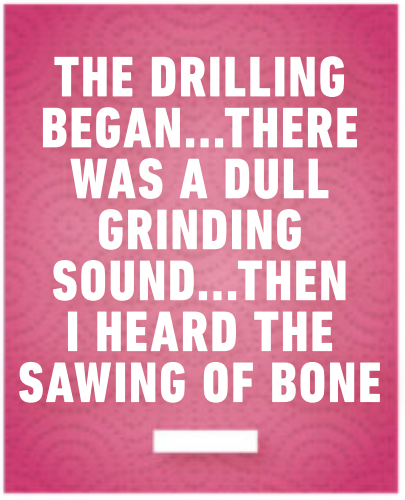
IT WAS UP TO ME NOT TO MOVE; NO SANDBAGS OR STRAPS RESTRAINED ME

A doctor behind my head said, "This will sting. I'm going to paint your head with iodine." The anaesthetist told me to lie flat on my back and turn my head to the left. Towels were placed around my neck firmly but not uncomfortably. In fact, I hardly noticed them after a few minutes.

NOW DR JONES was standing at my head, a tray of instruments beside him. With foot or hand controls he raised my head to the proper position. It was up to me not to move; no sandbags or straps restrained me, except one to keep me from falling off the table. He asked if I was comfortable. I said, "Yes, but I'm freezing." A blanket was tucked around me. Doubtless the impact of what was about to happen had given me the chills.

"I'm going to inject several needles at the base of your skull, Annette," Dr Jones said. "This will eliminate as much pain as possible, but you know I can't deaden it entirely."

He began inserting the needles. As he worked, Dr Jones occasionally consulted his associates, and sometimes dictated notes to a secretary in the gallery, through an intercom. I thought: "Imagine doing a delicate operation like this – and dictating at the same time." He told the type and amount of medication in each injection, reviewed my case history, and explained what he believed to be the cause of my seizures: a birth injury, damage resulting from an interference with the circulation of oxygen-carrying blood to one side of my brain, at the time of my birth.



Each needle felt as if it would come through my mouth. I finally lost count of the needles. "How many more?" I kept asking. "Not many. Try and bear it a bit longer," the doctor would answer.

I glanced at the clock. It seemed impossible but it was already 11.20am.

Now I felt the pressure of what I was certain was a scalpel against my scalp. No pain; just the sudden warmth of liquid trickling down my cheek. When I realised it was my own blood, I said, "I'm going to throw up." A pan was held close to my face. My mouth felt parched. A piece of ice was placed between my lips.

Dr Jones said, "Annette, we are about to make a few holes in your skull." The drilling began. There was a period of dull pain, and a dull grinding sound. There were to be, I knew, five to seven fairly large burr holes.

After an interminable interval everything was still, almost morbidly so. Then I heard the sawing of bone. I waited for the pain I so vividly remembered when the skull had been opened in my other operation two and a half years before. I finally asked how much longer it would be before they would break through my skull. Someone patted my hand and said, "It's already done, Annette."

THE CLOCK SHOWED 12 NOON. A nurse held a cup of something steaming – soup perhaps – and Dr Jones drank it through a straw.

I heard, more than felt, the awful sensation of liquid being squirted over my brain. When the brain is exposed, the air dries its surface quickly, and it must be continuously moistened.

At 1.30pm, Dr Jones said, "Turn the machine at this angle." I knew he was referring to the machine he would use to stimulate the electrical activity of my brain cells.

Pictures were taken, both in black-and-white and in colour. Then Dr Jones spoke to me quietly. "Annette, from here on I will need your full co-operation. We are going to stimulate your brain, and I want you to tell me exactly what you feel and where." Was I ready? I said I was.

A few seconds later I felt a light current go through my body. I said, "I feel as though I am about to fall off the table to my left." He answered, "That's fine. We'll try it again." This time the current was stronger. I said, "My left leg feels as though it is about to fall off the table." Moments later I felt someone lift my leg back onto the table. Then I heard the doctor say, "I want a few more colour pictures, please."

MORE BRAIN STIMULATION. "Doctor, that felt as though my left forefinger pointed inward." Dr Jones repeated the experiment, then said, "Let me hear what Annette said during the stimulation." I heard my own voice and realised my words were being recorded. Immediately after, Dr Jones said, "Annette, I am going to remove a small section of your brain which is causing some of your trouble."

Then I heard words which I shall never forget: "Annette, remember, just so much is in my hands."

A few minutes later came the clicking sound of metal as he put down the instrument he had used, and I knew the excision had taken place. I looked at the clock. It was 2.30pm. How much longer?

Dr Jones said, "Annette, I'm going to stimulate again. Please tell me what you feel." I felt the current, and at that instant I felt my left eye turn inward. It was repeated. Then Dr Jones said, "I am going to remove another small piece of brain."

At that crucial point I said, "Doctor, I have a funny feeling I've never had before. I'm afraid I'm going to have a seizure." Metal clicked as he laid aside his instrument. A few moments later I had the seizure, a small one.

"What kind of reading did you record?" Dr Jones asked an assistant. The answer came, in medical terms.

Once more I felt the stimulating current go through my body. And this time I had a familiar, sickish feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Once again the doctor said, "Annette, I'm going to remove another affected bit of brain." And, speaking to his assistants, he explained how far into the brain he was going. He said that the previous surgeon had excised at precisely the right spot, but had not gone this deep, fearing he would leave me paralysed.

For the first time I felt true cutting pain momentarily.

When it ceased I said, "If anybody

ever says again there is no feeling inside the brain, Dr Jones, don't believe him. I know better."

I kept saying, "I'm tired, doctor. Please put me to sleep." He answered, "I'll bet you a quarter you'll fall asleep within the hour, Annette."

Then he said that he was about to make his third excision, and now he would touch the section of the brain that controls vision. For the first time, I said a silent prayer.

Then I heard him put down his scalpel. I could still see the anaesthetist clearly – and I thanked God.

Dr Jones said, "Still awake? I guess I owe you a quarter." The recording shows that I replied weakly, "Deduct it from my bill."

I was so tired I could hardly hear the voices around me. After a while the doctors began testing the reflexes of my arms and legs. Dimly I heard them say, "All four extremities have good reflex actions. No paralysis."

The anaesthetist spoke: "Hold your arm steady, Annette, while we locate a vein." It meant that the operation was over. Now they would put me to sleep to close my skull.

Exhausted, I glanced at the clock as I felt the needle going into my arm: 4.30pm.

"No paralysis," I heard. All was well."

NOTE FROM EDITOR, 1964:
The kind of surgery performed on Annette Anselmo is quite unusual, and is undertaken only in certain rare, specific cases. For more than 99 per cent of all epileptics it would be neither applicable nor beneficial. It should also be noted that the techniques she describes have since changed, with progress in neurosurgery over the past ten years. In Annette's case, the operation was successful. On mild medication, she now leads a full, active life with no restrictions on her activities. She still has seizures, usually mild and brief; they come always at night, and only two or three times a year. The memory of her extraordinary experience is one that, for her, is not likely to fade.

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Cartoon Quips

RD MAY 1987

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BOB THAVEA, NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSOCIATION

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LIFE'S LIKE THAT

SEEING THE FUNNY SIDE

NOVEMBER 1984

◆ After my 20-year marriage ended in divorce, I went to live with my daughter and son-in-law. They encouraged me to start dating and, after a few months, I accepted a dinner engagement with an attractive man I had met at a party.

Nervous about my 'first date', I told my daughter I would be home no later than midnight. When I tiptoed in at 3am, this note was on my bedroom door: "Mum, in the future if you're going to be late, I expect you to let us know where you are, who you're with and a phone number where you can be reached. P.S. You're grounded until further notice!" PHYLLIS J. PATTERSON

◆ My husband's office was being relocated and he had to spend long hours at work, often staying away from home overnight. One Saturday afternoon a fishing buddy dropped by, only to be told once again that my husband was out of town.

"That guy is never home!" he complained.

"I know," I replied, "That's what I used to say."

"Used to say?"

"Yes," I sighed. "Before I found out I was pregnant." RITA M. EVERSON

AUGUST 1988

◆ When I stopped to visit a friend, I found her on the phone with a real-estate agent. "That's a little high!" she exclaimed. "What can I get for less than $500 a month?" The reply was evidently not to my friend's liking. "I see," she said abruptly, and hung up.

"What did the agent say you could get?" I asked.

"A car." RAEANN C. PAPPAS

ILLUSTRATION: KURT UNITT

◆ Astonished, I watched the man roller-skating towards me on the bicycle path. An owl, wings outstretched, clung to a leather patch on his shoulder. As they got closer, I could tell that the giant bird had lost part of one wing.

The skater stopped for a breather. "Twice a day we go out so he can pretend he's flying," the man said to me.

"I'm sure he would repay you if he could," I replied.

"He already has," the skater said. "I used to weigh 12 kilos more and I smoked." With that, man and bird took off again. JAMES EDMINSTER

◆ It was my mother's birthday and some family members had bought shade trees for her yard as a gift. I have an ancient convertible, so I was sent to pick them up. I put the top down and the nurseryman loaded the three-metre trees into the car. Sitting under a canopy of leaves, I drove off.

When I stopped for a red light, the driver of the car in the next lane gave me a startled glance. "Lady," he called over, "wouldn't it be a lot easier just to put up the top for some shade?" FRAN BELLER

◆ I keep five dogs in my backyard in four kennels of various sizes. One day during a heavy rainstorm, I went out to check on my pets. The big kennel was occupied by one dog, the middle-sized kennel held two, and the small kennels had one pet each. Satisfied that they were all snug and dry, I left.

A little later lightning streaked across the sky and thunder boomed. When I peeked out the back door, all the kennels were empty except the big one. In it were all five dogs. JUNE CROSSLAND

◆ I had moved out of town and into my own apartment. Two years later, my mother flew to visit me for the first time, and I proudly showed her around my place. "Charlotte gave me the love seat, Dad gave me the TV, Delores sold me the rugs for a song, you gave me the bookcase, and the lamp was a gift from Carol," I said.

Mum gave me a big hug. "I always *knew* you could make it on your own!" RENEE BEBOUT

◆ Everything on the restaurant menu was à la carte and shockingly expensive. Salad dressing was $2, a baked potato $4.50 and asparagus $6.25. After we had been served, a hullabaloo broke out in the next room, where a birthday party was being held. Waiters blew horns and banged pans.

"What on earth is *that*?" one man asked.

"Someone ordered the asparagus!" a member of our group responded. H.B. ARMSTRONG

THE MYSTERY OF MINNIE

A close-knit village holds an incredible blessing close to their hearts

BY *George F. Worts*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES COMPOSITE

When I first encountered Minnie she had been dead ten years. Minnie's husband, Tracy Garrett simply would not permit her to stay dead; so, in the most amazing way, she remained alive — a power in the community.

Garrett was the Mr Fixit of a village in which I lived for two years. His shop-window housed a dust-covered collection of old locks, parts of clocks, bearings, gears and other odds and ends. He sharpened lawn mowers, repaired bicycles, did odd jobs of carpentering and plumbing.

He was a wiry man of 55 with gnarled red hands, eyes as bright as a fox's, and a stoop resulting from his years over work benches. There was an air of secret merriment about him not quite in keeping with the legend of his grief at the death of a woman he had loved so devotedly over the 20 years of their childless marriage. He lived alone in a cottage whose garden was an extension of his junk-filled shop – a sort of pasture into which once hard-working machines had been turned loose to rust out their lives in peace.

After I had lived in the village a while I began to hear about Minnie's mysterious doings. The first story I put together by picking up scraps here and there was that of Miss Anastasia Peabody, the village librarian. Miss Anastasia was a plain-looking maiden lady of unknown vintage who had a hopeless passion for Henry Iverson, the school headmaster – a handsome and, it seemed, woman-proof bachelor.

One day Miss Anastasia disappeared. Three months later she came home, miraculously transformed! Her severe, brushed-back-into-a-bun hair-do was now a frivolous dark frame which softened her plain but appealing face. She wore fashionable clothes which set off her slim figure. Within a few weeks she and Henry Iverson were married.

This dramatic event was partly explained by my neighbour, Mrs Belle Fogarty: "Anastasia went to New York and took one of those how-to-be-beautiful courses. And anybody with a grain of sense knows that Minnie was behind it."

"Minnie Garrett?" I asked.

"Who else? It must have cost a lot of money, and it's going to take Anastasia a good long spell to get Minnie out of hock."

"Out of hock?" I asked. But at this evidence of a newcomer's prying curiosity, Mrs Fogarty retreated into New England reticence.

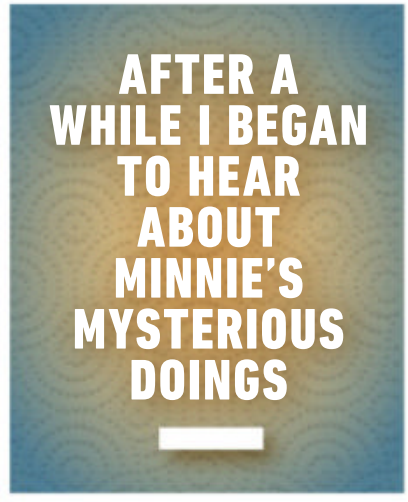
My determination to solve the mystery of Minnie led me to talk with other local people, and I collected a

wealth of stories touching on many lives. It was an enriching experience, but it left me completely in the dark as to how Minnie performed her wonders. Each was a story of someone who had got into some trouble that a moderate amount of money would cure, and each ended on the same bizarre note: "Minnie is in hock again."

One night in the chemist I overheard a young man say to the pharmacist, "Yes, it's all fixed. I'm going to be able to finish my last year – thanks to Minnie."

After he had gone, I asked the pharmacist about it. He was talkative – up to a point. He said the boy was majoring in chemistry at Cornell University but had had to drop out a few days previously because his father had suffered a financial setback.

Soon I discovered that Minnie was always put in hock for a sum of less than $1000 by someone whom the village trusted and approved. She was used as collateral until the loan was paid off.



ABOUT SEVEN MONTHS after my arrival in that warm-hearted community I began having troubles of my own. Everything went wrong. My work – writing fiction – had gone sour. Money I had counted on didn't come in. Then I was told that my daughter had to have an expensive operation. Any relatives or old friends who might have come to my rescue were out of reach.

One night I didn't sleep at all. Next morning, when I went to the kitchen to make some coffee, Tracy Garrett was there, at work on the sink. The drain had never worked properly and he often had to tinker with it, but I didn't recall speaking to him about it recently.

He worked silently and solemnly. Finally he said, "Well, I guess that'll hold her a while." Then he looked at me and said, "Understand you've been havin' a little trouble."

So he had heard about it! I was feeling a little bitter, but I also felt the need of talking it out with someone.

Garrett listened attentively. "Looks like all you really need is a lift for a while till things start comin' your way again," he said.

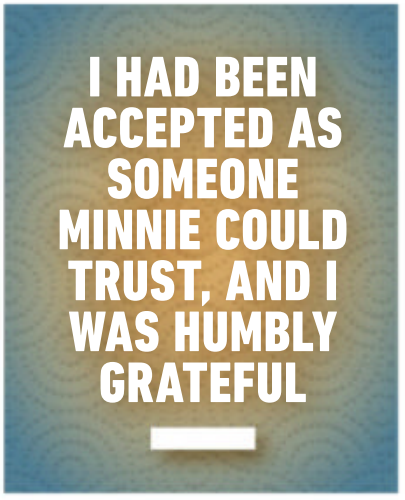
That, I assured him, was summing things up neatly.

"Then it's time you met Minnie," he said decisively.

I couldn't repress a slight shiver

and I couldn't help glancing out of the back door at his battered old delivery van. There was a big wooden crate in it. I was prepared for anything, but all that happened was that Mr Garrett took a worn pocket-book out of his hip pocket and slowly removed a tired-looking $1000 banknote. Roughly printed on it in large red-crayon letters was: MINNIE.

"All you do," said Garrett, "is take Minnie to the bank and put her up for collateral for any amount up to $1000. You pay the bank their regular rate of interest, and pay the loan off when you can. Then Minnie comes back to me."



Garrett's eyes sparkled. "You've been tryin' for months to find out who Minnie is and how she came to be. Now if you want to hear the story, I'll tell you.

"Minnie is named after my wife," he continued. "She was the finest woman that ever lived. The day she died, Minnie said to me, 'Tracy, I've been thinking that it doesn't matter overmuch to God whether or not I have an expensive funeral or an impressive monument. He doesn't set much store by pomp and show. So I want you to give me the cheapest burial you can, with a plain little headstone on the grave. Then I want you to take what money is left and buy a new $1000 bill.'

"And that," he said, "is how the Minnie you've got there in your hand came to be. My wife loved this village, and she wanted to keep on helpin' people who deserved and needed helpin' after she was gone."

Garrett paused a moment and then continued.

"Minnie's helped people get married and helped babies get born. She's paid grocer's bills and helped educate boys and girls, and she's sometimes saved their businesses after they've gone out in the world. She's kept people from worrying themselves ill. You'd be surprised by how many times Minnie's been in hock.

"And now," he concluded brusquely, "you trot down to the bank and borrow what you need and stop worryin'."

I began to understand why the town folk had been so secretive. They didn't know whether I could be trusted with a secret so precious. Now I knew I had been accepted as someone Minnie could trust, and I was humbly grateful.

In due course I paid off the note and returned Minnie to her guardian. A week later she was in hock

again, quietly at work for young Harry Tompkins, whose bulldozer had been threatened with attachment – and the budding Tompkins Construction Company was saved.

A LITTLE WHILE LATER Minnie fell, for the first time, into the kind of hands the village had been fearing. The man seemed honest and trustworthy. His business got into legitimate trouble and he needed $500 in a hurry. He borrowed Minnie from Garrett – and left town.

The way the village behaved, you would have thought its most beloved citizen had been kidnapped. People gathered at street corners and discussed the tragedy in hushed voices.

A month went by. Another month. Then one day Tracy Garrett received a registered letter from a distant city. Inside the envelope was Minnie. Not a word of apology or explanation. But Minnie was home again! And in hardly more time than it takes to tell, she was in hock again.

I moved away soon after that. I don't know if Tracy Garrett is still alive or if Minnie is still in circulation, but I'm inclined to believe she is. Minnie strikes me as the kind of woman who goes on for ever. R

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Blush-Hour Reports

RD JANUARY 1988

A nearsighted friend of mine who hated to wear her glasses went to a party without them. She started talking to an attractive man in the buffet line and tried her best to appear charming and sophisticated. It worked until she put her hand into the 'popcorn' bowl and came up with mashed potatoes.

CONTRIBUTED BY ROSEMARY P. NEAL

My daughter and her husband, Jim, left their pre-teen daughter alone for a few hours while they went out to dinner. Before leaving, they reminded her to keep the doors locked and not to let anyone know she was alone in the house. The next day my daughter met a friend. "I called you last night," the woman said, "but your daughter told me you were in the shower. Then I thought I'd give my message to Jim, but I was told he was in the shower too." CONTRIBUTED BY STELLA R. MCDARIS

JUNE 1933

MY ADVENTURES WITH A PAINT BRUSH

Painting provided Winston Churchill with mental stimulation and took him on a visual voyage of discovery

BY *Winston S. Churchill,*

CONDENSED FROM **AMID THESE STORMS**

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

To have reached the age of 40 without ever handling a brush, to have regarded the painting of pictures as a mystery, and then suddenly to find oneself plunged in the middle of a new interest with paints and palettes and canvases, and not to be discouraged by results, is an astonishing and enriching experience. I hope it may be shared by others.

For to be really happy and to avoid worry and mental overstrain we ought to have hobbies, and they must all be *real*. Best of all, and easiest to take up, are sketching and painting. They came to my rescue late in life, at a most trying time. When I left the Admiralty at the end of May 1915, I still remained a member of the Cabinet and of the War Council. In this position I knew everything and could do nothing; I had vehement convictions and no power to give effect to them; I had enforced leisure at a moment when every fibre of my being was inflamed to action.

And then it was, one Sunday in the country, that the children's paint box came to my aid. My first experiments with their toy water colours led me to secure, next morning, a complete outfit for painting in oils. The next step was *to begin*. The palette gleamed with beads of colour; fair and white rose the canvas; the empty brush hung poised, heavy with destiny, irresolute in the air.

