

ONLY **69p**

Burnt out of our home



22 Feb 2018 69p

Pick Me Up.

Issue 8

16 TRUE READS
PLUS LOADS OF PUZZLES!



HOW CAN I TELL MY GIRL

DADDY'S A MONSTER?



Phone habit was KILLING ME



I was just a kid

EVIL PAEDO'S PLAN TO GET ME PREGNANT

DIGGING DEEP

Why I need 9 JOBS!



DARK DAYS!

I HAD TO GO INTO HIDING



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You're One in a MILLION!



This week's blooms go to Carol Clayton. Her daughter Faye and son Stilianos wrote to tell us,

Our mum is always there to help us no matter what. She supported me through university when I was struggling, and helped me buy my first car, which allowed me to travel to uni to complete my degree!

When I broke my arm in a gymnastics accident, Mum did everything for me for the whole six weeks while my arm healed, and she never complained once.

She also helped my brother Stilianos with his first child. When he needed support, Mum was there for him day or night.

But it's not just us who Mum's happy to help. If someone's ill, she's the first to offer help with the shopping and housework.

For years, she visited the old lady next door, helping her to do jobs around the house.

Now 61, Mum is so caring



Mum Carol: so caring and helpful



Faye with her mum

and helpful,

but she's also honest. If you want to know how you look in a new outfit, she'll tell the truth!

As a family unit we're very close and get along really well.

And, basically, that's all down to our mum, as she's the one who brought us up to help each other. She truly deserves some flowers as a thank you for being so amazing!

With over 30 years' experience of helping celebrate life's special moments, FREE delivery by post and a FREE pop-up vase, a gorgeous bouquet from Flying Flowers is a lovely way to say, *I'm thinking of you*. See flyingflowers.co.uk

To nominate someone

Tell us who you think deserves to receive some lovely blooms and the reason why. See page 4 for details of how to get in touch with us.



WORDS: JAMES HANMAN

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Sneaky peek at this week!



Plump pooch... p22



Battered by ex... p6

A quick word!

£25! WIN PUZZLE!

Unscramble our word of the week. Clue: Faye's mum will offer to help ill people with this. (You'll find the word somewhere on this page!). Enter on page 45.

WHOSUERKO

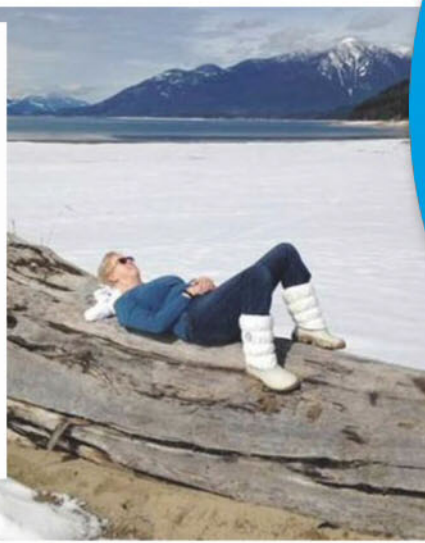
Your Wild week...

Having a good one? Share your pics and get **£25 CASH**



I was just absolutely fabulous at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford!
Jo Greasby, Clayton

Being surrounded by mountains and snow at Canada's Arrow Lake was the perfect setting for me to relax and sunbathe!
Andrea Richardson, Great Leighs



My grandson was surprised by this monkey in Borneo, asking, 'Why does it have a willy nose, Nanna?' Good question!
Jean Milne, Worthing



This was the sight that met my sore eyes! My hubby Colin posing with his new chainsaw!
Beverley Murphy, March

GET IN TOUCH

Send us your stories and photos, including all names and ages, a daytime phone number and full address.

GET CASH! £££

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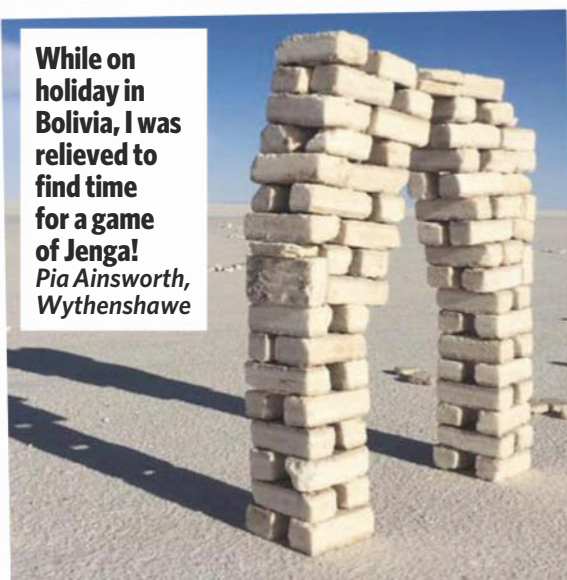
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While on holiday in Bolivia, I was relieved to find time for a game of Jenga!
Pia Ainsworth, Wythenshawe