Very gingerly I mixed a little blue paint with a very small brush, and then with infinite precaution made a mark about as big as a small bean upon the affronted snow-white shield. At that moment a motor car was heard on the drive and from it stepped none other than the gifted wife of Sir John Lavery, the distinguished portrait painter.

"Painting! But what are you hesitating about? Let me have a brush, a big one." Splash into the turpentine, wallop into the blue and white, frantic flourish on my palette, and then several large, fierce strokes of blue on the absolutely cowering canvas. The spell was broken. My sickly inhibitions rolled away. I seized the largest brush and fell upon my victim with Berserk fury. I have never felt any awe of a canvas since.

This beginning with Audacity is a very great part of the art of painting. We must not be too ambitious. We cannot aspire to masterpieces. We may content ourselves with a joy ride in a paint box. And for this, Audacity is the only ticket.

I write no word in disparagement of water colours. But there is really nothing like oils. First of all, you can correct mistakes more easily. One

sweep of the palette-knife 'lifts' the blood and tears of a morning from the canvas; the canvas is all the better for past impressions. Secondly, you can approach your problem from any direction, beginning if you will with a moderate central arrangement of middle tones, and then hurling in the extremes when the psychological moment comes. Lastly, the pigments are so nice to handle. You can build them on layer after layer if you like and can change your plan to meet the exigencies of time and weather. Matching them with what you see is fascinating. Try it, if you have not done so, before you die.

As one slowly begins to escape from the difficulties of choosing the right colours and laying them on in the right places and in the right way, wider considerations come into view. One is astonished to find out how many things there are in the landscape one never noticed before. And this is a tremendous new pleasure that invests every walk or drive with an added object. So many colours on the hillside, each different in shadow and in sunlight; such brilliant reflections in the pool, each a key lower than what they repeat; such lovely lights gilding or silvering surface or outline. I found myself instinctively as I walked noting the tint and character of a leaf, the dreamy purple shades of mountains, the exquisite lacery of winter branches, the dim, pale silhouettes of far horizons. And I had lived for over 40 years without ever noticing any of them except in a general way, as one might look at a crowd and say, "What a lot of people!"

THIS HEIGHTENED SENSE OF OBSERVATION OF NATURE IS ONE OF THE CHIEF DELIGHTS

I think this heightened sense of observation of Nature is one of the chief delights that have come to me through trying to paint. And if you do observe accurately and with refinement, and if you do record what you have seen with tolerable correspondence, the result follows on the canvas with startling obedience.

Then, the art galleries take on a new and – to me at least – a severely practical interest. You see the difficulty that baffled you yesterday; and you see how easily it has been overcome by a great painter. You look at the masterpieces of art with an analysing and a comprehending eye.

CHANCE ONE DAY led me to a secluded nook near Marseilles where I fell in with two disciples of Cézanne. They viewed Nature as a mass of shimmering light in which forms and surfaces are comparatively unimportant, indeed hardly visible, but which

gleams and glows with beautiful harmonies and contrasts of colour. I had hitherto painted the sea flat, with long, smooth stokes of mixed pigment. Now I must try to represent it by innumerable small separate patches of pure colour. Each of these little points of colour sets up a strong radiation of which the eye is conscious without detecting the cause. Look at the blue of the sea. How can you depict it? Certainly not by any single colour that was ever manufactured. The only way in which that luminous intensity of blue can be simulated is by this multitude of tiny points of varied colour all in true relations to the rest of the scheme. Difficult? Fascinating!

HOW CAN YOU DEPICT THE SEA? NOT BY ANY SINGLE COLOUR THAT WAS EVER MANUFACTURED

I was shown a picture by Cézanne of a blank wall of a house, which he had made instinct with the most delicate lights and colours. Now I often amuse myself when I am looking at a wall or a flat surface of any kind by trying to distinguish all the different tints which can be discerned upon it, and considering whether these arise from reflections or from natural hue. You would be astonished the first time you tried this to see how many and what beautiful colours there are even in the most commonplace objects.

Obviously, then, armed with a paint box, one cannot be bored or left at a loose end. How much there is to admire and how little time there is to see it in! For the first time one begins to envy Methuselah.

It is interesting to note the part memory plays in painting. When Whistler guided a school in Paris he made his pupils observe their model on the ground floor, and then run upstairs and paint their picture on the floor above. As they became more proficient he put their easels up a storey higher, till at last the élite were scampering up six flights into the attic.

All the greatest landscapes have been painted indoors, and often long after the first impressions were gathered. In a dim cellar the Dutch or Italian master recreated the gleaming ice of a Netherlands carnival or the lustrous sunshine of Venice. Here, then, is required a formidable memory of the visual kind. So painting may be a very useful exercise for the development of a trained, accurate, retentive memory.

Again, there is really nothing like painting as a spur to travel. Every day is provided with its expedition and its occupation – cheap, attainable, absorbing, recuperative. The vain racket of the tourist gives place to the calm

enjoyment of the philosopher. Every country you visit has a theme of its own and even if you cannot portray it as you see it, you know it, you feel it, and you admire it forever. But after all, if only the sun will shine, one does not need to go beyond one's own country. The amateur painter wanders and loiters contentedly from place to place, always on the lookout for some bright butterfly of a picture which can be caught and carried safely home.

PAINTING IS COMPLETE as a distraction. I know of nothing which, without exhausting the body, more entirely absorbs the mind. Whatever the worries of the hour or the threats of the future, once the picture has begun to flow there is no room for them in the mental screen. They pass out into shadow and darkness. All one's mental light becomes concentrated on the task. When I have stood up on parade, or even, I regret to say, in church, for half an hour at a time, I have always felt that the erect position is not natural to man and is only with fatigue and difficulty maintained. But no one who is fond of painting finds the slightest inconvenience in standing to paint for three or four hours at a stretch.

Buy a paint box and have a try. It would be a sad pity to shuffle along through one's playtime with golf and bridge, when all the while, if you only knew, there is waiting for you close at hand the wonderful new world of thought and craft, a sunlit garden gleaming with colour. Inexpensive independence, new mental food and exercise, an added interest in every idle hour, an unceasing voyage of entrancing discovery – these are high prizes. I hope they may be yours. R

CONDENSED FROM *AMID THESE STORMS: THOUGHTS AND ADVENTURES*. © WINSTON CHURCHILL. C. SCRIBNER'S SONS, 1932

Update: Almost certainly Britain's most famous prime minister, Winston Churchill (1874–1965) was renowned for his powerful speeches but is best remembered for leading Great Britain through World War II. Churchill continued his hobby into old age, painting over 500 pictures of subjects such as his goldfish pond at Chartwell and the landscapes and buildings of Marrakesh. He gave away many of his works he modestly described as "daubs". In 2021, Tower of the Koutoubia Mosque *sold at Christie's for US$11.5 million.*

Pert And Pertinent

RD JANUARY 1953

Nothing's more responsible for the good old days than a bad memory. FRANKLIN P. JONES IN *Your Life*

"DON'T LOOK DOWN!"

Below the trapped miners was an empty lift shaft, 600 metres deep. Only the strength of one man might save them

BY *John Dyson*

ILLUSTRATION: LEVENTE SZABO

Cradling his hard hat and bag of sandwiches, Mario Cockrell sprinted for the lift and shoved his way among the miners jammed inside. Many of them grumbled at him: "Late again!" The doors slammed shut, signal bells rang, and the cramped, two-level cage began a 16-minute, 1.6 kilometre-long descent into the President Steyn gold mine in Welkom, South Africa. It was 8.15pm on March 23, 1993.

Known as the 'Mary Ann', the passenger lift carried 21 men this trip, its bare aluminium interior lit only by their cap lamps. For nearly ten minutes the ride went smoothly. Then, suddenly, the lift cage lurched and stopped dead.

Rassie Erasmus, the Mary Ann's silver-haired attendant, was unworried. "Hold still," Mario heard him say. "She'll move in a minute."

Mario wasn't so sure. He heard a strange slapping sound from the darkness overhead. Then it hit him. Great coils of heavy steel-wire rope were piling up on the lift roof. The huge winch that had been lowering the cage was still running!

We're in trouble, thought Mario. Something had blocked the cage's descent, and whatever had snagged it could give way at any moment. The cable heaping on the roof, even a vibration from the men inside could nudge the over 2-tonne cage into free fall. The slack wire would snap as it was jerked tight. Nothing then would stop them from plunging 610 metres to the bottom – the height of two Eiffel Towers.

Mario shouldered Rassie aside to reach the door. "We've got to get out," he said.

"WE'RE GOING TO DIE"

From boyhood, Mario Cockrell, one of 11 children, had learned to fend for himself. His father had died when Mario was 12. During his teens, he had hunted in the Kalahari Desert with friends among the Khoisan, living off the land with a homemade bow and arrows.

As a young man, Mario had been an amateur boxer and a physical trainer with the South African army, before settling down with his Belgian wife, Connie, and hiring on at the mine. Now 31, he was saving for his dream: a couple of trucks to run as a small business, and a few acres of land for Connie and their sons, three-year-old Etienne and five-month-old Mario, Jr.

Mario forced open the lift door and looked out. His cap lamp shone on a sheer concrete wall plunging over 800 metres straight down. Between him and the wall lay a 150cm-wide abyss. To his right, the wall cornered and ran along the lift's side. To his left was empty space – a series of six adjoining shafts used by other lifts.

By luck, the Mary Ann had stopped exactly level with a horizontal reinforcement beam that provided a 45cm-wide ledge. Stepping gingerly onto this beam with his back to the abyss, Mario shuffled halfway around the lift, kicking rubble over the edge but hearing nothing hit the bottom. Leaning on the rear of the lift, still with a 150cm-wide chasm at his back, he spied a cluster of vertical pipes strapped to the outside of the beam.

THEN HE FELT A TREMBLING THAT GREW. FALLING STONES AND DUST SPRAYED HIS FACE

Below him, the shaft seemed to recede into infinity. Every three metres it was ringed by another set of crossbeams. And every 60 metres, he could see a platform where a brightly lit tunnel led into a working stope of the mine. Because of the nightshift change, all the tunnels were now deserted.

Then Mario felt a trembling that grew until the whole framework of girders hummed. Falling stones and dust sprayed his face as he peered up. Another car was coming!

The whooshing sound, like a distant train, grew louder and louder. It was the No. 6 cage plummeting down the shaft to the left of the Mary Ann, carrying tons of gravel for mixing cement. Now less than 800 metres above, it would speed past in under 60 seconds. As it did, Mario realised, it would catch the loops of cable spilling off the Mary Ann's roof and drag the cage and men into the void. *God help us!* he prayed.

Just nine metres below the stranded cage, Mario saw the station for '37 level' – 1100 metres beneath the surface. It would have a telephone and emergency button for halting all cars in the shaft. *I've got to get to it*, Mario thought. *But how?*

His eye fell on the cluster of vertical pipes. Most were too bulky to grip. Then he noticed a galvanised-steel water pipe, barely two centimetres in diameter and encrusted with dried mud. There was no time to descend the pipe hand over hand. He grasped it and stepped off the ledge. Then he relaxed his grip.

For an instant Mario fell free. He squeezed the pipe again to brake

himself, the rough surface ripping the skin off his palms. Now halfway between crossbeams, he felt the pipe begin to bend away from the wall. He let himself drop to where the pipe was more secure.

At last his boots hit the crossbeam level with the station. But he was still one and a half metres from the platform. Between him and safety was the yawning shaft. He took a leaping stride across it, grabbing a gutter pipe on the other side to haul himself forward. As he did, the gutter came away in his hands.

THE GUTTER CAME AWAY IN HIS HANDS. FOR A SPLIT SECOND, MARIO TEETERED IN SPACE

For a split second, Mario teetered in space. With a desperate heave he got his right foot barely onto the lip of the platform, straddling the dark gap. Then he lunged frantically, hooked his fingertips into the platform gate and pulled his other leg across. He could hear his fellow miners' shouts of fear as Cage 6 roared closer.

The emergency alarm should have been in a red box bolted to the rock wall. Where was it? With the mind-numbing roar of the big cage nearly on top of him, he saw the alarm, obscured under a coating of dust.

At that instant, Cage 6 whooshed past the Mary Ann, snagging its cable and filling the shaft with dust, sparks and thunder. Leaping to the red box, Mario smashed his fist through the glass and punched the button.

There was a great squealing sound as Cage 6 ground to a halt 20 metres below. Loops of the Mary Ann's cable were hooked beneath it. A few more metres would have meant catastrophe.

With the telephone, Mario reached the lift supervisor. "Keep the brakes on! Move nothing!" he shouted.

In the cage above, men were praying and weeping. "We're going to die!" one cried. As the dust cleared, Rassie Erasmus glanced down and was stunned to see Mario climbing back towards them, hand over hand.

"TRUST ME!"

When Mario reached the men, he found them round-eyed with fear. "It's all right," he said. "Everything's stopped. You can come down now." Not one dared move.

During his army service, Mario had always led by example. "Pass me my bag," he said now, adopting an angry tone. The frightened men passed his sandwich bag out of the Mary Ann. "Look at what I'm doing and just follow."

With the bag hooked over one shoulder, he started to lower himself down the pipe. But as the beam of his lamp shone underneath the Mary Ann, he saw something that made his blood run cold.

Somehow, the Mary Ann's vertical guide rails had become twisted, throwing it out of alignment. This had caused a corner of the lift to catch on a bracket clamped to a girder. The weight of the lift and its men was now resting on barely two centimetres of thin metal and a couple of screws. *If I don't get those men down, they'll die*, Mario thought. *Help me, God!*

Climbing back to their level, Mario told them, "This thing's going to drop at any second. Don't touch it, just hold your breath and come down the pipe with me." Nobody moved.

Mario picked out the smallest miner, a man of about 60 kilograms. Holding the pipe with one hand, he reached out with the other, grasped the front of the man's jacket and jerked him towards him. The miner screamed and tried to cling to the crossbeam. But Mario was not a man to be disobeyed. He punched the miner in the ribs.

As the miner slumped, Mario seized the man's jacket again and pulled him off the ledge. As if curling a barbell, he held the miner in mid-air so their faces were level.

"You see?" he said curtly. "I can hold you with one hand. Trust me."

The man threw his arms around Mario's neck but, terrified, would not hold on to the pipe. Mario loosened his own grip for a split second so they'd fall a short distance. Jolted, the man grabbed the pipe. With Mario cradling him, they inched lower. Watching in horror, the men on the crowded ledge above were sure the flimsy pipe would break.

Finally, Mario and the miner reached the crossbeam at level 37. Now Mario had to figure out how to make the 1.5 metre leap to the station platform. The young miner in his arms was in no condition to jump for it.

Leaving the man standing on the crossbeam, clinging to the pipe, Mario stepped out into space once more. At their utmost stretch, his legs just straddled the gap. He twisted his powerful body around and gripped the man's jacket. "Let go of the pipe exactly when I say!"

The man nodded fearfully.

"Let go!" Mario bellowed. The man obeyed, and Mario swung him across the gap, throwing him onto the platform and using the momentum to fling himself after.

Mario dusted off his bleeding hands, and, hand over hand, pulled himself back up the pipe.

BAR ROOM TRICK

Next to be brought down was Mario's stocky assistant, Jan Buys. "Don't look down!" Mario instructed. They descended the pipe to the crossbeam. But Jan's legs were too short to span the gap to the platform, and he was

too heavy to lift. *Now what?*

In his army years, Mario had often performed an old bar-room trick he learned from a book by Houdini. With shoulders on one chair and heels on another, he tensed his body into a bridge and challenged anyone to stand on his belly. It always won him a beer. Now he would do the same – but with a difference.

Standing on the crossbeam, he let himself fall forward, his hands grabbing the end of the platform. Bracing himself by holding a piece of ironwork, he rolled to face upwards. With shoulders on the lip of the platform, heels on the beam and muscles locked, Mario became a human girder.

HIS ARMS TREMBLED AND HIS SHREDDED PALMS BURNED AS THOUGH HE WERE HOLDING HOT COALS

"Okay," he told Jan, "come across on your hands and knees."

"I can't, you'll never hold me."

"Yes, I will. Believe in me."

Trembling, Jan crouched and grabbed Mario around the knees. Slowly at first, then rushing, Jan scrambled across.

Seeing the two men reach safety made the others more confident. Aaron Koetse came down the pipe sitting on Mario's shoulders. Thabo Phatsoane, a tall, athletic 34 year old, took his own weight on trembling arms while Mario guided his feet. With many hands reaching out from the platform, they had no trouble crossing the gap.

IMPOSSIBLE!

Mario had escorted 13 men to safety and climbed 16 times up and down a pipe that was slippery with blood from his hands. After two more trips, his arms trembled uncontrollably, and his shredded palms burned as though he were holding hot coals. But when he rested to catch his breath, the men in the tottering cage above pleaded, "Don't stop!"

God, give me the strength to save these last few, Mario prayed. Still gasping, he focused all his will. His arms were charged with strength as he climbed and descended four more times, then went back for the last man – Rassie Erasmus.

Scared stiff, the elderly Rassie grabbed the pipe and forced himself to step on Mario's shoulders. Bit by bit, they descended. Near the end, Mario's grip slackened. For the first time, he slipped. But his boots struck the crossbeam, and they were saved.

Now, as Mario again stretched his body across the void, Rassie watched in horror. How could he

risk Mario's life, and his own, by loading his 90 kilograms upon his friend's exhausted body? Even with men reaching for him, it seemed impossible.

But then Rassie read the look of total certainty in Mario's eyes. He took three brisk steps along Mario's taut body. A score of hands reached out to seize him and he was over.

'SOME TROUBLE'

There were cheers and tears as Mario was helped up. Shaking, he poured a cup of tea from his Thermos for Rassie, who was slumped against a wall. Then he phoned the surface: "We're all safe." It was 10pm.

Minutes later, a group of mine managers and engineers arrived in another cage. One grabbed Mario's hand for a hearty shake. Mario winced in agony. When he had punched through the alarm-box glass, he'd cracked a bone in his hand.

It was after midnight when Mario climbed into bed beside Connie, careful not to wake her. Next morning, he cuddled his boys. Only when Connie saw his raw, puffy hands did Mario confess there'd been some trouble at the mine.

Six months later, Mario Cockrell was awarded the South African mining industry's highest decoration for bravery. But no award speaks louder than the story miners tell, of the tough, quiet man who saved 20 lives, one by one, trip by trip, hand over broken hand. R

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Fair Play

RD AUGUST 1960

Found in a fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant: "You will meet a beautiful woman, you will give her money. She is our cashier."

Examiner

A pompous executive made a great show of lugging home a heavy briefcase each night. One day some junior members of the company slipped his telephone directory into his briefcase and sealed the case with tape.

It was two weeks later when the executive let out an anguished cry: "Somebody has swiped my telephone book!"

NEIL MORGAN IN *San Diego Tribune*

LAUGHTER

THE BEST MEDICINE

OCTOBER 1975

◆ A pre-season bather who found the ocean intolerably chilly stopped at a beachside cafe for hot coffee. "Cream? Sugar?" asked the waitress.

"It doesn't matter," shuddered the bather. "I'm going to pour it on my feet." NICK MORGAN

◆ The salesman mentioned that he had got three orders so far that day: "Get out. Stay out. And don't come back." CHARLES CARDEN

◆ A reporter asked the centenarian the inevitable question: "To what do you attribute your long life?"

"Not sure yet," the old-timer replied. "I'm still negotiating with a mattress company and two breakfast-food firms." M.M.

◆ Teenage girl to friend: "It was so strange the way we met – we were introduced." MELISSE

◆ I ran into a former neighbour and asked how our old mutual landlord was doing. "He's letting me have my flat done in any colour of my choice – but I have to pay for the crayons." ROBERT SYLVESTER

◆ A car manufacturing tycoon received a phone call. "Was it your company that announced recently in the paper that you put together a car in seven minutes?" the caller asked.

"Yes sir, it was," the executive answered proudly.

"Well," the caller said, "I'd like to let you know that I've got that car." *ROTARIAN*

◆ A millionaire, making a night landing on his private air strip, said, "I hope Junior hasn't left his 707 on the runway again." L.J.H.