I couldn't help thinking there was something different about my girls' faces, but Paris and Jasmine didn't know what I was talking about!
Stacey Hill, Torquay



Me and my son Murray - dressed as Michael Myers from *Halloween* - were so pleased to bump into these Stormtroopers at Comic Con!
Kelly Imrie, Hurlford



My friend Joe made a new friend at Kew Gardens!
Karen Baker, Watford



Doug the pug wasn't impressed when we suggested he make friends with Jaws!
Karen Wells, Gravesend



I told my daughter Lily she'd need to get started early in her training for World's Strongest Woman!
Nicola Partridge, Lordswood



Here's my fun-loving daughter Isabel, 6, having a laugh in the ball pit!
Anna Draycott, South Ockendon

NO PRINCE CHARMING

How can Sarah Andrews, 20, from Cardiff, tell her daughter the truth about her daddy?

Kissing my new fella Jason goodbye, I closed the door and turned to my dad. 'Well, what do you think?' I asked. 'He's not your usual type!' Dad said with a smile. 'You're not wrong,' I laughed. My dad Steven, 50, was used to seeing me with scruffy

teenagers. No wonder he was impressed with Jason's smart shirt and shiny shoes. 'And the age gap?' I asked. At 26, Jason was eight years older than me. 'He seems mature – just what you need,' Dad said. Having his approval felt great. Meeting Jason through

mutual friends in September 2015, I'd already felt so lucky. Handsome and caring, he'd buy me flowers and take me out for romantic meals. 'You're so beautiful, Sarah,' he'd tell me. I had a job in a care home, but after work I'd sit in the pub where Jason was a barman.

Even when he was serving customers, he couldn't take his eyes off me. I'd found my Prince Charming and was totally, head-over-heels in love.

Within weeks, I'd moved in to his flat.

'It's the happiest I've ever seen you,' Dad said, when I popped round.

'He's really looking after me,' I promised him.

Even when I went out with friends, Jason would check where I was going and who I was with.

'I need to know you're safe,' he said to me.

Then in February 2016, I fell pregnant.

It was shock, because I had polycystic ovaries.

'I'm sorry,' I sobbed to Jason.

I was 19, we'd only been together five months and we hadn't talked about kids.

Jason took my hand. 'I'm over the moon,' he smiled to me.

And then, all of a sudden, so was I.

That Valentine's

Day, Jason surprised me with a 4D ultrasound scan at a private clinic.

As soon as I saw the tiny little pumping heart on the screen, tears began rolling down my cheeks.

'You're seven weeks pregnant,' the sonographer told us.

'We'll be a proper family,' grinned Jason.

A few weeks later, Jason went out with his mates.

'I'll be home by 10pm,' he promised.

I spent the night watching telly and, by midnight, I was ready for bed.

But Jason still wasn't home.

I'd sent him a few texts but had got no answer. It wasn't on.

Hormones raging, I threw on my clothes and stalked round to the pub.

I found Jason sitting there, talking to two women.

'What are you doing here?' he spat, his face darkening. It was a look I didn't recognise.

I froze for a moment. Then I turned and fled from the pub.

I was almost home, when Jason caught me up, cornering me in our flat's stairwell.

But rather than offering apologies, he was livid.

'Are you stupid?' he screamed, spittle flying out of his mouth.

My heart hammered. I was scared. Of my own boyfriend.

I backed away and turned to run upstairs.

Then two hands were on the small of my back, sending me lurching forwards on to the cold, hard steps.

'Ouch!' I cried out, as I felt the concrete bite into my



I had a broken nose, stitches, needed surgery



Me and Jason (left). His attack left me bloody and beaten



LOVE TURNED TO FEAR

ribs. Then I heard two icy words. 'You bitch.'

Adrenalin propelled me into the flat and I slammed the bedroom door.

I shook as I waited, but Jason didn't come in. Instead, he rampaged around the flat, swearing, punching the walls.

Then, silence.

He'd passed out on the sofa.

That night I barely slept. I'd seen a side of Jason that I never wanted to see again.

The next morning, he didn't stop apologising.

'It was the drink,' he said.

He swore he'd stop boozing, so I forgave him and, for a few weeks, things were OK. Then he began constantly picking on me.

'What are you wearing all that make-up for?' he raged.

And he started moaning every time I left the house.

'Wouldn't you rather be with me?' he'd ask.

He'd pick up my phone and go through my messages.

'I'm eight months pregnant!' I spluttered.