MARCH 1982

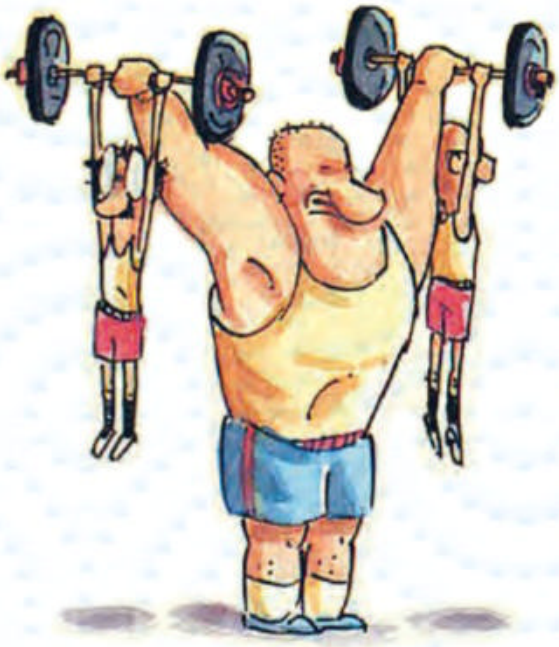
◆ A couple took their three-month-old son to the movies with them. On the way in, the usherette said they'd have to leave if the baby cried. "But we'll refund your money," she added.

After watching the movie for half an hour, the husband turned to his wife. "Well, what do you think?" he asked.

"It's the worst thing I've ever seen!"

"Me too," he agreed. "Wake little Ritchie." DICK NIEHOFF

◆ In Paris, a group of American tourists entered a large cathedral.



CARTOON: PATRICK MCDONNELL

Seeing a wedding in progress, one of the tourists whispered to a Frenchman nearby, "Who's the groom?" The Frenchman shrugged and said, "*Je ne sais pas*."

As the group continued through the cathedral, they came upon a funeral service. The American whispered to another Frenchman, "Who died?"

The man replied, "*Je ne sais pas*."

"Wow," the American said, "He didn't last long, did he?" **LEO AIKMAN**

◆ Two women were chatting. "I was talking to Jean the other day about holiday plans," said the first. "She tells me that you aren't going to London this summer after all."

"No," the other woman replied. "That was last year. This year we aren't going to Rome." **CHARLES WADSWORTH**

◆ A woman wished to have her portrait painted, and her husband engaged the best artist he could find. During one of the sittings the wife made a rather unusual request. She asked the artist to paint in a diamond necklace, earrings and tiara, even though she wore no jewellery. The artist obliged but was puzzled.

"Why did we add the gems?" he asked, as they surveyed the finished product.

Said the wife, "It's in case I should die before my husband. I just know he'd remarry right away. Let his new wife look for the jewels!"

MAE MORRISON

◆ A tourist asked a farmer if it were possible to catch the three o'clock train by taking a short-cut through the fields.

"Sure," said the farmer. "And if the bull sees you, you might even catch the two o'clock express." **ASHILD BARTH**

◆ A woman, lunching with her friends, listened to descriptions of elaborate alarm systems, links with police stations, guard dogs and whatnot that her friends had turned to as protection against burglars. Asked what steps she had taken, she pointed out that she has five small children. "If a burglar came into my bedroom," she said wearily, "I'd probably get up, take him by the hand and lead him to the toilet."

FUNNY FUNNY WORLD

AUGUST 1976

SURGERY IN MARBLE

HOW THEY SAVED THE PIETÀ

The world was shocked when the statue Pietà *by Michelangelo was mutilated by a man wielding a hammer. But ten months of ingenious and delicate work made it whole again*

BY *Janet Graham*

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

It was the morning of May 21, 1972, in St Peter's Basilica in Rome. As always, worshippers and tourists crowded before the first chapel on the right and gazed at Michelangelo's Pietà. *For nearly 500 years this marble statue of Mary holding the dead Christ has been an object of intense devotion, and also prized as an artistic masterpiece. Generations have marvelled at its exquisite translucent finish, the delicate moulding of Christ's body, the tender resignation of the Madonna's upturned left palm, the beauty of her sorrowing youthful face.*

Suddenly there was uproar as a man carrying a small hammer leaped over the altar rail and inflicted 15 shattering blows on the statue before a fireman was able to overpower him. Police later identified the mentally disturbed man as Laszlo Toth, a 34-year-old Australian geologist, a woman-hater who was convinced that God had ordered him to "kill" the Madonna.

In the *Pietà* chapel, the spectacle was horrifying: her left arm was severed at the elbow and wrist, and the fingers of the hand shattered; the tip of her nose had been smashed off; her veil and left cheek were scarred in several places; one eyelid was hideously damaged. Some 50 large marble fragments lay on the floor, plus 150 smaller ones and a multitude of powder granules.

A WAVE OF DISBELIEF swept the world. Sympathy, advice, even money, poured into the Vatican – from Christians, Jews and Muslims, communists and atheists. Art experts wrote from the four corners of the world, but so did schoolchildren and marble craftsmen, often expressing a deeply personal sense of sorrow. Rome was more like a city which had suffered some immense natural disaster. "Perfect restoration will be impossible," mourned the newspaper *Il Tempo*.

But the Vatican's Museums Director, Brazilian-born Dr Deoclecio Redig de Campos, knew better. Carefully, he assembled a team of seven scientists and restorers under the supervision of soft-spoken, bespectacled Dr Vittorio Federici, director of the museums' scientific research laboratory. For ten months nearly all of Federici's conscious thoughts would be absorbed by the task of repairing this unique work.

Immediately after Toth's arrest, the *Sampietrini*, the caretakers of

St Peter's, gathered up the precious marble chips from every cranny of the *Pietà* chapel. Fortunately, a plaster cast of the statue had been made in 1934 for display in the Sacristy. Now, while the actual statue remained in the chapel surrounded by a wooden partition, the plaster cast could be studied close-up for the details broken off and missing from the original.

From May to October 1972, the restorers worked in the laboratory of the Vatican Museums behind St Peter's. The first days were spent sorting and labelling the 200-odd fragments which had been found. (One narrow section of the veil, less than 20 centimetres long, was in 13 pieces.) This painstaking work was entrusted to Ulderico Grispigni, a skilled marble cutter and specialist in plaster casts, and Francesco Dati, an expert restorer of ancient bronzes and pottery.

THE FIRST DAYS WERE SPENT SORTING AND LABELLING 200-ODD FRAGMENTS

ONE DAY, after all the existing pieces had been identified, an envelope arrived from America containing a one-centimetre-square marble chip. A tourist had picked it up immediately after the attack and now, reading accounts of the restoration work, had realised the souvenir's true value. Later, a Roman hospital worker brought in another piece. Still there remained missing fragments: two gaps in the left nostril, several in the drapery over the arm, and a piece of the left eyelid.

To replace them, Federici and biochemist Dr Nazzareno Gabrielli set out to find a material which would reproduce exactly the colour, transparency and hardness of the original marble, and which in setting would assume the exact shape of an intricate mould. Eventually they decided on a mixture of polyester resin blended with finely powdered Carrara marble taken from ancient fragments in the Vatican's workshops. It answered the basic requirements and possessed an additional advantage which Dr Redig de Campos considered essential: when photographed under a special ultraviolet light, the composite showed up fluorescent white while the original material appeared blue. Thus the integrity of the masterpiece would be preserved by enabling future art scholars to identify the restored sections.

Re-creating the missing fragments was the job of deft-fingered Giuseppe Morresi, who constructs model shops as a hobby. Using soft

pink dental clay, he made one impression of the plaster cast of the *Pietà* and another of the corresponding section of the damaged statue. Then he fitted these two moulds together, and with a hypodermic syringe injected between them the semi-liquid mixture of marble powder – separately colour-matched for each fragment – and polyester. A perfect replacement piece resulted. To glue the fragments back in place, Gabrielli concocted a synthetic resin as hard as marble yet easily dissoluble in acetone, so that mistakes could be corrected.

ONE PROBLEM remained tragically unsolved. The translucent sheen of the marble, one of the outstanding features of the *Pietà*, bore ugly blue-black stains caused by the greasy coating of Toth's newly purchased hammer. With a weapon identical to the one Toth had used, Grispigni and Dati reproduced the marks on samples of marble, then tried to clean them. But marble is very porous and efforts to remove the stains with solvents only spread them.

One day, in a flash of inspiration, Francesco Dati applied a piece of Cellophane tape to a sample of stained marble. When he removed the tape, a little of the mark lifted away, too, and repeated applications cleaned the stain completely. Simple as it seemed, it was a major breakthrough, and the group was overjoyed.

For more than four months, the team had worked long hours in the laboratory. As Gabrielli put it later, "We felt just as though we were at the bedside of a human being who was very ill, and whom we loved dearly."

"WE FELT JUST AS THOUGH WE WERE AT THE BEDSIDE OF A HUMAN BEING WHO WAS VERY ILL"

Experiments and analyses complete, it was time to start work on the actual statue. On October 7 the restoration team set up shop in the *Pietà* chapel. On trestle tables they arranged pincers, spatulas and dentist's drills, moulds, mortars and microscopes, until the place took on the appearance of a surgical clinic.

The first task was to remove the stains. Dati confidently applied tape to one of the marks on the Madonna's face – but to his consternation the blotch remained as black as before. After anguished discussion, the men surmised that the statue might be slightly damp. For a nerve-racking 15 minutes they heated the marble with an infra-red lamp; then Dati tried the tape again. This time, half the stain came off at the first pull.

LIKE ALL MAJOR STEPS in the restoration, this tense incident was recorded for the Vatican archives by Antonio Solazzi, a government archaeological photographer. With the precision of a navigator, he had set up scaffolding at 16 fixed points in the chapel so that the Madonna could be photographed from every angle, before, during and after each phase of the operation. Enlargements of some of his photographs proved invaluable to the team, showing up details too fine for the naked eye.

Stains removed, the team started repairs on some of the less noticeable points of damage, like the drapery on the sleeve and veil, gaining needed experience before working on the face. It was not until November 13 that they felt confident enough to restore the eyelid, which was of utmost importance in preserving the Madonna's tender expression. As they watched tensely, Morresi glued his laboratory-made fragment into place and arranged wooden supports to hold it while it dried. All seemed well until Solazzi's magnified photograph of the repair revealed a minute shadow not present in the original. The pressure of the supports had flattened the mould fractionally.

Morresi promptly made a substitute and this time held it in place with tape. The second attempt was marvellously successful; so was the replacement of the two tiny fragments missing from the left nostril. Day by day the Madonna regained her sweetness of expression.

Now only the broken-off forearm remained to be dealt with. The plan was to attach this five-kilo piece to the statue's upper arm with an angled steel rod, inserted through the entire length of the limb and glued in place. But to get the resin adhesive to flow upward inside the marble to the shoulder required ingenuity. The technique evolved: first, drill a hole lengthwise in both the upper arm and the lower arm. Next, put in the rod, grooved to carry a two-millimetre plastic tube, and glue the arm pieces together at the elbow. Finally, at the waist, attach the thin plastic tubing to a vacuum pump and switch it on. From the uppermost tip of the tubing, then, the vacuum would suck the adhesive up all round the rod, bonding marble and steel firmly together.

To test the new process, Federici and his colleagues first experimented on a transparent plexiglass model of the arm. Delightedly, they watched as the viscous yellow liquid flowed up round the threaded rod, to fill the air space. It took three minutes. The system seemed to work.

Gently, Grispigni fixed the rod into the upper and lower arms. The two parts, ends coated with glue, were fitted together and immobilised with props. The vacuum pump was switched on. Adhesive was sucked to the top of the cavity; an hour later it had hardened.

Next day glue was flowed into a cavity drilled in the hand – its shattered fingers already repaired in the laboratory – and then the hand was slipped on to the steel rod protruding from the wrist. More supports held this final piece in place. At last, on the third day, with great caution, all props were removed. Would everything hold? It did. An audible sigh of relief went round the chapel; the surgery had been successful.

Finally, the marble was washed with distilled water, restoring its gleaming translucency. Save for one hammer-scar at the back of the veil, purposely left as evidence of the attack, the *Pietà* was again perfect.

On the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin – on March 25, 1973 – the *Pietà* was once more revealed to visitors. It is a tragic irony that we now have to view the serene face of the Madonna through a bullet-proof glass screen, for the age we live in is one of violence. Yet it is also an age where a few peaceful men, working with painstaking devotion and the skilled techniques of modern science, can restore lost beauty to the world. R

Update: Laszlo Toth was never charged with a criminal offence. In January 1973, a Rome court ordered him to be confined to a psychiatric hospital for at least two years. In February 1975, he was released and sent back to Australia, where he was not detained by the authorities. There is no certainty about his subsequent days, with some reports saying he lived a hermit-like existence in a remote part of New South Wales. Toth died in 2012.

Today an estimated ten million people a year visit St Peter's Basilica. The Pietà *is the only piece Michaelangelo ever signed. During its restoration after the attack, workers discovered a secret signature. Hidden in the folds of Mary's left palm was a subtle 'M'.*

How's That Again?

RD DECEMBER 1987

Sign in a supermarket: 'Aunt & Roach Killer. $1.29.'

CONTRIBUTED BY KATHY GUTHMULLER

Announcement in a church bulletin: 'Peacemaking meeting scheduled for today cancelled due to a conflict.'

SOUTH SALEM CHURCH BULLETIN

Letter to the editor: "I would like to thank the ambulance team for their support and care during my recent demise." POST FALLS TRIBUNE

PATTER

QUIPS AND ONE-LINERS

DECEMBER 1939

- **Child's definition:** ***an adult is one who has stopped growing except in the middle.***
- **It's not how old you are but how you are old.** MARIE DRESSLER
- ***Some men grow under responsibility, others only swell.***
- **Our barber looked at a young man's sleek hair and asked if he wanted it cut, or just the oil changed.**
- ***Our doctor calls them his 'Impatients.'*** WALTER WINCHELL
- ***Why is it that they always speak of a doctor 'practising'?*** HERBERT SPENCER
- ***If you think politics is easy, try standing on a fence while keeping one ear to the ground.*** JUDGE
- **An old saying: fish and visitors spoil after the third day.**

Nothing makes a toy more educational for a child than having his father trip over it.

FRANKLIN P. JONES IN *THE SATURDAY EVENING POST*

Don't question your wife's judgement — look whom she married.

DENVER POST

JUNE 1964

- **Fashion's new wider and deeper neckline has been tagged 'The Open Dior'.**

QUOTED BY **ELIZABETH CLARKSON ZWART** IN *DES MOINES TRIBUNE*

- ***The difference between an itch and an allergy is about $25.***

ROGER ALLEN IN *GRAND RAPIDS PRESS*

- **It may be possible to bypass all of America when the federal highway system is completed.**

KENNY BENNETT IN *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

- ***June is a girl's idea of the perfect end to a marry chase.***

DAN BENNETT

- **Remember way back when a capsule travelled inside a man?**

CHANGING TIMES, *THE KIPLINGER MAGAZINE*

DODIE'S DARLING DALMATIONS

When a pup call Pongo bounced into the playwright's life, she couldn't know this would be the starting point for a Disney classic

BY *Valerie Grove*

ILLUSTRATION: ALAMY

Author Dodie Smith sat down nervously in the London cinema. It was Christmas 1960, and this was a special preview of Walt Disney's animated film, 101 Dalmatians. *What would Disney's artists have made of her distinctively English story,* The Hundred and One Dalmatians, *written for English children, about dogs in England? From her time screenwriting in Hollywood, she knew how stories were adjusted in translation to the big screen.*

Dodie's nervousness increased when she saw that instead of her young couple, Mr and Mrs Dearly, setting up home with their dogs Pongo and Missis Pongo, Disney had created a pipe-smoking, song-writing bachelor looking for a wife. But at least he lived in Regent's Park, the very specific setting for the book and Dodie's favourite place in London. And his dog was called Pongo – the name of her own beloved first Dalmatian.

As the film progressed, she began to relax. The beautifully drawn puppies were as adorable and unruly as they were in life. The characters of the network of Home Counties dogs linked by their "Twilight Barking" telegraph were just as she had devised them. The Suffolk countryside, where Pongo and his mate Perdita search for their lost pups, was drawn with admirable accuracy.

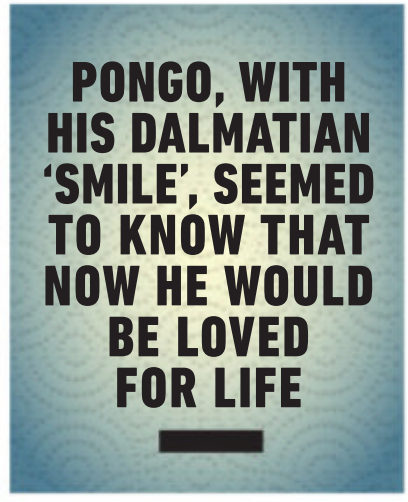
Dominating the scenes was the terrifying villainess Cruella da Vil, determined to kidnap the puppies to make fur coats. The puppies' escape and their suspense-filled trip back home to Regent's Park provided a happy, heart-warming ending. Would it be a success? Dodie's career badly needed a boost, but the story meant much more to her than that.

DALMATIANS had been a part of Dodie Smith's life ever since May 3, 1934, her 38th birthday. She was breakfasting in bed in her Dorset Square flat, elegantly furnished in ultra-contemporary black-and-white style, when her fiancé Alec Beesley and her best friend, actress Phyllis Morris, conspiratorially entered her room. On the bed they put a hatbox. It wriggled, the lid fell open, and out fell a Dalmatian puppy.

Dodie's reaction was less than ecstatic. True, she had loved dogs since her childhood, when she had been obsessively fond of animals. Now, after an unsuccessful struggle to be an actress and a job at a London furnishing shop (where she had met

Alec), she was at the peak of her fame as a playwright, four years after her first big success, *Autumn Crocus*. A strong-featured brunette, just 1.52 metres tall, she always dressed up for her first nights, sometimes in a white satin gown with a black velvet bolero and white camellias, when she would joke that all she needed to complete the picture was a Dalmatian.

But she wanted to choose one for herself, preferably a tiny puppy that had not yet got its spots, not this lolloping creature with enormous paws. Besides, she was rehearsing her third play, *Touch Wood*, and couldn't cope with house-training a puppy. She sent Pongo, as she named him, back to his kennels until after her play opened to rapturous reviews. The next day, she was photographed with Pongo in her flat. Newspaper reviews said the play was the work of "one of our most successful playwrights", but Dodie herself captioned the pictures "Portrait of a Happy Woman". Even Pongo, with his Dalmatian 'smile', seemed to know that now he would be loved for life.



SOON PONGO WAS MUCH MORE than a photogenic asset. She became devoted to him, putting his comfort first. When she and Alec, now her assistant and business manager, bought an open-topped Rolls-Royce, it had a glass partition so that Pongo could sit in warmth inside.

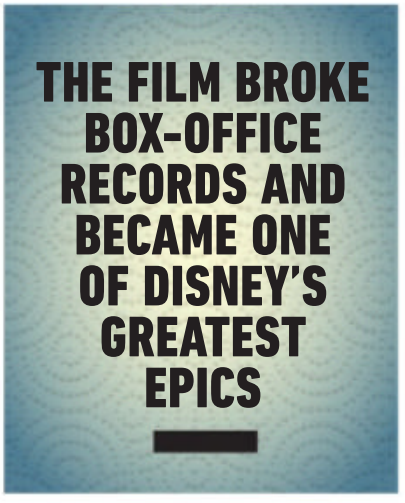
As Britain mobilised for war in early 1939, Dodie's best-known play, *Dear Octopus*, was filling the Queen's Theatre every night. But the author turned her back on success – she was then earning £12,000 a year – to sail for America, and exile. Alec was a conscientious objector and out of loyalty to him she agreed to leave the country, although she always regretted it. Of course, they took Pongo with them. As they drove round California, Pongo and the Rolls always gathered crowds.

But Pongo did not survive long in America. Dodie sat by him during his last days, prostate with grief. After his death, at the age of only seven, she soon decided that, to avoid being obsessed by one dog, they should get another – or, better still, two. They chose a young liver-spotted male, always known as Bizz, and a black-and-white female they named Folly.

In mid-1943 Dodie and Alec, who had married but never had children, decided to mate Buzz and Folly. Told to expect a litter of up to ten, they watched with concern as Folly gave

birth ... ten, 11, 12. The 13th puppy was born seemingly lifeless. Alex wrapped it in a towel and gently rubbed it until it gave a little gasp and moved its tiny limbs. "I felt like God," Alec always said, when telling the story. This puppy became the Cadpig of Dodie's book.