What did he think I was going to do – run off with another man?

Despite everything he'd put me through, I only wanted

him – the old Jason – back.

Finally, that October, I gave birth to our daughter Amiyah. Jason was by my side, smitten.

And, suddenly, it was as though our bad patch was over.

He was such a great dad, getting up for night feeds and changing nappies.

When Amiyah was a couple of months old, Dad offered to babysit for us.

Jason took me to dinner, then we went on to a bar for drinks.

But, as Jason downed pint after pint, his expression began to change.

'Stop looking at other men,' he snarled at me.

The old fear rose up again – I remembered the last time...

'I'm going home,' I said.

But Jason followed me, spitting abuse at me.

On a quiet road, he suddenly grabbed my arm and pinned me against a wall.

His eyes looked crazy as he began squeezing my neck.

I was fighting to get my

breath, terrified.

Then his grip loosened. 'You're not worth it,' he scowled, and walked away.

Right then, I knew it was over. I had to get out, for Amiyah's sake.

But leaving was so scary.

Collecting Amiyah from Dad's, I said nothing about Jason's attack.

It took me another three months to pluck up the courage to leave.

But, in March 2017,

I packed some things and took Amiyah to a friend's.

Jason texted constantly, begging me to come back.

He's not the man I thought he was, I sobbed to myself.

Weeks later, in April 2017, I needed to get the rest of Amiyah's toys from the flat.

Jason promised he'd go to his mum's, but when I got there he was waiting for me.

'Let me stay and spend time with Amiyah,' he begged.

Wearily, I agreed.

The first night was fine, but on the second, the rows started again.

I stepped into the stairwell to smoke, to let things cool down.

But Jason followed me out there, his face

twisted with rage.

'What are you doing to me?' he yelled furiously.

And then pain and a thousand stars exploded, as he head-butted me in the face.

Blood sprayed across the stairs, as I felt my knees buckle under me.

Cowering, with my arms

over my head, I begged him to stop.

But punches and kicks rained down on me from every angle.

The metallic taste of blood filled my mouth, as I started screaming for help.

I couldn't open my eyes, but I felt Jason's hands grab my hair and start dragging me

back into the flat.

He threw me against the wall. And, with that, he left.

As I lay, my battered face pressed against the living room carpet, I heard Amiyah crying in her room.

In agony, I could see my own blood above me on the walls.

But I couldn't move.

Thankfully, moments later, the police stormed in.

A neighbour had called them.

I was taken to Heath Hospital and a nurse looked after little Amiyah while I was being treated.

My forehead had burst open, leaving a gaping hole over my eyebrow.

I needed 30 stitches, had a broken nose and badly bruised ribs, and would need surgery on my left eye.

Jason was arrested.

The couple of months before the trial were gruelling. I suffered anxiety, depression and nightmares, and was scared to be at home alone.

In September 2017, at Cardiff Crown Court, Jason Dean Takata, 28, pleaded guilty to two counts of grievous bodily harm.

He was jailed for 10 years.

A restraining order was also imposed to stop him having any unauthorised contact with me.

While my physical injuries have healed, the emotional scars run deep.

Jason is the father of my beautiful daughter. She's 16 months now. Soon she'll be asking about her daddy.

How can I tell her the truth?

That her daddy isn't the Prince Charming I once thought he was.

Daddy is a monster.

Cowering, with my arms over my head, I begged him to stop

WIN PUZZLE 2

Follow it!

£1,000!

Solve the puzzle to spell out a term related to the picture. The arrows show you where to put your answers. The answer is spelled in the yellow squares. Enter on page 45.



			Veteran, old soldier	Amend proofs	Distinct periods of time	Proops, stand-up comedian	Lingerie item	Move extremely slowly	Brick-holders
			Snake found in the UK			Hostage money			
			Outclass	Wrath, rage		de vie, brandy	Droll fellow	Restless craving	White bathroom powder
							Common card game		
			Loaded, in the money	Billiard-stick	Makes strong	Heroic tale	Crow-like bird	Frozen water	Gangway
Badger's burrow	Sum up, run through	Metal cans			Of an operation				
			See photo			In times gone by	Trendy		
Granary	Central				Female gander			Forecourt fuel company	Bolted
			Lizard, comedian	Took liquid			And the rest (abbr)	Gnome	F
Spot	Be of use				Long story	Armed strife	Picture stand	E A S E L	
			Swarm over	Coil of metal	Most fresh			Impudent talk	Immature
									E
Root vegetable	Passports or driving licences, eg				Hydro town		Musical play	On nine, elated	D
					Main part of a church	Press clothes		Droops	Ardent
									Had already learned
Approached	Froned plant				Score of zero	Mire	Set off, incite		
			Sir... McKellen, actor			2nd Greek letter		Diesel, actor	
Sugar root	Eye shield (3,5)						Complaint		
			Solidify			Natters		Morning dampness	

PHOTO: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

EYES RIGHT?