The final tally was 15 puppies. Homes were found for 14 of them, but they kept their favourite, Dandy. Their three dogs became their Dalmatian family, sleeping on pillows beside their beds. The Dalmatians also became an obstacle to returning to England. How could they subject their beloved animals to quarantine?



But finally they did return. The war was over, and Dodie had never stopped missing England. The dramatisation of her novel *I Capture the Castle* was soon to be put on in London, and the Beesley entourage arrived at Southampton in October 1953. Usually heavily involved in casting and direction, Dodie was more concerned with visiting the dogs in quarantine, paying for extra meat and heated kennels.

At last, in April 1954, Dogs' Freedom Day dawned. They took the dogs back to their whitewashed, thatched cottage in the village of Finchingfield, Essex, vowing to never again leave them for more than a few hours.

Their joy at being back in England was clouded by Dodie's lack of success – critical and financial. In the era of the kitchen-sink drama, with John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* about to flourish, her drawing-room comedies were cruelly out of fashion: *I Capture the Castle* ran for only six weeks. She'd written three plays that hadn't found favour with a producer. So it was in a spirit of rebellion that at Christmas 1954 – having just bought an Enid Blyton book for a neighbour's child – she began to wonder if she might herself write for children. And what better subjects than her darling Dalmatians? She remembered the seed of a story about a wicked woman who steals Dalmatian puppies for her fur farm, sown 20 years earlier when a friend remarked on first seeing Pongo: "He'd make a nice fur coat." That December night, she sat up until 3am by candlelight, and let the plot of *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* unfold.

In seven weeks she had completed the first draft of her tale of Pongo, a canine Sherlock Holmes, and his quest for the puppies stolen by the evil Cruella and incarcerated in a

forbidding mansion call Hell Hall. She never thought she could write "a little book about dogs", but in the end it wasn't difficult; those dogs and the countryside through which they travelled were all so dear to her.

HER PUBLISHER, HEINEMANN, engaged twin artists Anne and Janet Grahame-Johnstone to illustrate the book. They drove to Essex to observe Dodie's three Dalmatians, capturing the breed's athleticism and graceful, horse-like gait in brilliant drawings. Ever a perfectionist, Dodie insisted that the cottages, farms and villages in the background also had to look right.

The book, which appeared at Christmas 1956, was an instant success. Then came a dramatic development: the Walt Disney organisation offered $42,000 for the film rights. The film cost $5.8 million to make – 300 artists toiled for three years on the meticulous drawings. During this time Walt Disney himself visited Dodie. He described how his people had feared that the scene in which the starving puppies are suckled by some kindly cows might cause offence, but he had insisted on keeping it.

The film broke box-office records and became one of Disney's greatest animated epics, filling cinemas whenever it was revived. Pongo lives on in millions of toys marketed by Disney, and Dodie's book has become a classic loved by every new generation of children.

The only thing Dodie lacked now was her own Dalmatian. Dandy had died in 1955 and been buried beside his parents in the garden. Each dog's death caused Dodie agonies. Dalmatians were, after all, the nearest thing to motherhood she ever experienced. After six years, unable to bear the pangs every time they passed the corner where the dog-baskets had been, she and Alec acquired another Dalmatian. They called him Disney, after Walt, whose film had restored Dodie's reputation and ensured an income for the rest of her life.

Though Dodie felt a little wistful, in later years, that the film had eclipsed her earlier fame as a playwright and novelist, she consoled herself that she did not really mind being immortalised by her favourite breed of dog. As she said, no human being apart from her husband had ever meant as much to her as her dogs. "As one grows older, one tires of many things and people. But one will never be too old for dogs."

In the last years of her life, there were two more Dalmatians. The last one, Charley, was an unusually vicious, teeth-bearing character who stole food, bit people and could knock Dodie over with ease. But towards the end, when the widowed Dodie, frail and bedridden, was alone in her cottage, he would guard her bedside. When she was taken into a nursing home a few months before her death age 94 in 1990, Charley – having

bitten the postman in a final gesture – died of a broken heart and was buried with the other Dalmatians.

DODIE WOULD HAVE BEEN both delighted and amused that the Disney organisation is now filming a 'live' version of *101 Dalmatians* at Shepperton Studios, using more than 200 real Dalmatian puppies and with Glenn Close as Cruella.

She might have been amused, too, to know that in writing her biography I was also afflicted with Dalmatian mania. On the dark November night when I finished the book, I decided that our family lacked that essential black-and-white spotted dog. The next day, I drove to the nearest breeder and acquired an eight-week-old puppy we called Beesley, after Dodie's married name.

Beezle, as he is now known, looks uncannily like Pongo. He is full of Dalmatian spirit at its best – "a dog prepared to love every human being on sight", as Dodie said. To me, he is Dodie's eighth Dalmatian.

Update: In 2021, Walt Disney Pictures released a crime comedy, Cruella, *starring Emma Stone and based on the character of Cruella de Vil. It was a box-office success, and a sequel is planned.*

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Classified Classics

RD JUNE 1957, RD DECEMBER 1987 AND RD APRIL 1960

Author-psychologist wants secretary, university graduate who has majored in any subject but psychology. *The New York Times*

Free Persian-style home accessories in black fur or smart grey stripes. Perfect hearth decorations! Male and female models come equipped with automatic purr and built-in washing attachment.

Golf clubs – must sell or get divorce. *Toronto Telegram*

In a death notice: The deceased had requested that there be no flowers (due to her allergies). *Elmira StarGazette*

The University Symphony Orchestra will have its first rehearsal Wednesday in Crouse Auditorium. Louis Krasner, conductor, will be available for consolation from 6.30 on. *The Syracuse University Orange*

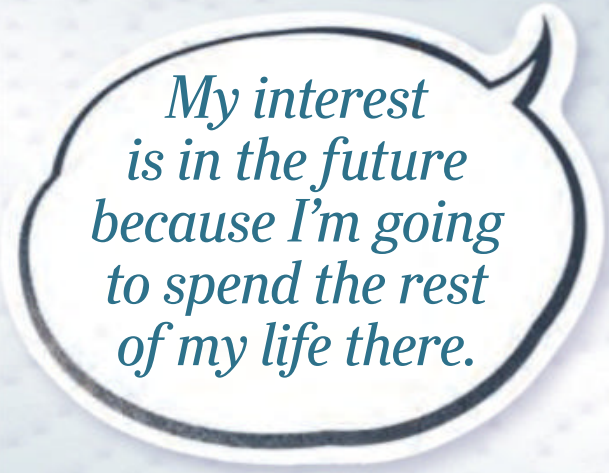
Towards a More

PICTURESQUE SPEECH

TWISTS AND TURNS OF PHRASE FROM READERS

SEPTEMBER 1945

- Planes pigeoning home.
- ***A conscience as clear as good-flying weather.***
- That ceaseless reconnaissance known as childhood.
- ***A woodpecker, telegrapher of the forest.***
- Eschewing meat is not so tough as chewing it.
- ***I'm about as fit as a fizzle.***
- As the evening wore on her face wore off.
- ***He's strong in the courage of his connections.***
- He fell into her eyes up to his heart.
- ***The pretzel-posture of day coach slumber.***
- Mahogany-faced sea captains.
- ***Fanning his interest with her long eye-lashes.***
- I'm half Scotch and half soda.
- ***As naked as a concert solo.***
- He wore his pants patched with flesh.



JANUARY 1946

- Mother, introducing her newly married son's wife: "And this is my daughter-in-love."
- ***The odds and endlesses of housekeeping.***
- The moaning after the night before.
- ***The jury came to the conclusion that the fire was caused by friction between the insurance policy and the mortgage.***
- Twilight sowing stars in the sky.
- ***Like a ballet dancer, a dried leaf twirled across the road.***
- A dress designed with an ulterior motif.

WHEN KRAKATOA BLEW UP

When the Indonesian volcanic island of Krakatoa erupted in 1883, its shock waves were felt right around the world

BY *Ernst Behrendt*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

The world is awed by the might of the blasts that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but there was an explosion once that was incomparably greater. Those atomic bombs flattened two cities, yet people a few dozen miles away were oblivious of the fact. When the East Indies island of Krakatoa blew up, on 27 August 1883, the whole world knew about it. The noise was heard 3000 miles [nearly 5000 kilometres] away.

The great waves the explosion caused in the sea reached the shores of four continents and were recorded 8000 miles away. An air wave generated by the blast travelled clear round the world, not once but several times. And where had been a mountain half a mile high was now a hole a thousand feet deep and miles across.

Red-hot debris covered an area larger than France, to a depth of sometimes 100 feet on land. For nearly a year afterwards the dust of the explosion, blown upwards for 30 miles, filled the high atmosphere over almost the whole globe. Even though there were no large towns within 100 miles of the volcano, 36,000 persons lost their lives.

The biggest blast in history was caused by nothing more mysterious than the old-fashioned force which rattles the lid on a tea-kettle. But the fire under the kettle was a mile-long pocket of seething lava and it changed a cubic mile of ocean into super-heated steam. The lid blew off and the kettle exploded as well.

Krakatoa was a volcanic island of about 18-square miles in the Sunda Strait, in the Dutch East Indies [now called Indonesia], between Java and Sumatra.

Early in the spring of 1883, there were warning signs. Smoke and steam poured from recent fissures in the rock. A river of lava cut a wide swath through the tangled jungle. But the Dutch in Java and Sumatra were not alarmed. Old Krakatoa had puffed and rumbled before. Even when the Dutch Captain Ferzenaar arrived in Batavia in August with a report that two new volcanoes had appeared on Krakatoa, the Dutch were not impressed. There were scores of volcanoes in Indonesia; besides, Krakatoa was almost a hundred miles away.

"The ground was so hot it burned right through the soles of my boots," Captain Ferzenaar said. Well, if it was that warm on Krakatoa the few people who lived there would have to take to their boats and wait until the island cooled off.

Captain Ferzenaar was the last foreigner to set foot on Krakatoa before the eruption. By this time navigation through Sunda Strait was becoming difficult. Several skippers turned back when they saw the narrows covered with a foot-thick layer of cinders. But the captain of one freighter battened down the hatches and calmly sailed through the hissing sea. His cargo – kerosene!

No one after him attempted the passage. By now Krakatoa's rumblings had grown into a continuous, angry roar heard along the entire east coast of Java. In Buitenzorg, 61 miles from Krakatoa, people were seeking shelter from what they thought was a gathering thunderstorm.

THE CAPTAIN OF ONE FREIGHTER SAILED THROUGH THE HISSING SEA. HIS CARGO – KEROSENE!

"IN THE AFTERNOON of 26 August," R.D.M. Verbeck wrote in his description of the catastrophe, "the low rumbling was interrupted by sharp, reverberating detonations. They grew louder and more frequent. People were terrified. Night came, but no one thought of sleeping. Towards morning the incessant noise was drowning out every other sound. Suddenly, shortly before seven, there was a tremendous explosion. Buildings shook, walls cracked and doors flew open as if pushed by invisible hands. Everybody rushed into the streets. Another deafening explosion, and then everything was quiet as if the volcano had ceased to exist."

The volcano *had* ceased to exist. Seething with the expansion of its gases, the white-hot lava found temporary outlets in the two craters seen by Ferzenaar, which normally acted as safety valves. But the pressure became too great. Unimaginable energies were straining against hundreds of feet of solid rock overhead. The rock heaved, buckled; on the evening of 26 August it cracked wide open like the wall of a defective cauldron.

With all the fury of a primordial cataclysm, a stream of lava burst forth in a deafening roar. Seconds later the ocean rushed into the opening. On contact with the hot lava the water changed into superheated steam. Colossal blocks of granite and obsidian rocketed upwards amid a cloud of dust and smoke. Again the ocean rushed in, battling the pent-up lava, changing into expanding, exploding superheated steam, breaking down barrier after barrier of rock.

No one knows how many times the white-hot magma pushed back the ocean and how often the ocean

returned to the assault. In the end the water won. Early in the morning of 27 August the ocean reached the volcanic centre of the island. Even the fury of the previous explosions was but a faint prelude to the final cataclysm as the heart was ripped out of Krakatoa and 14 cubic miles [60 cubic kilometres] of rock streaked upwards into the sky.

The sun was blotted out behind a curtain of ebony torn by jagged lightning. Miles away, Krakatoa's pyrotechnics awed the sailors of the British ship, *Charles Bal*, who saw the island shoot up over the horizon, "shaped like a pine tree brilliantly illuminated by electric flashes". The sea was covered with innumerable fish, floating belly-up on the churning water.

Long afterwards came the noise – the loudest ever heard by human ears. "The concussions were deafening," wrote a Lloyd's agent in Batavia, a hundred miles away. They hammered every ear-drum in Java and Sumatra and put fear into the hearts of Borneo's head-hunters. People in Victoria Plains, Australia, 1700 miles to the eastward, were startled by what seemed to be artillery fire. The sound waves travelled 2968 miles westward to Rodriguez Island near Madagascar.

A WALL OF WATER, 50 FEET HIGH, WAS ADVANCING AT INCREDIBLE SPEED

WITH THE NOISE, concentric waves of air started on their way around the globe. A day and a half after the explosion, the first of them hit London from the west. Then a second wave rushed over the city from the east. Four times the east-bound wave swept over London – and over Berlin, St Petersburg and Valencia as well – and three times it swept back. The stratospheric see-saw continued for more than ten days before the blast had spent its force.

Far more violent was the effect of the eruption on the sea. In Anjer, on the west coast of Java, a retired sea captain suddenly noticed a new island which had bobbed up in the strait. The next moment he was running for his life. The island was a wall of water, 50 feet high, advancing across the narrows at incredible speed, battering down the wharves, engulfing Anjer, racing uphill, smashing everything in its path. The wave flung a log at him, and he went down. When he regained consciousness he was sitting on the top of a tree half a mile inland, stripped of every shred of clothing but otherwise unharmed.

He was one of the few who saw the wave and lived to describe its fury. Anjer had vanished. The wave, rising to a height of a hundred feet, wiped out

scores of villages and killed thousands of people. On the coast of Sumatra, the wave tore the warship *Beroun* from her moorings and drove her, anchor dragging, two miles inland, leaving her stranded in the jungle, 30 feet above sea level.

The wave raced across the entire width of the Indian Ocean. When it reached Cape Town, 5100 miles away, it was still over a foot high. It rounded the Cape of Good Hope, returned northward into the Atlantic, along the coast of Africa, and at last spent itself in the English Channel.

Whole districts of Indonesia were buried under ashes; the jungles were choked, the rice paddies changed into deserts. The sky was so filled with ash that for a time lamps were needed all day in Batavia.

But what covered the land and the sea was only a small part of the volcano. Most of Krakatoa's solid rock had been pulverised and blasted to a height of 150,000 feet. Clouds of volcanic dust hung suspended in the stratosphere for months. Air currents carried them across oceans and continents. All over the world, the rays of the sun were filtered through a veil spun in the depths of Sunda Strait. In Paris, New York, Cairo and London, the setting sun appeared blue, leaden, green and copper-coloured, and at night the Earth was steeped in the light of a green moon and green stars.

The phenomenon lasted into the spring of 1884; then the colours faded, and Krakatoa's magnificent shroud disappeared. The final chapter in its history seemed to be over. Krakatoa was utterly dead. Nothing was left of it but a few square miles of rock buried under a mountain of ashes. All plants and insects and birds and mammals had been dissolved in a fiery cloud.

THEN A MIRACLE HAPPENED – the miracle of the rebirth of life. Four months after the eruption, a botanist found an almost microscopic spider, gallantly spinning its web where nothing was to be caught. It had apparently drifted in on the wind.

And then after a few years came the grasses and shrubs, the worms, ants, snakes and birds. They arrived by air – seeds dropped by birds on their flight over the barren land; small caterpillars carried by the wind; beetles and butterflies winging their way over from Java and Sumatra. They arrived by water – eggs of worms and reptiles flung ashore with flotsam; snails and scorpions riding waves on decayed tree trunks; pythons and crocodiles swimming across the narrows. Parasites clung to their bodies.

Plants and animals came over by accident, but there was nothing accidental about the sequence in which they established themselves. It was a rigid chronological pattern telescoping millennia into months. Some forms of life had to be there first so that others could live.

For a while some forms prospered through the absence of enemies and competitors. Around 1910, Krakatoa was overrun by swarms of ants; ten years later, when there were plenty of birds and reptiles, the ants had all but disappeared.

By 1919 the first small clusters of trees had taken root, and by 1924 they had grown into a continuous forest. A few years later, climbing plants were already choking the trees to death and transforming the new forest into a tropical jungle with orchids, butterflies, snakes, numerous birds and bats.

Krakatoa became a naturalist's paradise, and the Dutch made it a nature reserve and allowed no one but scientists to set foot on the island. They worked out a complete inventory of life on Krakatoa. They counted the steadily growing number of new arrivals and observed how they lived with each other and fought each other. They even discovered several sub-species – birds and butterflies with peculiar characteristics not to be found anywhere else. Krakatoa was not only drawing on the forms of life around it; it was creating a life of its own.

Then, one day, the scientists discovered another sort of life stirring on Krakatoa. The old volcano was not dead. Deep down under its rocky foundation a pocket of lava was seeking an outlet for its energies. The bottom of the inland sea was heaving and buckling again. A submarine cone was building up; on 26 January 1928, it broke the surface and showed its top, a flat, ugly island a few hundred feet across, which the waves washed away a few days later.

A year passed. Then suddenly a geyser began to spout steam and ashes. Sulphurous fumes drifted over the ocean. Again the sea was covered with dead fish floating belly-up.

The new geyser is still there. It is a portion of the ancient crater rim with mud deposited on top and a flue in its centre – a safety value for the stupendous pressure generated by the lava pocket underneath. The locals call the new volcano 'Anak Krakatoa', the 'Child of Krakatoa'. No name could be more ominous. R

FROM *NATURE MAGAZINE*. ©1946, AMERICAN NATURE ASSOCIATION

Update: Anak Krakatau's most recent eruptions were on April 10, 2020. The first eruption, which lasted one minute and 12 seconds, started at 9.58pm and spewed out a 200-metre-high column of ash and smoke. A second eruption, lasting 38 minutes and 4 seconds, came 37 minutes later, spewing out a 500-metre-high column of ash. But don't be alarmed – volcanologist Jess Phoenix said at the time that the 2020 eruptions were a perfectly normal occurrence.

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VIEWPOINTS

MUSINGS AND OPINIONS

JANUARY 1935

◆ ***"Her ladyship makes a lovely corpse," said the undertaker. "Lovely in life, lovely in death, is what I always say. It's astonishing, the beauty that death brings out. My old grandfather, who was in the same line of business, told me that, and for 50 years I've confirmed the truth of his words. 'Beauty in life,' he used to say, 'may come from good dressing and what-not, but for beauty in death you have to fall back on character.' If I want to size a person up, I look at them and picture them dead."***

V. SACKVILLE WEST, *ALL PASSION SPENT*

◆ Every educated person should know what his or her insides look like. It was not until I had attended a few post-mortems that I realised (with Leonardo da Vinci, Christopher Wren and others) that even the ugliest human exteriors may contain the most beautiful viscera, and was able to console myself for the facial drabness of my neighbours in omnibuses by dissecting them in my imagination.

J.B.S. HALDANE, *SCIENCE AND HUMAN LIFE*

◆ ***A hundred years from now, I dare say, some dreamy collector will pay a cool thousand for an old milk bottle, and I wish I had the equivalent for what my hot-water bag will bring in 2034! Why we should be so beguiled by the antique is a riddle that perhaps only the interior decorator can solve.***

CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER

◆ The filling station men have improved the manners and courtesy

◆ **Every woman has the right to feel beautiful... It is her birthright. To all women between the ages of eight and 80 who want to grow beauty, here is my advice; forget what your looking glass tells you, but say to yourself a dozen times a day: "I am beloved." No woman who actually believes that she is precious in the eyes of another can walk ungracefully, or live without charm.**

MARIE DRESSLER

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

◆ **Human beings have developed some very complicated and expensive ways of taking exercise. For my part, I can enjoy exercise in quite a simple and old-fashioned way. When my system needs toning up I like to go out into the woods and alternately walk and run. By running I don't mean just a dog-trot, but a good, brisk clip which thoroughly "warms up the engine." Going about, I often run from one building to the next.**

HENRY FORD IN *THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE*

of the American public more than all the colleges in the country.

ROBERT A. MILIKEN, EMINENT PHYSICIST

FEBRUARY 1938

◆ ***As one grows older, I think one feels life more in terms of things. This sounds rather material but it isn't. Things become so saturated with their associations that they symbolise the loveliest experiences and intimacies of life.***

ANNE SEDGEWICK, *A PORTRAIT IN LETTERS* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN)

◆ Suppose there should suddenly be dumped into man's conscious mind a small part of what he had forgotten: out of his past, ten million faces would surge up from darkness into a dreadful glare; a vast murmur of voices would gather out of silence and grow until it builds pandemonium in his skull. In that sea of faces he would not find the few that had been dear to him; voices he had loved would be drowned in rapid chatter. The few good books he had read would be smothered under the ten thousand bad. Worst of all, he would search in vain among the trivialities, the broken purposes, and the weak surrenders of his own past for that ideal self of which his weak memory had allowed him complacently to dream.

ODELL SHEPARD, QUOTED BY BRUCE BARTON IN *THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE*

◆ ***If a nation had any sense, they would begin their wars by sending their oldest men into the trenches. They would not risk the lives of their young men except in the last extremity. In 1914, it was a dreadful thing to see regiments of lads singing 'Tipperary' on their way to the slaughterhouse. But the spectacle of octogenarians hobbling to the front waving their walking sticks and piping up to the tune of "We'll never come back no more, we'll never come back no more" – wouldn't you cheer that enthusiastically? I should.***

RADIO BROADCAST BY **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**

TABLE FOR TWO

The celebrity chef on how her husband taught her to love good food, and to savour life

BY *Julia Child*

AS TOLD TO *Gail Cameron Westcott*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

If World War II had never occurred, no one would have heard of Julia Child. I would have undoubtedly married some nice businessman and probably become an alcoholic. Instead, I met Paul Child.

It happened, of all places, in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on the verandah of a tea planter's residence. The year was 1944, and the plantation served as headquarters for the OSS, America's first spy agency. I was, I'm sorry to say, not a spy, just a humdrum office worker. Paul, a gifted artist, was an exhibits officer who made charts and maps for Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Commander for Southeast Asia. While we worked in palm-thatched huts, elephants wandered on the premises. It was all very exotic.

And no one was more exotic to me than Paul, a person unlike anyone I'd ever known – multilingual, worldly and insatiably curious. I saw so much more when I was with him. Never without a camera on his shoulder, he opened my eyes to the hidden beauty of ordinary scenes. Paul viewed life as a continuing series of adventures, and I was a lucky woman indeed to be a participant.

Ten years older and a few centimetres shorter (just right, in my view), Paul grew up in Boston and lived in Paris during the 1920s, where he knew Ernest Hemingway (a selfish, mean man in his opinion) and Gertrude Stein. He was a painter, master photographer, stained-glass cutter, poet and linguist. And he was a lover of good food and could describe in details the preparation of quenelles.

Quenelles? When I met Paul, my interest in cuisine had been limited to sating my huge appetite. I was 187 centimetres and always hungry. Growing up in Pasadena, I'd had a privileged life with public schools, a tennis court in the back yard, and a hired cook in the kitchen – which I considered a dismal place. Our meals were conventional women's-magazine fare – beef, chicken or lamb. When I attended Smith College, I mostly remember consuming large quantities of jam doughnuts and driving around to sly-grog shops – this was the early 1930s – in my black Ford convertible packed with giggling girls. Upon returning to Pasadena, I harboured some vague idea of becoming a novelist, but like most women of my era I was truly prepared for nothing. Then came the war. I joined the OSS and shipped out to Ceylon.

I was 32 when I met Paul and my life finally got started. Like me, he was an eater, but his was a much more sophisticated palate. Paul was transferred to China late in 1944, and soon after I followed.

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he was always seeking out new tastes. He'd take me along and we sampled it all. Our growing relationship coincided with my food awakening.

Paul was fond of saying – and with good reason – that he had married me in spite of my dreadful cooking. The first thing I ever cooked for Paul, when he came to visit me in California after the war, was calves' brains in red wine sauce. Just dreadful!

The brains, which you must handle gently were awful, and the sauce was worse. Why I picked something I'd never tried, I don't know. Paul was sophisticated, and I thought this would impress him.

LIKE ME, PAUL WAS AN EATER, BUT HIS WAS A MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED PALATE

After our wedding, we settled in Georgetown, and I took up cooking for the same reason most women do – to please a man. In the beginning, it took me hours and hours – often until 10pm – to get dinner on the table. I used *The Joy of Cooking* and complicated recipes from *Gourmet* magazine, and things often went wrong. Paul was encouraging no matter what I did. And I learned an important cooking secret: when something goes wrong, correct it if you can, and if you can't, bear with it.

In 1948, we moved to Paris, where Paul had been appointed exhibits officer at the US embassy. On our first day in France, we stopped in the city of Rouen for a lunch I still remember in precise detail: oysters and white wine, sole meunière, a great fresh salad, cheeses and delicious little petits fours with a fresh fruit dessert.

It was as if I had never tasted food before. I became determined to master the preparation.

We moved into the top floor of a wonderful old house on the Left Bank, with a pussycat who lived on the roof. I enrolled at the Cordon Bleu with a cluster of former servicemen studying to become chefs, and Paul became our willing guinea pig and an expert on wine.

Our marriage was a partnership in the deepest sense. Paul never cooked, but he'd shell peas if needed, and chop and shop with me. He described himself as "the part of the iceberg that doesn't show."

After we returned to the US, he designed the kitchen in our Cambridge home, took pictures and drew wonderful illustrations for my cookbooks. Paul was my entrepreneurial business manager and resident ogre.

Our time together lasted 48 years, until his death in 1994 at the age of 92. Over my bed hangs the Valentine painting Paul did for me one year of a tree laden with hearts. R

Towards a More

PICTURESQUE SPEECH

TWISTS AND TURNS OF PHRASE FROM READERS

SEPTEMBER 1953

- The cicadas buzzing the doorbell of autumn.
- ***Wheat fields with crew cuts.***
- Summer rusting into autumn.
- ***The sunset gift-wrapped the day.***

When she says she has a boyish figure, that's straight from the shoulder.

- She is blessed with a sympathetic disposition, but she wastes it on herself.
- ***Our toaster is the kind that doesn't ring a bell when the toast is done – it sends up smoke signals.***
- A man will always pay a fancy figure for checking his hat.

JUNE 1964

- Golf is a game where the ball lies poorly and the player well.
- ***Peering above, probing beneath, curling her lashes, brushing her teeth, daubing her face with every new mixture, the teenage daughter's a bathroom fixture.***

By soft-drink stand: "Thirst come, thirst served."

- In maternity shop window: "You should have danced all night."
- The contents of a woman's purse prove that she can take it with her.
- ***In a hardware store: "We sell window glass (and footballs)."***

Direct dialling has given us a new ailment — cauliflower finger.

FORGET ME NOT

Suffering from extreme amnesia, he remembers nothing — except the woman he loves

BY *Jan Goodwin*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

Clive Wearing stares into space. But the moment his wife, Deborah, enters the room, his face lights up, and he springs to his feet. He pulls Deborah to him, then whirls her around, sending her strawberry-blonde curls flying. "You're gorgeous. I adore you." It is exactly what he says each time he sees her. "Isn't she lovely?" he asks, kissing Deborah's hands as she giggles.

Minutes later, when Deborah steps away, the light goes out of Clive's blue eyes. "Somebody told me my wife is here," he says worriedly, "but I've never seen her. I've never seen a human being for 20 years. I've never seen anything, heard anything. Days and nights are exactly the same. Precisely like death. I'd like to be alive."

When Deborah first met Clive she was 21, a shy soprano in a choir he was conducting. He was 40, charismatic and driven; Deborah was taken with his Celtic, aquiline features. As the choir-master of the famed London Sinfonietta, director of the London Lassus Ensemble and one of the world's leading Renaissance music scholars, he'd collaborated with such composers as John Tavener, Michael Nyman, even Beatle Ringo Starr. His special programmes of Renaissance wedding music created for the BBC for the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, were leather-bound and presented to Diana at Buckingham Palace.

"The most important things cannot be spoken; that's why there's music," Clive told Deborah on their first date. She didn't know those words would sustain her in the years to come.

In March 1985, just 18 months after they celebrated their marriage at the Royal Festival Hall, Clive was struck down with what is believed to be the most extreme case of amnesia ever recorded. The herpes simplex virus, cause of the common cold sore, had travelled to his brain, wiping out his entire memory centre, including the hippocampus and areas that control emotion and behaviour. An extremely rare disease, it is known in this form as herpes encephalitis. Left untreated, 70 per cent of the patients die; more than half of the survivors are left with neurological damage, though in most cases much less devastating than Clive's.

"It's as if Clive's every conscious moment is like waking up for the first time," explains Deborah. "Tests show that my husband's memory is just seven seconds long. Any new information given to him melts as fast as snowflakes on the skin, leaving no trace."

CLIVE OFTEN WORKED until midnight seven days a week, and his routine was no different in the spring of 1985, when he first became ill. "He came home one night complaining of a headache," recalls Deborah. "It was nothing remarkable."

But the next day, Clive's teeth were chattering, and his headache was so severe that he described it "as though someone is hitting me with a hammer."

Deborah told him to stay in bed and phone her at work if he needed anything. "I can't remember your number," he said, though he called her at her office daily. When she gave him the number, she noticed that he wrote "Deborah Wearing" next to it, as if he didn't know her well.

Alarmed, Deborah called their doctor, who diagnosed flu and prescribed a painkiller for the headache. Two days later, after Clive told his wife he couldn't remember her name, she contacted the doctor again. He said that a local outbreak of an influenza strain mimicking meningitis was the cause of Clive's confusion. When Deborah returned home later that afternoon, she found Clive's bed was empty and no sign of him in the apartment. She checked with neighbours, phoned the doctor and police.

"TESTS SHOW THAT MY HUSBAND'S MEMORY IS JUST SEVEN SECONDS LONG"

Hours later, as she was beginning to despair, the phone rang. Police from a nearby station told her Clive was with them, OK but confused; he could not remember his address. When Deborah brought him home, he walked right by the entrance to their building.

Clive's temperature had risen to 40°C, so Deborah called an ambulance and he was rushed to the hospital.

There, he began slipping in and out of consciousness. "Stay with me, darling. Stay with me. I love you," Deborah urged in panic as doctors ordered a CAT scan and a spinal tap. Eleven long hours later, a doctor told her that Clive had encephalitis – an inflammation of the brain – caused by the cold-sore virus. "There's an 80 per cent chance he'll die," he said.

"But he's never even had a cold sore," a stunned Deborah responded.

"The virus lies dormant in most of the population without symptoms," the doctor explained. "Very, very rarely, it goes to the brain."

Just days earlier, the couple had talked about starting a family. Clive had three grown children from a previous marriage, but he and Deborah wanted two together. "I was hoping to get pregnant soon because Clive was

getting older," she says. "Now I was being told that it was likely my husband would die."

Over the next two days, Deborah spent every hour she could at Clive's bedside. On the third day, Deborah watched helplessly as Clive began having major seizures.

Her husband was treated with acyclovir, an antiviral drug that had just come on the market, but the virus had already caused his brain to swell. As it pressed against the unforgiving bone of the skull, it literally crushed itself. In the weeks that followed, Clive stabilised. But scans would show that his brain had been virtually mulched.

THOUGH HE COULD NO LONGER READ BOOKS, HE COULD STILL READ AND PLAY MUSIC

Professor Barbara Wilson, a renowned Cambridge research scientist specialising in memory and knowledge, says, "The virus caused the destruction of Clive's brilliant mind."

"Not only had he lost his past," says Deborah, "He couldn't store any new memories."

His speech was scrambled, and he used the word chicken to describe everything. When a doctor asked him what a tie was, or a pen, he would reply in his authoritative voice, "a chicken". Then he started speaking backwards. He suddenly remembered Deborah's name but pronounced it in reverse, as "Harobed". Damage to his frontal lobes, which play a role in behaviour and personality, caused a host of other peculiar symptoms. When Clive used an electric razor obsessively, shaving his face long after his facial hair – including his eyebrows – was gone, doctors realised that he was suffering from a condition called perseveration, causing him to repeat behaviours endlessly. He went through periods of being maniacally childlike, popping out of cupboards to surprise people – even jumping out of cars when taken off hospital grounds.

Then, three months after being hospitalised, Clive started having violent episodes. He banged nurses' heads against the wall, threw chairs, even knocked Deborah to the ground. "I should have been frightened," she says, "but somehow I wasn't. This was still the man I adored. I knew it was the brain damage that made him out of control."

THE EPISODES DROVE other family members and friends away, and at night, home alone, Deborah would throw herself on her bed and literally howl in anguish, yearning for the man she had married.

Through it all, Clive maintained some understanding that Deborah was his wife. His doctors say this is because emotional memory is stored in a part of Clive's brain that was less affected by the virus. "As ill as he was," Deborah says, her face softening, "he could still look into my eyes, and tell me he loved me."

That same emotional memory also made Clive aware of his loss. It was heartbreaking, says Deborah, to watch him try to understand what was happening – and fail. He would sob. "Imagine trying desperately to grasp who you are and not being able to."

ONE DAY, Deborah sat Clive down at the hospital chapel's organ, placing a piece of sheet music in front of him. He began to play. "It was like someone had given him a gift," says Deborah. Though he could no longer read books or a newspaper, Clive, it turned out, could still read and play music.

"Music is part of Clive's procedural memory, like walking or riding a bike," explains New York neurologist Dr Oliver Sacks.

The chapel became the couple's sanctuary, especially during Clive's second year of hospitalisation, when he was transferred to the psychiatric ward. While it was clear that her husband, who needed round-the-clock supervision, would never come home, Deborah felt that he belonged in a facility geared towards those with brain injuries. Unfortunately, there were no such centres in Britain at the time.

So in 1986, Deborah gave up her job and founded the Amnesia Association to lobby for such facilities. The work kept her busy, but the strain of her situation eventually took its toll.

***

In 1994, after sinking into a deep depression, and being advised by family and doctors to start a new life, Deborah moved to the US.

Several times a week, she phoned Clive in England to tell him about New York. In the meantime, he had moved into a specially created brain trauma unit in East Sussex and was doing well there. After three years in the US, Deborah moved back to England because she missed what she describes as the Cliveness of Clive. "It's his soul, I suppose," she says, "something that is not dependent on your mind or your ability. It's your identity, which is at a much deeper level". In 2002 the couple renewed their wedding vows.

Despite having no memory of specific musical pieces when they are mentioned by name, and a limited recall of his previous musical knowledge, Clive is able to play complex piano and organ pieces, sight-read music, and conduct a choir. R

EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL PUBLISHED IN 2006.


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THE MOST EXPENSIVE BOOK IN THE WORLD

Here is the story of how Henry the Lion's Book of Gospels, *after a long period of wandering, finally returned to its birthplace*

BY *Claus Gaedemann*

PHOTO: ALAMY

It is the morning of December 6, 1983. The Grosvenor gallery of Sotheby's auction house in London's New Bond Street is packed. The air is stifling, the atmosphere tense. Fifteen camera teams have set up their equipment. About to be auctioned off before an international audience of 300 bibliophiles is "the most important treasure of the Middle Ages ever to be offered in the open market": Henry the Lion's Book of Gospels.

Shining in gold, silver and purple, the book measures 34 by 26 centimetres and is more than 800 years old. It contains the four gospels in Latin, written by hand and illuminated in a labour that took many years to complete. Experts have estimated its value at between £2million-£4 million.

About 11.45am, auctioneer Richard Came brings down his ivory hammer three times. "One million pounds!" he opens the bidding. Heads perk up and hands are raised.

Four million. Five million. Six million. Most bidders give up, keeping their hands down.

Only two are left in the running now: Stephen Massey of Christie's, New York's famed auction house, bidding on behalf of a private, anonymous client; and Nicholas Poole-Wilson of London's Bernard Quaritch, the world's biggest antiquarian bookseller, who has joined forces with Hans Peter Kraus, a well-known New York dealer in manuscripts. Every time the auctioneer points at one of them, the price goes up by £200,000. At the £7 million mark, Massey hesitates, then raises his hand: £7.2 million. After this, he throws in the towel.

"£7.4 million!" Poole-Wilson nods.

"Any bids on the phone?" Came asked as a matter of form. None. And down comes the ivory hammer. For the equivalent of US$10.7 million and after less than two minutes of bidding, the knockdown is to the man from Bernard Quaritch.

Between Kraus and Poole-Wilson in the third row sits a silver-haired man from Germany. He is 82-year-old Hermann Josef Abs, honorary chairman of the board of the Deutsche Bank. He now shakes hands with the two men. Quite obviously, Abs has finessed the art purchase on behalf of his country, and was able to win over to his side the two strongest competitors. Poole-Wilson and Kraus were bidding for the Federal Republic of Germany.

The price realised is the highest ever paid for a book. The German federal government has contributed $2.6 million to the purchase price, Lower Saxony $4 million, Bavaria

$3.2 million and the Foundation for the Prussian Cultural Patrimony $1.3 million. The remainder is to come from donations.

Some people consider the price too high for 226 parchment pages from the 12th century. After all, 50 kindergartens or three homes for the aged could have been built for that sum. But works of art like the gospels cannot be looked at with a bookkeeper's eye. It is part of Germany's heritage, similar to Cologne Cathedral and Bamberg's Horseman. "I am convinced," says Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann, "that its recovery for the German public was a national task of the first order." On January 11, 1984, a plane from the West German armed forces brought the book from London to Hanover, where it was escorted by police officials to a bank vault.

IN THE MIDDLE AGES, GOSPEL BOOKS WERE CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST PRICELESS

In the Middle Ages, gospel books were considered to be the most priceless, the most sacred of all liturgical writings. On high church holidays, they were displayed on the altar, included in processions and placed on the necks and shoulders of newly appointed bishops.

Henry the Lion's Book of Gospels is one of the most richly decorated medieval books. With its 50 full-page multicoloured miniatures, among them 17 canon tables and nine pages of illuminated initials, and 1500 additional small illuminated initials throughout the text, it is a top work of Romanesque book painting. Besides the biblical scenes, it depicts 12th century court life: knights with their sumptuously dressed ladies feasting at banquet tables, representing allegories of vices and virtues.

The book's original owner, the Guelph Henry the Lion, had become Duke of Saxony in 1142 at the age of 13. In later years, he also received the title of Duke of Bavaria. He founded Munich, contributed to the rise of Lübeck and Brunswick, and became a forefather of nearly every royal dynasty in Europe.

It was around 1175 that Henry commissioned the imperial abbey of Helmarshausen in northern Hesse to produce a gospel book. The Benedictine monk Herimann of the Romanesque painting school of Rogerus of Helmarchausen took at least three years to complete the work. He personally wrote the text, and painted all illustrations and part of the initials. A dedicatory poem, written by Herimann in gorgeous majuscules on purple-dyed parchment, makes it one

of the few books of the time signed by the artist himself.

Since Henry the Lion ruled over all the lands between Brunswick and the North Sea, plus Bavaria, he was deemed a serious rival to Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, his cousin. The Book of Gospels' illustrations contain many hints of his ambitious plans and daring aspirations. Thus, the last section of the book boasts a miniature depicting the coronation of Henry and his wife Matilda: God's hands reach down from the skies and place crowns on the heads of the pair.

THE BOOK BOASTS A MINIATURE DEPICTING THE CORONATION OF HENRY AND HIS WIFE MATILDA

"In the Middle Ages," says Professor Eberhard Nellmann, a medievalist, "only emperors and kings were crowned by God. The coronation miniature proves Henry's pretensions to kingship, and it may be safely assumed that Herimann painted it on his master's explicit instruction."

On other pages, there are more hints to Henry's claim to the throne; the dedicatory poem, for example, alludes to him as a *nepos Karoli*, a relative of Charlemagne.

Scholarly analysis of the book has furnished some evidence of its time of origin: the coronation miniature portrays Thomas à Becket – murdered in 1170 at the command of King Henry II of England – as a saint. Because his sanctification took place in 1173, the Book of Gospels cannot have been completed before that date – and surely not later than 1175, for by then Henry the Lion's star had already passed its apex. In 1180, he fell under the imperial ban for having failed to support his emperor in an Italian campaign. Relieved of his Saxonian and Bavarian duchies, Henry fled into English exile two years later. He died in Brunswick in 1195.