7 SIGNS MOST PARENTS MISS

Is your child a reluctant reader? It may be time to book that eye test

We all like to think we're on the ball with our children's health. But when was the last time your kids had an eye test?

It's not always obvious a child needs glasses – they may not realise their vision is blurry. And with 80% of teaching in school being visual, clear sight is critical.

That's why Specsavers is encouraging all parents to get their children's eyes tested. It has also teamed up with Thomson Screening to deliver free vision-check software to every UK school, via three-minute checks.

Half term is the perfect time to get their eyes checked. Tests are child-friendly, using special charts if your little one can't recognise letters yet. If they need glasses, the Specsavers range is uniquely designed to fit children's heads properly – and they look great too!



Is your child straining to see?

1 You may notice your child tilting their head or sitting too close to the TV.

2 It isn't unheard of for kids to avoid homework, but if they're finding it hard to read and getting headaches, it could be they need glasses.

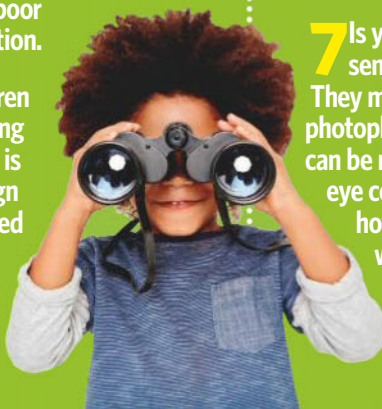
3 If your child seems to be falling behind at school, it might be because they're struggling to see a whiteboard or to read their books.

4 Not everyone's cut out for sports, but, if your little one flounders when catching or hitting a ball, it may be more than just poor co-ordination.

5 Children rubbing their eyes is often a sign they're tired or are suffering eye ache.

6 If your child has stopped using their phone or tablet, it might be due to eye strain.

7 Is your child sensitive to light? They might have photophobia, which can be related to an eye condition. Watch how they react when they are exposed to direct light.



Book an eye test today!

To find your nearest Specsavers, go to [specsavers.co.uk](https://www.specsavers.co.uk). NHS eye tests are free for under-16s. Get your child's school to sign up for free vision-check software at [screeningforschools.co.uk](https://www.screeningforschools.co.uk).



Transforming eye health

Out of **CON**

When life got all too much for Megan Stanley, 19, from Wrexham, she found a worrying way to cope

Everyone has times in their life when things feel a bit overwhelming.

Back in November 2012, when I was 13, my grandad Derek, 70, passed away.

Me and my mum Alison had lived with him and my nan Margerie, 74, since my parents had split when I was a toddler.

Grandad and I had always been close. With him gone, I struggled to cope.

I was being bullied at school, too, and felt as if I had no control over my life.

So I started going out running after school. My feet pounding the pavements around where we lived, I enjoyed the sense of freedom, the way it let me escape all my problems.

At first, it was just a mile or so but, each night, I ran a little bit further.

Then I started going out on weekends, too.

'Do you think you're taking this new fitness regime a bit too seriously?' Mum asked, worried.

'I just enjoy it,' I replied to

her, reacting defensively.

I'd not set out to lose weight, but I'd started to notice my clothes feeling looser.

And, when my bones started to jut out under my skin, I hid it from Mum by wearing baggy clothes.

I'd made that happen, and I enjoyed the feeling of being in control.

By the time I turned 14, I was restricting what I ate, too.

First, I ate no dairy or fats, then I just had a vegan yogurt for breakfast and soup for dinner.

'What's going on?' Mum demanded, as I made excuses not to eat at dinner time. 'You're getting too thin. I just want to help.'

'I'm fine,' I'd shrug. 'I don't want your help.'

Truth was, by now I was exercising for hours every day as well.

I was running, doing

star-jumps and sit-ups at home, jogging on the spot.

During the week I'd even skip lessons to walk around the school grounds burning calories.

I liked the feeling of losing weight. It was my comfort – and, the more I lost, the more I wanted to lose.

By the time I turned 15, my size-10 clothes were hanging off me.

A week after my birthday, I was going upstairs at home when I slipped, banging my head and elbow. Only, frail and weak, I couldn't get myself on my feet.

'I can't get up!'

I shouted to Mum.

Horried, she took me to Wrexham Hospital.

Doctors did blood tests, took my blood pressure and pulse.

Then they weighed me.

Before, I'd been a healthy 8st 7lb. Now I weighed just

5st – dangerously underweight for my 5ft 3in frame. My pulse was extremely low, as well.