The 800-year peregrinations of the world's most expensive book are still not fully known. Some experts presume it was brought to Prague in the 14th century by Emperor Charles IV. There, in 1594, it received a sumptuous new binding in the Bohemian Renaissance style: red silk and velvet, gold clasps and a holy relic covered by a precious rock crystal.

In 1858, the Austrian scholar August Wilhelm Ambros found the famous book in the Prague Cathedral archives, and devoted a treatise to the work. It was privately bought by the then Guelph king George V of Hanover, who paid more than 10,000 taler for it, an enormous sum at the time. When his kingdom fell to Prussia five

years later, he took the book with him into his exile in Austria.

The sensational sale in London shed some light on the book's further meanderings. Sources assume that in early 1945 the Guelph dukes removed the gospels to Marienburg Castle near Hildesheim to keep the book out of reach of the approaching Red Army. Soon after, Duke Ernst August, aided by English friends, had it taken to Switzerland. Around 1949, the gospels were probably offered to the British Museum in London, then to the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, both times without success. It seems that the book passed out of Guelph's possession and its subsequent owners sold it anonymously at Sotheby's.

The Book of Gospels has found its final resting place at the Wolfenbüttel Duke August Library. For exhibitions elsewhere, copies will be made. Historians will also use them for a further deciphering of the book's rich contents.

Says Lower Saxony's minister-president Ernst Albrecht: "We consider ourselves lucky in having been able to bring home from exile *Henry the Lion's Book of Gospels*, for in it German and European culture and history come alive in a most singular fashion." R

VALUABLE REPOSITORIES OF HUMAN HISTORY

The title of 'the most expensive book ever sold in the world' is no longer held by *Henry the Lion's Book of Gospels*. Today, that text is estimated to be worth US$30.73 million (inflation adjusted price), making it the world's third-most-expensive book. The 'most expensive book' title is now held by Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Leicester*. The 72-page linen manuscript includes Leonardo's

Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Leicester*

theories and observations of the world, such as the movement of water, fossils and the luminosity of the moon. Estimated to be worth $54.4 million (IAP), the codex was sold for $30.8 million in 1994 to Bill Gates. He released some of its images as screen savers and wallpapers for Windows 98 Plus. The world's second most expensive book is considered to be *The Book of Mormon (Printer's Manuscript)*, worth $37.35 million (IAP), currently owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

A STRING OF BLUE BEADS

The most precious gift to give or receive is love

BY *Fulton Oursler*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES COMPOSITE

Pete Richards was the loneliest man in town on the day Jean Grace opened his door. You may have seen something in the newspapers about the incident at the time it happened, although neither his name nor hers was published, nor was the full story told as I tell it here.

Pete's shop had come down to him from his grandfather. The little front window was strewn with a disarray of old-fashioned things: bracelets and lockets worn a century ago, gold rings and silver boxes, images of jade and ivory, porcelain figurines.

On this winter's afternoon a child was standing there, her forehead against the glass, earnest and enormous eyes studying each discarded treasure, as if she were looking for something quite special. Finally she straightened up with a satisfied air and entered the store.

The shadowy interior of Pete Richards' establishment was even more cluttered than his show window. Shelves were stacked with jewel caskets, duelling pistols, clocks and lamps, and the floor was heaped with andirons and mandolins and things hard to find a name for.

Behind the counter stood Pete himself, a man not more than 30, but with hair already turning grey. There was a bleak air about him as he looked at the small customer who flattened her ungloved hands on the counter.

"Mister," she began, "would you please let me look at that string of blue beads in the window?" Pete parted the draperies and lifted out a necklace. The turquoise stones gleamed brightly against the pallor of his palm as he spread the ornament before her.

"They're just perfect," said the child, entirely to herself. "Will you wrap them up pretty for me, please?"

Pete studied her with a stony air. "Are you buying these for someone?"

"They're for my big sister. She takes care of me. You see, this will be the first Christmas since mother died. I've been looking for the most wonderful present for my sister."

"How much money do you have?" asked Pete warily.

She had been busily untying the knots in a handkerchief and now she poured out a handful of pennies on the counter.

"I emptied my bank," she explained simply.

Pete Richards looked at her thoughtfully. Then he carefully drew back the necklace. The price tag was visible to him but not her. How could he tell her? The trusting look of her blue eyes smote him like the pain of an old wound.

"Just a minute," he said, and turned towards the back of the store. Over his shoulder he called, "What's your name?" He was very busy about something.

"Jean Grace."

When Pete turned to where Jean Grace waited, a package lay in his hand, wrapped in scarlet paper and tied with a bow of green ribbon. "There you are," he said shortly. "Don't lose it on the way home."

She smiled happily at him over her shoulder as she ran out of the door. Through the window he watched her go, while desolation flooded his thoughts.

Something about Jean Grace and her string of beads had stirred him to depths of a grief that would not stay buried. The child's hair was wheat yellow, her eyes sea blue, and once upon a time, not long before, Pete had been in love with a girl with hair of that same yellow and eyes just as blue. And the turquoise necklace was to have been hers.

But there had come a rainy night – a truck skidding on a slippery road – and the life was crushed out of his dream.

Since then Pete Richards had lived too much with his grief in solitude. He was politely attentive to customers, but after business hours his world seemed irrevocably empty. He was trying to forget in a self-pitying haze that deepened day by day.

The blue eyes of Jean Grace jolted him into acute remembrance of what he had lost. The pain of it made him recoil from the exuberance of holiday shoppers.

THE TURQUOISE STONES GLEAMED BRIGHTLY AGAINST THE PALLOR OF HIS PALM

During the next ten days trade was brisk; chattering women swarmed in, fingering trinkets, trying to bargain. When the last customer had gone, late on Christmas Eve, he sighed with relief. It was over for another year. But for Pete Richards the night was not quite over.

The door opened and a young woman hurried in. With an inexplicable start, he realised that she looked familiar, yet he could not remember when or where he had seen her before. Her hair was golden yellow and her large eyes were blue. Without speaking, she drew from her purse a package loosely unwrapped in its red paper, a bow of green ribbon with it. Presently the string of blue beads lay gleaming again before him.

"Did this come from your shop?" she asked.

Pete raised his eyes to hers and answered softly, "Yes, it did."

"Are the stones real?"

"Yes. But not the finest quality."

"Can you remember who it was you sold it to?"

"She was a small girl. Her name was Jean. She bought them for her older sister's Christmas present."

"How much are they worth?"

"The price," he told her solemnly, "is always a confidential matter between the seller and the customer."

"But Jean has never had more than a few pennies of spending money. How could she pay for them?"

Pete was folding the gay paper back into its creases, rewrapping the little package just as neatly as before.

"She paid the biggest price anyone can ever pay," he said. "She gave all she had."

There was a silence then that filled the little curio shop.

In some far-away steeple, a bell began to ring. The sound of the distant chiming, the little package lying on the counter, the question in the eyes of the girl and the strange feeling of renewal struggling unreasonably in the heart of the man, all had come to be because of the love of a child.

"But why did you do it?"

He held out the gift in his hand.

"It's already Christmas morning," he said. "And it's my misfortune that I have no one to give anything to. Will you let me see you home and wish you a Merry Christmas at your door?"

And so, to the sound of many bells and in the midst of happy people, Pete Richards and a girl whose name he had yet to learn walked out into the beginning of the great day that brings hope into the world for us all. R

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Son looking at kite with father: "What do you mean run with it? Doesn't it have any batteries?" STEWART, KING FEATURES

Little girl to parents bringing home new baby: "Sure I wanted a brother – but I didn't want him necessarily to live here." HOEST, IN PARADE

Teenager to mother: "Gee whiz, Mum, 'wanting to make the world a better place to live in' and 'cleaning up one's room' are two different things." LEO GAREL, KING FEATURES

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ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

HUMOUR ON THE JOB

AUGUST 1992

◆ Arriving at my first job as an office temp, I sat down at the computer terminal and turned it on. Fortunately it was menu-driven, making it easy for me to use the software. The menu gave me three choices:

1. Go to Microsoft Word
2. Go to DOS
3. Go to the Bahamas

Admitting the creative humour of the programmer. I smiled and, curious, chose the third option, the Bahamas. The computer screen responded: "Don't you wish!"

JEANNINE M. FERTIG

◆ As a real-estate agent, I often advise my clients how to make their houses more marketable. Two weeks after suggesting that one client do some repairs, I received a call from him.

"I fixed the leaking roof, replaced the gutters and painted inside and out," he told me.

"Good," I replied. "Are you ready to sell your house?"

"No, I'm sorry," he apologised. "Now I have no reason to move."

JACKIE FOSTER

◆ Members of our strategic-planning department pride themselves on their ability to be prepared. One morning the vice president called a colleague and me to his office and began describing an important project.

Opening my portfolio, I was embarrassed to discover just one piece of blank paper. As the executive continued, I scribbled the facts on both sides of the paper and then on the cardboard of my note pad. My colleague passed me a couple of sheets of paper, yet she did hardly any writing. Later, when I asked her why her notations had been so brief, she replied, "My pen ran out of ink."

CORRI HANSEN

◆ At a landscaping business, six workers were standing around chatting and laughing. A ute was reversing towards them in order to load some plants, when the company's owner's car approached. The employees immediately sprang into action. With serious expressions and purposeful gestures, all six of them directed the one little vehicle back the last three metres. ALAM KHAN

◆ When my firm purchased new telephones, a summer intern was instructed to key in the numbers for the automatic-dialling feature on each employee's phone.

I had him enter two numbers for my home, one that could be dialled through the company-owned phone line and the other for direct dial, in case the firm's line was busy.

Shortly after the intern finished, I had a visitor from corporate headquarters. When he needed a phone, I offered him mine.

"Your personal life is none of my business," the visitor commented after making his call. "But you should be more discreet." He pointed to the labels on the automatic-dialling buttons. They read: 'HOME-1' and 'HOME-2'.

CURTIS FAHSHOLZ

CARTOON: PHILIP SCHEUER

◆ My first day on the job at a major tea company, the fellow who was conducting my orientation asked me if I had any questions. "This seems like a great place to work," I said, "but there are always drawbacks. What are they here?"

"No coffee breaks," he replied.

FRANK J. DAVIS SR

◆ I managed an ice-cream stand that employed mostly teenagers. They were like a second family to me, so it was difficult to dismiss one spoiled youngster who didn't carry her share of work and was always telling others what to do. Her sister applied for the vacancy. On the application form, she answered the question "Why do you want to work here?" by writing: "My sister told me she was fired because she was bossy. I figured that since you and I think so much alike, I'd fit right in!"

DEBORAH K. SAXION

◆ As the deadline for a major project drew near at our publishing firm, both our fax machines were put to the test. Secretaries were sending and receiving messages and making last-minute corrections. One young assistant, holding a handful of new instructions to be distributed to various departments, asked the office manager, "Whatever did we do before fax machines?" A man of few words, the manager replied, "We did things on time."

C. RICHARD COTTON

CRAWLING IN THE PADDY FIELDS

Hard physical work taught me an unforgettable lesson: you reap what you sow

BY *Yu Yuh-Chao*

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

I have ploughed, planted, cut harvests, pickled tea leaves and chopped wood in the isolated but beautiful countryside of Kuanhsi in Taiwan. But of all the chores that are a farmer's lot here, crawling in a paddy field to rid it of weeds is, in my experience, the task that trains one best to develop a Spartan spirit.

Nowadays, of course, the farmer need only use chemicals to kill weeds. It was not so when I was a boy some three decades ago. From the age of eight or so, I had to contribute my share of labour along with my father and two elder brothers, Yuh-hsien and Yuh-tang. Our family was too poor to afford paid labourers. Kneeling in a paddy field with a hat, a shirt and a pair of shorts my only protection, I was up to my thighs in mud. It splashed all over me, wet, sticky and dirty. When mud splashed into my eyes and on to my lip, I'd stand up, find the kettle of fresh water and try to wash it away; but it was always a long struggle before I could get it completely out of my eyes and off my lips.

The first weeding of the year occurred just before spring, and the second in midsummer. Then the blistering sun beat upon my arched back, making me feel like hot bread stuck to the side of a pan. The evaporating water from the paddy field steamed up my nostrils and face. Between ten in the morning and four or five in the afternoon, when the air hardly stirred, perspiration ran in rivulets, making streaks on my mud-covered arms and legs. It felt as if little bugs were crawling all over me. If a drop of sweat ran into the eyes, it would trigger tears. To prevent the sweat from running into my eyes, I kept my face as low as possible.

I told myself, *Be patient! What good does it do to begrudge my lot? If my parents and brothers could go on taking it, so I could I.* A kind of pride took place of the hurt in me. So thinking, I slowly pulled myself together and I crawled on.

When I pulled out rotten plants, they had a raw stench. The mud was so slimy that it made my flesh creep. Standing up, ploughing or planting, you didn't feel it so much, but it hit you hard when you were working with your face close to the water.

My skin often developed rashes and my knees bled. The bamboo stakes and the bugs, worms and snakes in the water cut and stung. Moreover, the small leeches sucked blood and caused infection.

On the way home every day, I'd soak myself in the creek and then take a hot bath at home. I could not sit down and eat dinner until I was sure that every bit of dirt had been removed from my

pores, and no hint of smell remained. When I put on clean, coarse cotton clothes, fragrant from drying in the sun, it was pure ecstasy.

ONCE, DURING MY SUMMER holidays, Father was sick, but he worked in the field just the same, because there was so much to do. As I looked at his lean figure, crawling ahead of me, I thought of my own dim future. I was tied to the land by job after back breaking job, unlike other boys who had freedom to pursue happiness. Why were there people in the world who would never know what it was like to toil, and others, like me, who had been toiling ever since they were small boys, season after season, year after year? Why were some people sitting before electric fans or in air-conditioned rooms, while I was panting and sweating under the blazing sun? Why was there mud and more mud in front of me?

Only we farmers were willing to crawl, to assume the lowliest of positions in order to have a better harvest. Even a buffalo or a horse, when working for man, stands tall. I was suddenly consumed with great pity and great respect for the multitudes of poor farmers, and the focus of my attention began to extend beyond myself and my family. This was an important turning-point in my life.

While resting beside a field one day, my brothers and I resolved to pursue useful knowledge and technology to help ourselves and other farmers improve our circumstances, and lighten our burden of labour. This resolve gave me strength so that when I went to university, and later to the US on a scholarship, my spirit rose above personal hardships. Crawling in the mud had taught me to take bleeding and sweating as part of my life, and not to be afraid in the face of difficulties and setbacks. But what was more important was that I had learned the meaning of "You reap what you sow".

Mother used to say, "Judge a man not by his face, but by his fields." I appreciate more and more the meaning of these words. The land is dependable, as long as you are willing to toil on it. When the wind blew and the green rice plants swayed like waves in a sea, dazzlingly beautiful, a deep sense of satisfaction swelled up in me.

I laboured hard in the simple, isolated countryside of my home, and I am proud of this. Although later I went into academic research, I shall always remember what working in the paddy fields taught me: plant your feet firmly on the ground, work hard and you will be rewarded.

The author's brothers also found work away from the paddy fields. Yuh-hsien became an agricultural and forestry official. Yuh-tang became a deputy police superintendent.

OCTOBER 1999

Bonus Read

MY PENNILESS JOURNEY

In 1998 I decided to walk 500 miles across England and into Scotland with no money. Would I be shown enough hospitality to keep going?

BY *Peter Mortimer*

FROM THE BOOK **BROKE THROUGH BRITAIN**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Olivier Kugler*


SAM

A powerful voice inside me whispered that I was being idiotic, that a man of 54 should have more sense. If I wanted to try walking 500 miles [800 kilometres] from Plymouth to Edinburgh without the security of a wallet, I should have done it years ago.

I told the voice to shut up. The idea took root. As far as I knew, no one had done this before. A friend offered me Sam, her seven-year-old King Charles spaniel. "He'll walk forever," she said, "and people will like you." Sam looked cuddly. Also, he would give me solace in hours of loneliness and I could snuggle up to him in the cold. I welcomed Sam as my companion.

For practical tips on wandering destitute I visited a Buddhist monastery 20 miles from Cullercoats, my home town at the mouth of the River Tyne in northeast England. The monks advised me to carry an umbrella and wrap moleskin round my feet. "You will find the walk very hard," one monk warned, "but eventually you will gain strength. It will be part of your journey through life, so you must do it."

Day one: At 9.35am on Sunday, July 26, 1998, I set off from Plymouth on my odyssey. A small knot of fear gripped my stomach. I was entering an unknown world. For nine miles Sam and I were buffeted by thundering traffic on the A386 out of Plymouth, then we sought refuge in the spacious grounds of the Moorland Links Hotel. Without thinking, I led Sam in.

"Can I help you, sir?" asked the receptionist. I looked around. Sunday diners reclined in comfort, the smell of roast beef was in the air. I wanted to order a pint, but realised that, from now on, this was one of many places I could look at but not touch. I was a person apart, trapped in an invisible bubble of poverty.

"I'd, um, like some water for my dog," I said. The receptionist put a bowl on the thick pile carpet and Sam drank eagerly. For our Sunday lunch, Sam and I shared two small triangles of toast, plus some butter, saved from

my hotel breakfast in Plymouth. The shadow of total destitution deepened as I tried to hitch a lift from a middle-aged couple driving away from the hotel. They looked at me with disdain and accelerated away. Their rejection knocked me back. Then came my first – albeit mixed – experience of Christian charity.

"Is that all you want, water for your dog?" asked the rector of the nearby village of Yelverton when I interrupted him mowing his lawn.

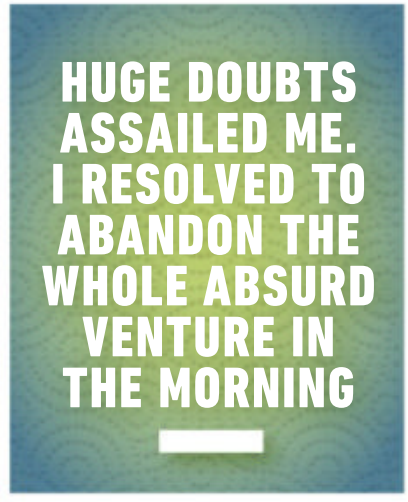
"Anything else, naturally, would not go amiss," I mumbled.

The rector walked towards his front door. I followed. Suddenly he swivelled and said loudly, "Do not enter the rectory!" He motioned me to a garden seat. Some minutes later he emerged with water for Sam, and tea and chocolate biscuits for me.

I thanked him and apologised. "I wouldn't have come inside."

"If you knew what had happened here," he said, and returned indoors.

We arrived in Tavistock at 7.30pm to find the town empty. Steady rain thrummed on to my small umbrella. All doors seemed excessively closed. Sam looked up at me with his big brown eyes as if to say, "What do we do now?"



From the large parish church of St Eustachius I heard singing. We stood at the back of the nave, wet and bedraggled, while the packed congregation sang of Christian charity, mercy and compassion. The service over, they filed past me. I approached several and explained I needed food and shelter. They were embarrassed but had perfectly reasonable excuses for rejecting me.

I felt I was an irritation. I was no longer Peter Mortimer, writer. I was a beggar, a person you crossed the road to avoid. Then Geoffrey Boucher, a young curate, said I could sleep in his garage. As he drove me to his home I told him about my journey.

"Actually," he said, "you can have the spare room." I mentioned the Yelverton rector. "Ah, yes. Last year someone came, just like you. The rector invited him in and was badly beaten. He's nervous."

While Geoffrey cooked me pork chops and vegetables, I consoled weary Sam and unpacked the few contents of my backpack: a spare set of clothes, wash bag, sleeping bag and camera. My body felt drained. I went to bed, lay in the dark and huge doubts assailed me. I resolved

that in the morning I'd abandon the whole absurd venture.

Day two: At 7.30am I awoke in better spirits. A new day, a new perspective. Sam, too, was livelier. "Maybe we'll not give up," I told him. "Not just yet." My knot of fear was still there, though.

Geoffrey gave me valuable help for the night to come. "I've phoned Alex Warne, owner of the East Dart Hotel at Postbridge on Dartmoor," he said. "It's on your route and you can sleep in his stable." Geoffrey drove me to the edge of Dartmoor. As we parted he held out a £10 note. "I know you intend to carry no money. I respect that. This is for extreme emergencies."