Doctors put me on bed-rest and said I needed glucose.

'I'm not having glucose,' I snapped, knowing it contained calories.

Distraught, Mum broke down in tears.

'Is she going to die?' she sobbed to nurses.

Sounds odd, but I thought everyone was overreacting.

'Mum, it's going to be fine,' I reassured her.

'No, it's not,' Mum sobbed, beside herself. 'If you don't eat, you're going to die.'

I was so tiny, Mum went out and bought me clothes for an 8-year-old.

I was kept in hospital for three weeks, then moved to a psychiatric hospital, where I had therapy and my food intake was monitored.

After seven months, I was allowed home. But, while I'd put on a little weight, I was still obsessed.

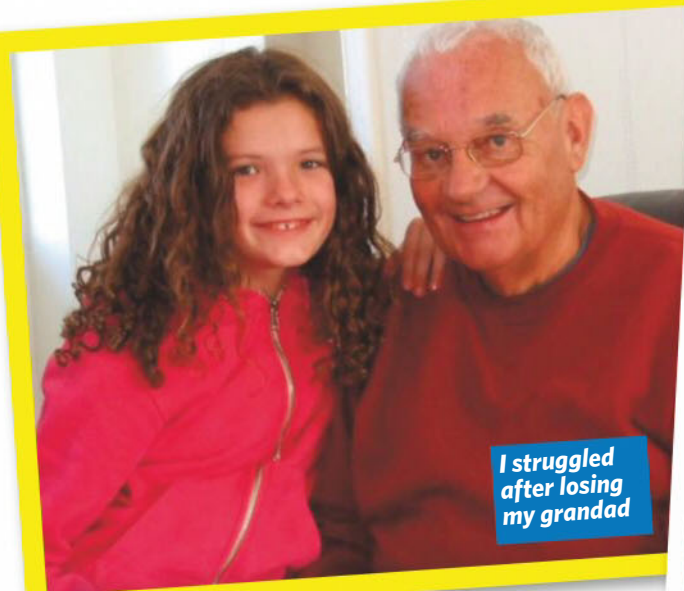
I followed other anorexia sufferers on Instagram, and lots of them mentioned using health-and-fitness apps to lose weight. So I downloaded one onto my smartphone.

I'd use it to track every single calorie I ate each day, as well as all the calories I'd burned exercising.

Suddenly, it seemed even easier to lose weight. I just made sure the app showed I was in negative calories all the time by

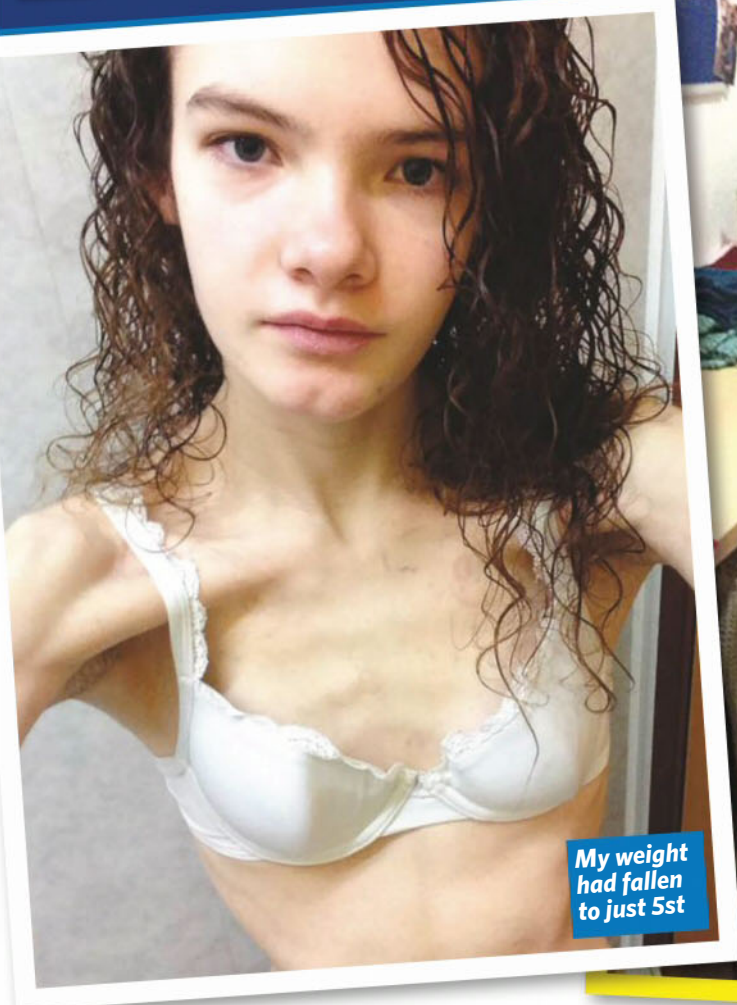
I made sure the app showed I was always in negative calories

After deleting the app, I'm healthy again



TROL

OBSESSIVE REAL LIFE



My weight had fallen to just 5st



I constantly checked my phone...

doing more exercise. I was addicted – app-obsessed, constantly checking and updating it.

Any weight I'd gained in hospital quickly vanished.

After six months, I was back in psychiatric hospital again.

By now, my fingertips were blue due to poor circulation, my dark, curly hair was falling out and my nails were in a terrible state.

I had more group therapy, individual therapy and art therapy. But the anorexia had put my body under so much strain, I was diagnosed with heart block, which meant my heart wasn't beating to the right rhythm.

'It could cause a heart attack at any time,' the specialist warned me.

Terrifying.

I was there for a year, battling to get better.

When I was finally allowed

home, I was closely monitored.

But, one day in early 2015, I was standing talking to Mum when suddenly my body went rigid and I dropped to the floor, and started having a fit.

My brother Luke, then 11, ran away scared, and my sister Ffion, 13, called the Emergency Services as Mum gave me CPR.

An ambulance raced me to Wrexham Hospital.

There, I was diagnosed with epilepsy, caused by the strain under which I'd put my body.

After three days, I was sent back to psychiatric hospital, where I had two more seizures.

Each time, I'd collapse onto the floor and black out, before waking up not remembering anything. It scared me so much, and I knew it was all down to my anorexia.

By now, I was nearly 18. I'd been in the grip of anorexia for five years.

All the friends I'd made in

the psychiatric hospital had got better, moved on with their lives.

Yet I'd already had to re-sit a year at school, and felt as if I was being left behind.

Suddenly, it was as if something inside me clicked.

As a first step, I deleted the fitness app from my phone.

It was tough, not being able to keep track of every calorie I consumed, but strangely liberating, too.

Without the app to obsess over, I started trying to eat a bit more each day and reduce the amount of exercise I was doing.

It wasn't easy – but, this time, I was determined.

'I'm going to get better,' I promised Mum.

I'd put her through hell, too.

After just six weeks, my weight was up to nearly 7st.

Once again, I was allowed to go home.

This time, I enrolled on

a Health and Social Care course at college – and, last April, I met my partner through mutual friends.

Now my weight fluctuates between 7st 7lb and 8st.

I eat healthily and exercise sensibly – and I'm wearing size-8 clothes.

My heart problem has gone, and I haven't had a fit for over a year.

But I'm not there yet.

I'm just taking things one day at a time.

And, thanks to the love and support of Mum, now 49, Ffion, 16, Luke, 13, and my girlfriend, I'm happier than I've been for years.

That phone app is supposed to help people lose weight safely – but, for me, it was a dangerous tool.

I'm just glad I found the strength to click 'delete'.

It saved my life.

Your Deals of the week

We've done the research - so that you can save the **CASH**

OUR TOP TIP

Zip it!

Whether you fancy whizzing down Zip World Titan, the largest zip zone in Europe, or rolling, jumping and sliding on the bouncy nets at Zip World in North Wales, enjoy 2-for-1 Mondays until 19 March. To book, call 01248 601 444.



Sweet like chocolate

The Green & Black's Miniature Bar Collection lets you experience a range of their finest fairtrade flavours, from fiery ginger to crunchy butterscotch, for only £4 (usually £5.50), in Tesco until 6 March.

Taste the tropics

This flavour-packed Crafted Mango & Passion Fruit Juice Drink is handmade in the UK with no added sugar. It's fruity and fragrant, with smooth and sweet mango and tangy passion fruit, and down to £1 (usually £1.50), in Tesco until 27 Feb.



OFFER OF THE WEEK

A bit special

Gettingpersonal.co.uk has a huge range of gifts and homewares, from personalised stationery and hand-stamped jewellery to bespoke cushions and engraved cheeseboards - there's something for everyone! Get 10% off now with our exclusive reader code PICK10

SAVING OF THE WEEK

Get your teeth into this

Sensodyne Rapid Relief Toothpaste has £1.50 off in Sainsbury's until the end of March. Usually £4.50, the toothpaste, which is said to relieve sensitivity pain in just 60 seconds, is now £3. Available in store and online at sainsburys.co.uk



On the pulse

Healthy, flavour-packed meals are made easier with Merchant Gourmet Simply Cooked Puy Lentils and Tomato and Basil Puy Lentils, which are priced at two for £3 (usually £2 each) at Morrisons until 21 Feb.