I took the note, realising the importance of the gesture. We shook hands and embraced.

KINDNESS AND CHAOS

"How are you with a paintbrush?" asked Alex Warne when I offered to sing for my supper. For three hours I creosoted the outside of his stables. Alex, grey-bearded and slightly grizzled, then offered me a bath and my first hot food of the day, chicken casserole. Sleeping in stables sounds romantic, conjuring up images of soft hay, but Alex's stables had bare concrete floors. I moved this way and that in my sleeping bag in a futile attempt to find lasting comfort.

Day three: Terrible weather on Dartmoor – a soaking-wet curtain of mist and rain. Every car hurtling past me threw up curved sprays of water. I had no idea where we might spend the night, where we might get a meal. I found it in a bungalow at Dunsford, outside Exeter.

"You'd best take the caravan. Just up the lane," said Cliff Brimblecombe, a 67-year-old cider maker with a strong Devon accent. His wife Evelyn appeared in the doorway behind him. "I'll make you a meal," she said. A few moments later I was up the muddy lane, into the caravan and tucking into hot meat pie and potatoes while Sam crunched on dog food.

Day four: I took care to shave every morning. Stubble may be attractive on a 21-year-old, but at my age it gave the appearance of an old wino. Even so, I got wary looks if I tried to strike up conversations. That day my plan was to head for the village of Clyst Hydon, where my partner Kitty had lived as a student. Thirty years on,

I found Tom Coleman and his wife Jean still living at Town Tenement Farm and they offered me a cup of tea and a bed for the night. I was keeping a watch on a runny eye Sam had and cleaning it regularly. It seemed to give him no bother.

Next day it was back to the game of chance, standing beside the A303, checking my map and deciding where to try next. I decided to avoid main roads and large towns where possible. Meandering lanes would lengthen my journey, but I hated the blur of traffic, and if you have no money, towns are depressing.

Staple Fitzpaine? A village with a name like that had to have something going for it. I entered the Greyhound pub with all the confidence a penniless man could muster, explained my journey to the young male bar staff but they knew of no farm which might offer shelter.

I turned to trudge away with Sam. "You can stay with us for the night." A young couple, Teresa Hurley and David Takle, had been eavesdropping. Peeping round the table was their twinkly three-year-old Levanna. I laughed out loud in sheer relief.

We drove the few miles to Ilminster in Dave's battered car. Dave, 39, worked when and where he could in the building trade. "Often we can't pay the rent," said Teresa, "but we're madly in love." The flat was untidy, chaotic. I felt at home. We ate pizzas, drank beer and played Scrabble. Levanna refused to go to bed unless Sam went with her. I slept on the settee.

Next morning, as I gloomily packed to go out on the road again, Teresa said: "We both think you should take a break. Rest up here for today." I thought about it. Why not? I had travelled 80 miles. I needed a day off. Teresa and Dave were true friends.

I had no money to offer these generous people who had so little themselves, nor could I help pay for the petrol next day when they gave me a lift to make up for the distance I'd lost. I sat in the back next to Sam and Levanna, whose blue eyes stared at me.

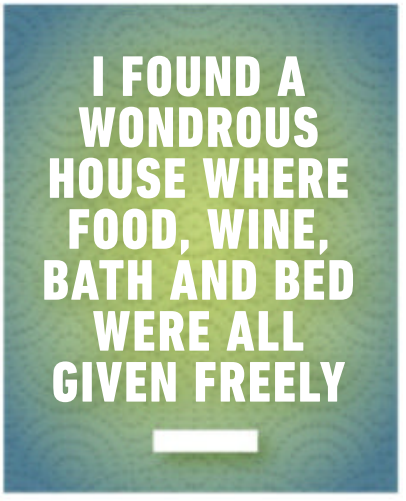
After about 40 miles the car stopped. I stood at the roadside and watched the car go, Levanna's little face pressed against the back window, a small, white hand waving. I felt sorry for myself but knew the antidote. Get going.

The problem was my feet, which were blistered and painful. In Shaw

village, Wiltshire, I came to a large stone building, the Shaw Clinic of complementary medicine. My knock was answered by the clinic's owner Sheila Carter, a striking dark-haired woman wearing a white coat. She looked at me cautiously. I was walking to Edinburgh?

Soon the delicate hands of Sheila, a fully trained chiropodist, were examining my feet. "I have no money," I warned, but she took no notice.

"The feet are severely bruised," she said. "I'll try to take the pressure off the worst areas." Skilfully she bandaged two cushions like ring doughnuts to the balls of my feet. It was a work of art.



At 7pm, Sam and I were heading along the B4014, looking for a night's shelter, when Avening appeared in front of us, clinging to a hillside. "No dogs!" yelled a middle-aged woman as we entered the village post office. I tethered Sam outside. Inside, the woman stood in my way. "How can you stay anywhere with no money?" I began to explain but she moved to the back of the shop. It was spitting with rain. I walked to a local pub, where the barmaid was friendly and her suggestion unexpected: "Try the College of Colour Therapy."

THE TURQUOISE BATH

"Of course you can stay," said Carmel Gimbel, a slim, tall, elegant Irishwoman who ran the Hygeia College of Colour Therapy with her husband Theophilus. The large rambling building dated from the 14th century. Carmel, resplendent in rainbow colours, led Sam and me down a corridor to The Blue Room, lit by a single blue light. "When you're ready, come and have a drink with us in the music room," Carmel said.

I reclined on a big settee with a glass of chilled white wine and Carmel asked to look at my feet. She massaged them tenderly. "Your voice is very tight. What's that fear inside you?" she asked. I told her. The fear of my journey, of not being up to it, physically or mentally. She continued the massage and I coughed. "That's the fear being released," said Carmel.

Next, food appeared: a sizzling barbecue of chicken legs, sausages, burgers, chops. I tore at them like a wolf.

Theophilus, 78, was a Bavarian who came to Britain in 1949. Years of imprisonment during the Second World War, some of it in dark, solitary confinement, inspired him to teach colour's potential.

"A colour bath would help," Carmel

said. "Given your mental state, turquoise would be best." Into my bath water went two drops of natural blue dye, then two drops of green. It instantly transformed into a shimmering turquoise. I lowered myself in, propping my bandaged feet above the taps and the turquoise embraced me. I closed my eyes. I had found a wondrous house where food, wine, bath and bed were all given freely, as if charity were the most natural thing in the world.

Day eight: "Try the Cotswold Hunt Kennels," said a woman in Andoversford, outside Cheltenham. Thus I entered the world of foxhunting. The kennels had 100 hounds. "You can have a mattress in the back room," said Julie Barnfield. "The spare room's being decorated."

I mentioned to her husband Julian that I was anti-foxhunting and he shrugged, as if on such a brief contact he wasn't interested in a fierce debate. But isn't foxhunting cruel and unnecessary? "There's a lot of ignorance," he replied. "The fox is dead within seconds of being caught. In theory the best method of killing a fox is at night, with rifle and spotlight, but you're never sure the fox is dead. The fox is a pest, and sheep farmers around here would agree."

Helpfully, he recommended Clifton upon Teme Hunt Kennels at Tedstone Delamere near Worcester for my next night's shelter. Nobody seemed surprised to see me at Clifton. The owner was on holiday, and Peter Harper, James Cook and Johnnie James were holding the fort. They told me I was welcome to sleep on the settee in the bungalow's living room.

That night my feet were burning like furnaces. In the morning I found a nearby chiropodist willing to see me – "I have no money," I told her – but her earliest appointment was the next afternoon. "Stay here as long as you like," said Peter in his Welsh lilt.

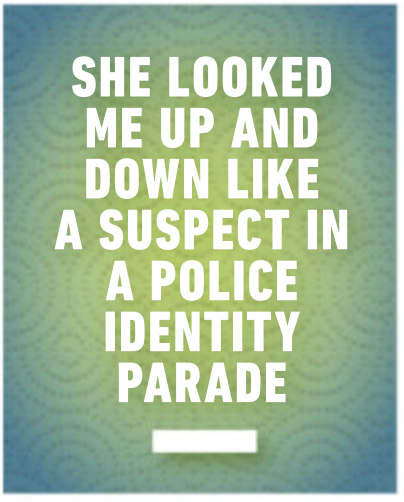
For two days I experienced the hospitality of a world that fascinated and horrified me. The kennels, kept spotless by Peter and shy 17-year-old James, held 120 hounds. When I stood by their enclosures they pushed noses and paws through the steel, big softies desperate for affection. Then I saw them at feeding time. They feasted on dead cows and

sheep. Ferociously, they tore off long strips of flesh, pushing and snarling at one another, raising bloodied snouts from the carnage. I imagined them at a fox.

I set off next morning feeling bouncy. The chiropodist had carefully shaved layers of dead skin from my feet. "One reason they hurt so much," she explained, "is the liquid trapped under the skin."

Day 13: Miles travelled so far: 230. I had evolved a new method of walking. Sam and I would walk for 90 minutes, then rest for about 30, when I would remove my boots and socks, and have a nap. We had moved into Staffordshire and we were on a bendy dangerous road. I needed a lift. At a lay-by, I approached a middle-aged couple munching sandwiches in a four-wheel-drive. "We're full up," said the man. "Got the dog in the back." On the vast rear seat was a tiny terrier.

A truck driver was no more charitable. "I've only just stopped," he said. "Be here a long time yet." Two minutes later, he hurtled past me without a second look. Was it my appearance? Was it Sam? From now on I decided I'd either arrange a lift at my night stop or do without.



I was north of Stafford by late afternoon when I tried a large detached house. A man stripped to the waist smiled as he opened the door, smiled as I stated my case, and smiled when he said no can do. "Why not try the Scout camp?"

The Kibblestone camp site, 80 acres of secluded woodland, was half a mile up the road. I threw myself on the mercy of the warden Paul Westwood, a youngish man with a ponytail. "Officially we're not allowed guests," he said, "but you've got an honest face and you've come a long way." Sam and I were given a fairly spartan but comfortable eight-bunk room.

Now hunger pangs had begun to gnaw. I drifted among the various Scout groups encamped through the forest. The leader of a Devon group was ladling out hot portions. Could I have some? She looked me up and down like a suspect in a police identity parade. "Food supplies are on a strict budget," she said. "So much a head and none to spare."

Another group leader said: "We have come here for a special holiday. The last thing we want is strange men approaching us begging."

I saw myself in a new light – a suspicious character wandering among

young boys. I'd be lucky not to get arrested. Then I saw a tent pitched on its own, with a man, a woman and two boys. I sensed they didn't belong to a group. I came straight out with it. "I'm pretty hungry. I wonder if you could share a bit of your food with me?"

"Sure!" Dean Coffield, a former Scoutmaster from Dudley, was with his wife Sharon, their 12-year-old son Jon and Jon's mate James Sutton. "There's not that much, but you're welcome to it." They had beans, sausages and garlic bread. We sat around their fire.

As I rose to leave, Sharon put a plastic bag in my hand. "For breakfast," she said. An hour earlier I had faced a hungry night followed by a hungry morning. Now look at the kindness I'd received.

This night virtually marked our halfway stage. Ahead lay Derbyshire and the Peak District.

"HE NEEDS REST"

I liked to think my doorstep manner was improving. Freda Chadwick, a lively woman in Cauldon, near the Peak District border, was amazed when I leant on the lower half of her stable-type kitchen door, told her about my journey and asked for water. "Are you totally mad?" she asked, and shouted for her husband John, who appeared looking slightly uncomfortable. He had a prominent pot-belly. "He's travelling from Plymouth to Edinburgh with no money!" exclaimed Freda. John shot me a look.

Freda gave me a cup of tea, fruit, biscuits and dog biscuits for Sam.

Day 18: In high spirits I strode out across the open, flat landscape of the Vale of York, at one point plunging waist deep through a field of corn. Sam became a rustle of white and orange somewhere near my feet. The Buddhist monk at the monastery I visited before setting out was right about me eventually gaining strength. I was fit, lean, fast. We achieved an 11-hour, 24-mile day.

At Whixley one woman, in answer to my request for food and shelter, told me slightly sniffily, "I don't think people do that kind of thing around here." Someone else suggested the pub, which was shut, and a third householder didn't answer my knock, so I had to fend for myself.

The door to the pavilion of Whixley's cricket club was slightly ajar. By 8pm, Sam and I were on the floor in my sleeping bag. I was worried about Sam. The temperature on the road to Pontefract had been in the high 20s. He panted like a steam engine, lagged behind and I'd had to carry him for a while. I pulled him closer to me, whispering affections in his little pink ear.

The next day I dropped in to see two old friends, Tim and Jude Tribe, at Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire. Jude looked closely at Sam's runny eye. "It needs seeing to," she said.

"There's a vet next door." Enter Christine McCormack. Her verdict was damning. Sam had developed a deep ulcer in his eye. "I can give him ointment for now," said Christine, "but he needs more treatment and a lot of rest." Sam's odyssey was finished.

Guilt consumed me. King Charles spaniels were not the world's greatest canine explorers yet Sam's wee legs had carried him 370 miles. I'd turned him into an exhausted wreck. I arranged for his owner, Sarah Davidson, to pick him up, then stood staring at Sam on the settee. It was the end of an important relationship. I'd known this journey only with Sam.

"Just go," said Jude. "That's the best way." I went.

Day 20: Approaching the village of Gilling West, north of Catterick, I came to a large stone house, heard voices and peeped over the garden wall to find a group of people looking uncommonly festive for 4.30 in the afternoon. I'd happened on a double celebration. Brian Sperring was 56 that day; his partner Dorothy Halford would be 50 the next.

Would they kindly fill my water bottle? "Of course. And have a cup of tea!" Did they know anyone near by who could put me up? "Ask the farmer Hughie Bird."

Energetic Hughie, 60 years of age, welcomed me into the kitchen of Mill Farm like some long-lost relative, shoving a mug of tea and a piece of pork pie at me. Could he give me shelter? "Take the caravan in the field."

After daybreak I thought of making my usual early start but Hughie was keen to show me his farm, his life. "Stay this morning," he said. "I'll make up your lost miles."

First I admired his 90 milking cows. Next, he led me into a windowless shed, 125 feet long and 40 feet wide, for an extraordinary sight. The floor was covered with 9000 two-week-old chicks. The dull light and humid atmosphere contrasted with the constant chirruping of the chicks. Hughie took great pride in keeping the shed clean and habitable.

This room was the chicks' entire life. They would live here from day one to six weeks, then be taken away for slaughter. They would never even know of the sun's existence. I

wondered how I would feel, buying my next supermarket chicken, yet this was a normal part of Hughie's world and if I worked in it, it would probably become normal for me.

Hughie's lavish hospitality at mealtime was a revelation. We sat around the big kitchen table and his wife Joyce cooked a monstrous pile of bacon. Every time we attacked the pile more rashers appeared. There was fresh bread, scones, butter. We ate, chattered, laughed. Then, as promised, he gave me a lift.

My buoyant spirits sank at Frosterley, in the Wear Valley. At farm number one I had to walk through a yard with chained dogs only to be told it was no go. Farm number two: dogs, no go. I knocked at a third door, a cottage. A shrill female voice shouted: "Who is it? What do you want?" I shouted my apologies and left.

HUGHIE WELCOMED ME INTO THE KITCHEN OF HIS FARM LIKE SOME LONG-LOST RELATIVE

A DESTITUTE ITINERANT

A key to gaining invitations into British homes, I was coming to realise, was the presence of a caravan, as with Hughie Bird and with Cliff Brimblecombe, the Devon cidermaker. It gave a wanderer shelter but reduced the donor's sense of territorial invasion. Now where could I find a caravan in Frosterley? I was virtually through the village when I spotted Bridge End Cottage. Next to it was a caravan. I rang the front doorbell.

"You'd better come in." Joyce Crosier seemed amused by my plight. She and her sister-in-law Joanne were waiting for their husbands to return with an Indian takeaway. Meanwhile, would I like a glass of wine?

When Ron and Barrie arrived back to find a destitute itinerant on the settee they opted for charity rather than indignation. I had chicken korma that night – and the caravan.

Next day I spotted another caravan, this time behind a cottage near Slaley in Northumberland. My knock was answered by Ernie Auriemma, a big man with a thick dark moustache and a Mediterranean appearance. Could I sleep in the caravan? "Sure." As simple as that. "Go and sort your stuff out, then come back to the house."

At the kitchen table, Ernie's wife Vivien gave me food, while Ernie, an estate worker looking after 450 sheep, told me his story. He was here because his Neapolitan father, a POW at neighbouring Haydon Bridge, had fallen in love with the enemy after the Second World War,

brought over his Italian sweetheart and they married.

Day 24: Gorse moorland high in the Pennines, forest tracks and shale paths made for hard, unstable walking. After 20 miles the cold began to seep through my clothes. My tired limbs cried "Stop!" but my soul wanted to sleep that night in Scotland.

At 6pm I reached the border at Carter Bar, little more than two lay-bys and a mobile snack bar. I marched up to the young man at the snack-bar counter. "If I were to tell you I had travelled penniless all the way from Plymouth to get here, would that be worth a cup of tea?" I asked.

"Aye, it would." His sing-song Scottish accent, plus the hot tea he put into my shivering hands, lifted my mood.

Fellside Boarding Kennels, the very first buildings I came to, gave me shelter. "You can have the caravan," said Bernard Whiteley.

Early next morning I stood in the kitchen of the house, eating a slice of bread and feeling alone. Was I taking my welcome for granted? Was I becoming a parasite, crawling my way through the nation's generosity?

When Bernard walked by exercising a brace of dogs, I ran out and offered to help. Bernard's face lit up – he had a surprise for me. Although the kennels specialised in looking after holiday dogs, the Whiteleys kept a special pack of their own.

"Ever walked huskies?" Bernard asked. No. He gave me the leads of Sholk and Patchy and I whizzed down the lane behind turbo-charged, twin-booster rockets. All I could do was hang on and hope.

I KNOCKED AT A THIRD DOOR. A SHRILL FEMALE VOICE SHOUTED: "WHO IS IT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

Only two more nights now, the first on Walter Inglis's farm at Lilliesleaf, near Selkirk, some 50 miles from Edinburgh. My final night was in the hamlet of Heriot.

"There's a room in the annexe waiting to be decorated," said Gillian Torrie, landlady of the Dug Inn. "Nothing in it, but you're welcome."

Friday, August 21: Twenty-seven days and 530 miles after leaving Plymouth I came to the vast plain out of which Edinburgh rises.

By now I was a walking machine. My speed had increased to three and a half miles an hour. I felt uplifted. The knot of fear in my stomach had completely gone.

The lonely country roads were behind me. Then I landed on another planet: traffic jams, men in suits with mobile phones, restaurants, department stores, office blocks.

HOME AGAIN

Back in Cullercoats with my partner Kitty and 14-year-old son Dylan, I returned the £10 note given to me by Geoffrey Boucher. I also wrote and thanked everyone else who took a chance on me.

I was asked: "Did you find any regional differences in degrees of friendliness?" Not at all. I was shunned and made welcome in all parts. Many people distrusted me, but only once (at Whixley) was no help forthcoming. I found that those who offered shelter and food had more open faces.

As a townie, I discovered the startlingly simple truth that everything we humans manufacture, we eventually tire of. What's created by nature, on the other hand, never wearies us.

A friend of mine joked: "I'm broke all the time!"

"No, you're not," I replied.

Total penury, like I experienced, brought a dreadful sense of alienation and exclusion. It made me understand how lucky most of us are. We take for granted a standard of living much of the world has never known. Despite poverty, most of us need not wonder where we will sleep tonight; hunger is a temporary state, relieved by a chocolate bar until the next meal.

And yet, despite our good fortune, many of us are restless and unfulfilled, and feel there should be more to life. One answer I believe is travel.

There's a Hindu tradition of going on pilgrimage after the age of 50. Most of us are still physically active and have enough experience to fortify us against new challenges. Yet many are rushing into early retirement. What's ahead is more important than what's behind, on a 500-mile trek or on your last day on earth.

Comparatively few people really travel. They make surrogate expeditions on TV documentaries and are shuttled off on package tours. Where is the sense of wonder, the excitement?

Real travel is less high-tech, more unpredictable, and better. R

Update: Twenty-three years after his walk through Britain, Peter Mortimer still marvels at the challenges he faced. "The mental and the physical battles were close competitors," he says. "I could never bear to think how far lay ahead or I would have succumbed."