Sweet scent

This 100% organic, scented candle hamper, containing three natural massage candles and two votives, is on offer for £35 (from £55) in time for Mother's Day. Available from nelliemimosa.co.uk until 22 Feb.



Fun food

Goodfella's Thin Margherita has a stonebaked base topped with their signature sauce and melty mozzarella. At £1.50 (usually £2) in Asda until 21 Feb, these are perfect for a Friday night pizza party!



TREAT OF THE WEEK

Bargain bubbles

Light and bubbly Prosecco is the perfect way to celebrate any event - birthdays, weddings and even just the fact it's the weekend! You can celebrate for less with this I Heart Prosecco, which is down to £7 in Sainsbury's (usually £10), until 27 Feb.

Your Brainwaves...

You're a clever bunch! Earn **£25 CASH** for your brilliant tips!



Twinkle, twinkle, little tealight...

To make tealight holders more decorative, simply adorn the edges with stick-on gems. When the candles are lit, it looks really pretty and twinkly!
Mary Campbell, Ayr



Tip of the Week

Slam dunk

Use a fork to dunk sandwich-style biscuits, such as custard creams or Oreos. You won't drop your biccys in your drink!
A Laird, Wirral



Top Mum's Tip!

Storage solution

Jam jars are perfect for storing your little ones' crayons!
R Griffin, Warmley



Smoothie operator

If you have fruit that's past its best, but still edible, use a hand blender to make a healthy and refreshing smoothie!
Pat Lowther, Durham



Curtain cool

Hair scrunchies make cheerful and quirky curtain tiebacks, as they come in different colours and are super-versatile!
Angela Garvin, Romford

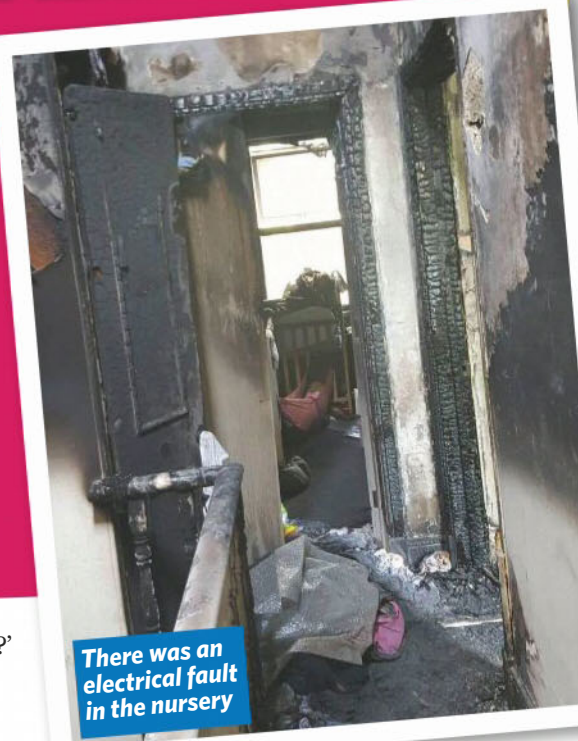


Take the tube!

Keep your plugs and cords organised and untangled by storing them neatly in an empty toilet roll!
Karen Hill, Caernarfon

Three babies AND A HERO HUBBY

Crashing out after finally getting her triplets to sleep, Sneha Dave, 30, from Harrow, never imagined the horror she'd wake up to...



There was an electrical fault in the nursery

By the time my husband Brijesh, 31, and I got our three little ones off to sleep, it was 2am. 'Well, I'm not going to have any trouble nodding off,' I yawned.

A mum to 9-month-old triplets, it's fair to say I was often shattered.

Still, we had two extra pairs of hands on deck that week.

It was last May, and Brijesh's mum Kusum, 59, and dad Narendra, 63, were visiting from India. They were besotted with their grandchildren – girls Rishva and Rutvi and our boy Rithaan – giving me a welcome rest from non-stop childcare.

Kusum and Narendra were sleeping downstairs, and we'd put the triplets in cots in our bedroom – easier than having them in their own room. Brijesh and I were out

for the count within seconds...

Only, at 4am, I awoke with a shocking jolt.

The smoke alarm was screaming, and from downstairs I could hear my in-laws calling up to us.

'Wake up, something's happening!' they shouted.

Heart racing wildly, I shook Brijesh awake.

'The smoke alarm is going off, and your parents are yelling!' I said. 'Can you go down and see

what's going on?'

Brijesh raced downstairs, the bedroom door slamming behind him. Meanwhile, I clambered out of bed to check on the triplets, who were waking up.

'It's OK,' I said, calming them. But then I smelt it. *Smoke...*

It was billowing under the bedroom door.

Terrified, I let out a scream.