These days, he wouldn't consider such an ambitious walk. "I was in my mid-50s then. The knees would forbid it now."

Peter's latest book, Planet Corona*, is a collection of his recent newspaper columns.*

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RD RECOMMENDS

King Richard Biopic

Richard Williams (Will Smith) is father of tennis greats Serena (Demi Singleton) and Venus (Saniyya Sidney). The movie follows his dream and unwavering plan for his daughters to play tennis on the world stage (or court) — and leave the gang violence of the LA suburb the family of seven live in behind. Richard believes fiercely in his daughters' talents and uses unconventional methods to get them there. This movie will make you laugh and cry (happy tears) in equal measure. A feel-good film.

COMPILED BY DIANE GODLEY

The Matrix Resurrections

Sci-fi/Action

***The Matrix* returns – 20 years after the first film was released – with the fourth instalment in the movie franchise. Neo (Keanu Reeves) and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) venture back into the Matrix and even deeper down the rabbit hole in this mind-bending adventure. Set in a provocative new world where reality is subjective, *Resurrections* comes up trumps with the kind of visual effects that helped define it in pop culture at the turn of the century.**

The Addams Family 2 Animation

Morticia and Gomez and the freaky family are back in an animated comedy sequel. Like all kids, the Addams children are growing up, and Mrs and Mr Addams are distraught that their kids are skipping family dinners and totally consumed with 'scream' time. To reclaim the family bond, Gomez decides to cram Uncle Fester, Wednesday, Pugsley and the rest of the crew into the haunted caravan and set off across the US for a family holiday. Totally out of their element, what could possibly go wrong?

Non Fiction

A Brief Welcome To The Universe

Neil deGrasse Tyson, Michael A. Strauss, J. Richard Gott

NEWSOUTH PUBLISHING

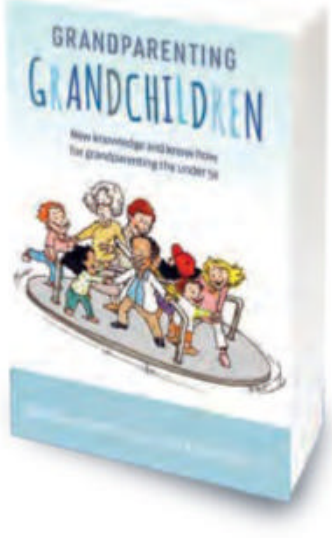
Have you ever wondered how stars live and die or whether there is intelligent life out there? Would you like to go on a tour of the cosmos, visiting planets, stars, galaxies and black holes, but only have an appetiser appetite to learn about our solar system? Then this book may get you started. This pocket-sized tome is a mini-version of the astrophysicists' larger collaboration, *Welcome To The Universe*, and is intended to whet your appetite for more.

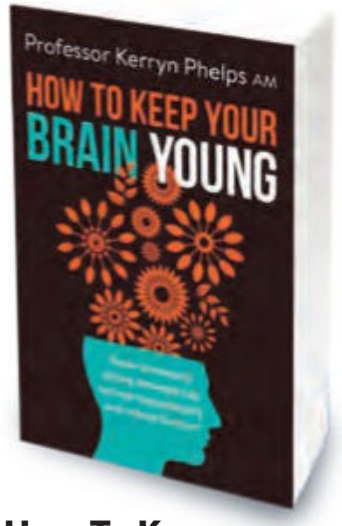
Grandparenting Grandchildren

Dr Jane Williams and Dr Tessa Grigg

EXISLE PUBLISHING

Now that the world is starting to look more like normal, you may be getting to see more of the grandchildren. You may even be helping raise them while their parents work. If you're in a bind, then *Grandparenting Grandchildren* may just see you through. This book provides the tools you need to build your grandchildren's imaginations and strengthen the relationship. It talks about key influences on healthy development in the under-fives and reaffirms what you instinctively know.





How To Keep Your Brain Young

Dr Kerryn Phelps AM

MACMILLAN

Renowned medical practioner Dr Kerryn Phelps addresses our collective concern in her stand-out new book: losing our mental faculties as we age. According to Dr Phelps, while ageing physically is inevitable, ageing mentally is not. In this reader-friendly book, Dr Phelps explains the basics of how the brain works, how it is capable of continually rewiring and relearning, and applies this knowledge to sustainable lifestyle habits so we can stay mentally sharp and age gracefully.

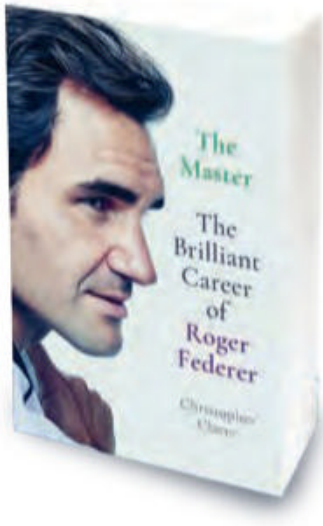
PHOTOS: COURTESY NEWSOUTH; EXISLE; MACMILLAN

The Master: The Brilliant Career Of Roger Federer

Christopher Clarey

HACHETTE

Considered perhaps the greatest male tennis player of our time, Swiss legend Roger Federer's enduring excellence and calm-under-fire demeanour have seen him become a sentimental favourite in the hearts of many. This book provides an intimate glimpse into Roger's life and career by Christopher Clarey, who has interviewed him more than any other journalist. It delves into the people, places and experiences that have been pivotal in carving the career of this sporting great and father of four. *Z.Meunier*



Fiction

Get Well

Michael Leunig

PENGUIN RANDOMHOUSE

"Simple rhymes, homemade aphorisms, sentimental yearnings, daggy jokes, funny faces and mysteries of the heart" is how cartoonist Michael Leunig describes his latest collection of work in *Get Well*, a compilation of cartoons from the past four years – when the world was, well, not very well. Like all Leunig scribblings and etchings, *Get Well* is deceptively wise, heartbreakingly beautiful and downright funny. A tonic many of us could do with during these strange times and the holiday season.

Build Your House Around My Body

Violet Kupersmith

ONEWORLD

Ingenious, imaginative and a little bit creepy, this is Violet Kupersmith's brilliant debut full-length novel. Drawing on her experiences of working as an English teacher in Vietnam, Kupersmith cleverly combines Vietnamese history and folklore to create a uniquely original story. The disappearance of two women, although a quarter of a century apart, are intrinsically linked. Bound together by ghosts, ancestors as well as possessed bodies and lands, Kupersmith has created a feverish fantasy that's hard to put down.

PHOTOS: COURTESY HACHETTE; PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE; ONEWORLD

Podcasts

The Last Days Of Vincent Van Gogh

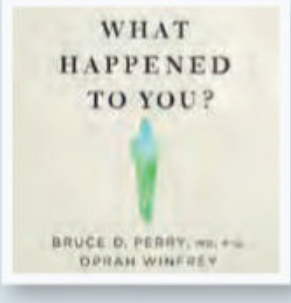
The bright, sunny colours of Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh's canvases belie his tragic ending. But his last years and final days would also see him create much of the dramatic and intense art that made him a legend.

Shandee's Story

Award-winning journalist Hedley Thomas – who created *The Teacher's Pet* and *The Night Driver* – investigates the unsolved murder of 23-year-old Shandee Blackburn, who was attacked as she walked home after work in the Queensland sugar and mining town of Mackay in 2013.

Unsung Science

TV presenter David Pogue, a six-time Emmy winner, takes you behind the scenes into the worlds of the people who have created mind-blowing achievements in science, technology, transport, food and health – who reveal their first inspirations, journeys and the times they almost gave up.



What Happened To You?

Oprah Winfrey and renowned brain expert Dr Bruce Perry discuss the impact of our childhoods and how healing should begin with the way we phrase our questions. Rather than asking "What's wrong with you?", try "What happened to you?" Search for 'What Happened To You?' on YouTube.

Audio Book

HOW TO GET PODCASTS **To listen on the web:** In a search engine, look up 'Shandee's Story', for example, and click on the play button. **To download:** Download an app such as Podcatchers or iTunes on your phone or tablet and simply search by title.

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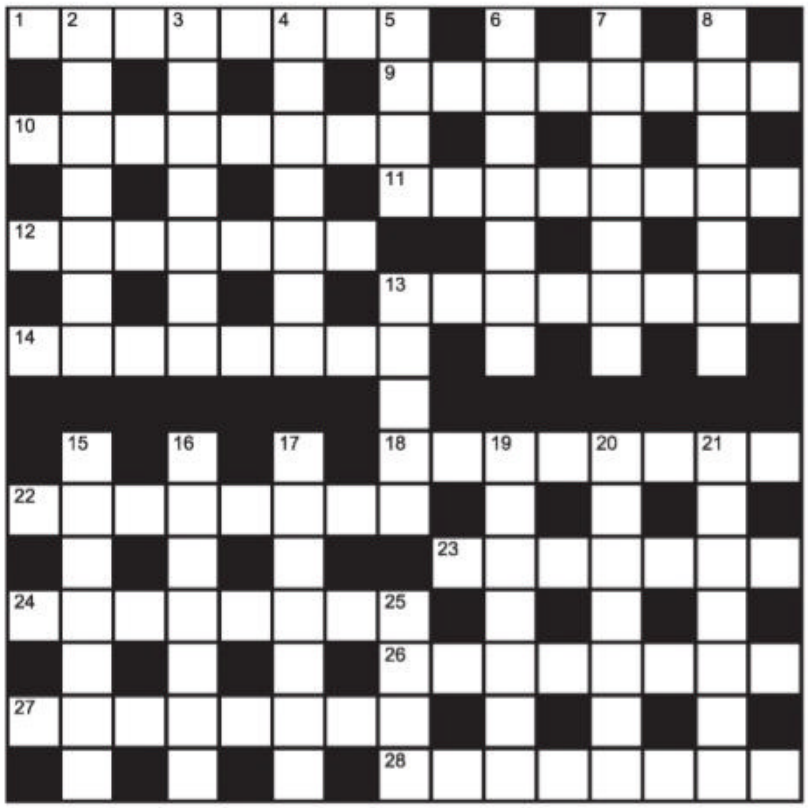
PHOTOS: FROM TOP, GETTY IMAGES; WWW.YOUTUBE.COM; UNSUNG SCIENCE.COM; AUDIBLE.COM

PUZZLES

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on pages 142.



Crosswise

Test your general knowledge.

ACROSS

1 Fabric (8)
9 Longing (8)
10 Merchant (8)
11 Imagine (8)
12 Candidate (7)
13 Precarious (8)
14 Goes backwards (8)
18 Exceptionally tense (8)
22 Portuguese jellyfish (3-2-3)
23 Austere (7)
24 Hallway (8)
26 The world of schools and universities (8)
27 Its capital is Little Rock (8)
28 Locate exactly (8)

DOWN

2 Breathtaking (7)
3 Vague (7)
4 Ailment (7)
5 Small harp-like musical instrument (4)
6 The gathering of crops (7)
7 Uncommon (7)
8 Cuddle (7)
13 Doorkeeper (5)
15 Stonework (7)
16 Portal (7)
17 Like Abba (7)
19 Make clear (7)
20 Underwater missile (7)
21 Inhabitant of, eg, Tehran (7)
25 Coarse file (4)

CROSSWORD: CROSSWORDSITE.COM

Puzzle Answers

PAGES 142

	6				7		4	
5		2			3	7		6
	3			6		9		
			1		8			
2	9						7	4
			2		4			
		7		8			9	
8		6	5			2		7
	2		7				6	

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: To win, you have to put a number from 1 to 9 in each outlined section so that:

- Every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- Each of the outlined sections has all nine numerals, none repeated.

IF YOU SOLVE IT WITHIN:

15 minutes, you're a true expert

30 minutes, you're no slouch

60 minutes or more, maybe numbers aren't your thing

FAMILY FUN

Puzzle Answers
PAGES 142

Spot The Difference

There are ten differences. Can you find them?

Book Exchange

Your book club is doing an exchange with each person getting a book someone else has bought and read. There are six members, including you. Each person will pick a name out of a hat, and you're hoping to get Kathie, your best friend in the club. It's your turn to pick, and you've overheard that someone who picked before you drew the name of your other friend, Paula.

What are your chances of picking Kathie's name?

Fill In The Blanks

How many common English words can you make by adding a letter to each of the blanks below? We found four. Proper nouns don't count.

M__R__Y

ILLUSTRATION: (FOREST) GETTY IMAGES

TRIVIA

Test Your General Knowledge

1. Actors Dolph Lundgren, Ken Jeong, Mayim Bialik and Rowan Atkinson share what educational background? ***2 points***

2. What bird is the national symbol of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador, yet is vulnerable to extinction? ***2 points***

3. Aiming to make fashion more inclusive, Aille Design uses Swarovski crystal pearls to create what design element for T-shirts and masks? ***2 points***

4. Approximately how many islands does the Philippines comprise? a) less than 1000; b) more than 10,000; c) around 7500? ***1 point***

5. What country has the most vending machines per capita? ***1 point***

6. Which were invented first: skis or wheels? ***1 point***

7. Lonar Lake in India, Kenya's Lake Nakuru and Lake Van in Turkey are all what kind of lake? ***2 points***

8. In 1844, Samuel Morse sent the first long-distance message using what new technology? ***1 point***

9. Recent findings show that Earth has an eighth continent, though it's largely submerged under water. What is it called? ***1 point***

10. What country has the world's only non-quadrilateral national flag? ***1 point***

11. What six-member team made its official Paralympic debut at the Tokyo games? ***1 point***

12. Female researchers comprise 30 per cent of the global workforce in the sciences, but more than double, at 63 per cent, in what South American country? ***2 points***

14. How many times can the New Year be celebrated as clocks strike midnight around the world? ***1 point***

13. King Louis XIX of France and Portugal's King Luís II Filipe share what royal record? ***2 points***

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. Master's degree or higher in STEM. **2.** Andean Condor. **3.** Braille phrases. **4.** c) 7500, although it depends on the tide. **5.** Japan. **6.** Skis, more than 10,000 years ago. **7.** Soda lakes (high alkalinity). **8.** The telegraph. **9.** Zealandia. **10.** Nepal. **11.** Refugee Paralympic Team. **12.** Bolivia. **13.** Shortest reign (20 minutes). **14.** 38 (because there are 38 different local times).

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

PUZZLES ANSWERS

From Page 138

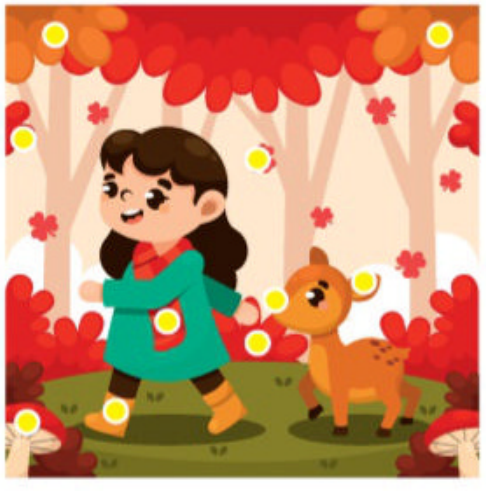
Crossword

1 M	2 A	T	3 E	R	4 I	A	5 L	■	6 H	■	7 U	■	8 S	■
■	W	■	V	■	L	■	9 Y	E	A	R	N	I	N	G
10 R	E	T	A	I	L	E	R	■	R	■	U	■	U	■
■	S	■	S	■	N	■	11 E	N	V	I	S	A	G	E
12 N	O	M	I	N	E	E	■	■	E	■	U	■	G	■
■	M	■	V	■	S	■	13 U	N	S	T	A	B	L	E
14 R	E	V	E	R	S	E	S	■	T	■	L	■	E	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	H	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	15 M	■	16 D	■	17 S	■	18 E	L	19 E	C	20 T	R	21 I	C
22 M	A	N	O	F	W	A	R	■	X	■	O	■	R	■
■	S	■	O	■	E	■	■	23 S	P	A	R	T	A	N
24 C	O	R	R	I	D	O	25 R	■	L	■	P	■	N	■
■	N	■	W	■	I	■	26 A	C	A	D	E	M	I	A
27 A	R	K	A	N	S	A	S	■	I	■	D	■	A	■
■	Y	■	Y	■	H	■	28 P	I	N	P	O	I	N	T

Sudoku

1	6	9	8	2	7	3	4	5
5	4	2	9	1	3	7	8	6
7	3	8	4	6	5	9	1	2
4	7	5	1	9	8	6	2	3
2	9	1	3	5	6	8	7	4
6	8	3	2	7	4	1	5	9
3	5	7	6	8	2	4	9	1
8	1	6	5	4	9	2	3	7
9	2	4	7	3	1	5	6	8

Spot The Difference



Book Exchange

1 in 4, or 25 per cent. There were six names in the hat to start. But you know Paula's name has already been taken out, and it wouldn't make sense for you to get your own name and the book you had bought. That leaves four names, and you're going to pick one.

Fill in the Blanks

Marry, mercy, merry and murky.

ILLUSTRATION: (FOREST) GETTY IMAGES; CROSSWORD: CROSSWORDSITE.COM

WORD POWER

Short But Challenging

Four-letter words are the most popular in word games like Scrabble. Here are some to add to your vocabulary

BY *Linda Besner*

1. calx – A: medical symbol that features two snakes and a staff. B: pivotal point in an argument. C: powder formed when a metal is heated.

2. gaze – A: break a promise. B: disagree using strong words. C: look steadily and intently.

3. razz – A: tease. B: add sparkle or glitter. C: bulldoze an entire area.

4. cyan – A: wistful yearning. B: greenish-blue colour. C: reddish-brown colour.

5. ankh – A: feeling of anxiety and depression. B: Egyptian symbol of life. C: abscess in a molar.

6. silt – A: fine dirt sediment. B: funnel for pouring cement. C: slippery undergarment.

7. quay – A: visible repair. B: thickened buttermilk. C: hard surface beside water.

8. apse – A: recess in a church. B: iron frame of a wheelbarrow. C: sparse hedgerow.

9. tare – A: tenth portion reserved for charity. B: bundle of kindling. C: weight of an empty container.

10. wend – A: travel in an indirect fashion. B: wrap tightly. C: walk while holding hands.

11. quip – A: witty remark. B: blow bubbles. C: waylay.

12. sere – A: endowed with wisdom. B: extremely dry. C: full to the brim.

13. echt – A: concisely argued. B: out of style. C: authentic.

14. rapt – A: spellbound by something seen or heard. B: of a freckled complexion. C: quick-witted.

15. mazy – A: absent-minded. B: full of twists and turns. C: extensively cracked, especially of glass.

Answers

1. calx – C: powder formed when a metal is heated. Antoine Lavoisier famously compared the mass of mercury with the mass of its calx after burning.

2. gaze – C: look steadily and intently. His gaze shifted to the doorway as Julia entered the room.

3. razz – A: tease. Eli was always razzing Sonia about her old-fashioned clothes.

4. cyan – B: greenish-blue colour. Four-colour printers usually hold cartridges of cyan, along with magenta, yellow and black.

5. ankh – B: Egyptian symbol of life. The first known examples of the ankh sign in Egyptian artefacts date back to the Early Dynastic Period.

6. silt – A: fine dirt sediment. The fertile silt that accumulates as the Nile River empties into the sea makes the soil rich in nutrients.

7. quay – C: hard surface beside water. Down to the end of the 18th century there was only a primitive quay on the river side for shipping purposes.

8. apse – A: recess in a church. The apse of St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City contains a bronze throne that the saint himself is believed to have used.

9. tare – C: weight of an empty container. The gross weight of a can of peaches includes the tare weight and peaches, whereas the net weight excludes the tare weight.

10. wend – A: travel in an indirect fashion. While the shadows lengthened, Penelope and Miro wended their way to the river.

11. quip – A: witty remark. Sebastian and Bill laugh out loud at Brian's quip.

12. sere – B: extremely dry. The desert landscape was sere and bright.

13. echt – C: authentic. Pauline's party outfit, complete with bell-bottomed jeans, tie-dye T-shirt and love beads, was echt 1970s.

14. rapt – A: spellbound by something seen or heard. The guide at the dinosaur exhibit lectured to a rapt audience of five year olds.

15. mazy – B: full of twists and turns. Paul and Anne navigated the town hall's mazy corridors to the marriage-licence desk.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

4–7: Fair
8–11: Good
12–15: Word Power Wizard

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