There really was a fire! Opening the bedroom door, a wall of heat and smoke hit me.

The nursery, next door to our room, was on fire.

'Brijesh! Help us!' I screamed.

I heard his voice come through the smoke.

'Get back in the bedroom!' he yelled, frantic. 'Shut the door!'

The babies were screaming, the room filling with smoke.

I whimpered with terror as I ran



Brijesh was badly burned



L-R: Thankfully, Rutvi, Rithaan and Rishva were in with us

triplets to care for. 'I know, but at least we're all safe and unharmed,' Brijesh said, putting his arm around me.

Three days later, we moved into another place – the top floor of a maisonette in the same area. It was nice having a new home, but it was much smaller, harder to manage with three babies, and carrying the pushchair up and down the stairs was difficult.

Poor Brijesh had to go to the hospital twice a week for the next month to get his dressing changed.

I'd have to pass our old home on my way to the salon where I work as a beautician.

Seeing its blackened windows, I'd want to cry. That was the house we'd taken our beloved babies home to.

I could remember that day so clearly. We'd been so happy, excited, ready for a new chapter.

Now, though, everything felt so bleak.

But, do you know what? People were so wonderful! We got a lot of support from the charity Helping Hands, who'd heard about our plight.

And, when Brijesh went back to work at the restaurant a month after the fire and his parents returned to India, Helping Hands sent us a nanny, who helped me put the kids into a routine.

It turned out the fire had been caused by an electrical fault in the nursery.

I'm just so grateful the babies were with us that night, that we had a smoke alarm, and that Brijesh acted so fast.

I try not to think about what could've happened if they'd been in the room next door – or if my husband hadn't been there that night.

He's a real hero.

Now we're all looking to the future. And, with three gorgeous, demanding little babies brightening up every day, I know that things can only get better.

our way across the landing, thick smoke making it impossible to see anything.

Thankfully, the stairs hadn't caught fire yet, and we were able to make our way down.

Luckily, our neighbours had heard and seen what was happening.

They came to our door, made sure we were safe and took us all into their home, along with Brijesh's frantic parents.

It was here that I discovered what'd happened after Brijesh had first rushed downstairs to see why the smoke alarm had gone off.

'I saw a fire had begun in the corner of the babies' bedroom,' he told me. 'The flames were already knee-high, so I filled a bucket with water in the bathroom and threw it over the flames, but it was no use.'

Desperate to stop the fire spreading, Brijesh had been trying to pull baby clothes and bedding out of the way of the flames, but had burned his right hand badly.

'Oh, Brijesh!' I gasped.

He'd lost all the skin on his palm, which was red and raw.

Four minutes later, a fire engine raced down our road.

We watched as they managed to put out the fire

before it spread to the ground floor. But the whole top floor of the two-bed house we rented was completely destroyed.

Moments later, paramedics arrived on the scene.

Brijesh, the babies and I were taken to Northwick Park Hospital for further tests.

Brijesh had suffered smoke inhalation, and was taken to the Burns Unit for treatment on his hand.

Thankfully, the babies and I were given the all-clear.

Brijesh's parents were fine, but very shaken up.

We called the private landlord, explained what'd happened. That first night, he put us up in a bed-and-breakfast but after that, we had nowhere to go.

I went with the babies and my mum-in-law to stay with friends in Wembley, while Brijesh and his dad stayed in a flat above the restaurant, where Brijesh worked as a chef.

We were lucky to have kind people around us who would help, but it was so difficult.

Unable to stop thinking

about the fire, I was an emotional wreck, scared to go to sleep, afraid all the time.

Three days after the fire, we were allowed to go back to the house, to try to salvage some belongings. So I went with Brijesh, leaving the triplets with his parents.

Walking through the front door, it hit me how quickly our lives had changed. Within minutes, everything became so different...

We weren't allowed upstairs – they said it wasn't safe. In a way, I was glad. The thought of seeing my babies' charred cots and imagining what could've been was too awful to bear.

We walked through the ground floor, collecting our things. We didn't own most of the furniture, but we took what was ours – a rug, TV and single wardrobe, along with pots, pans and plates from the kitchen, and any of the kids' toys we found.

We had no insurance, either. 'Most of the kids' stuff was upstairs. It's all gone,' I wept.

We were homeless, with

We had no insurance and we were homeless, with triplets to care for

Your Health

INSTANT appointment

With Doctor Arabella Onslow



Heavy periods

Q I'm keen to give blood, but a doctor said my iron was too low. I was advised to eat red meat, but I'm vegetarian. I also have heavy periods. What can I do to boost my iron levels?

Katie, Sale

A You can get lots of iron from pulses and dark-green veg. And eat food rich in vitamin C, such as red and green peppers and broccoli, which boost iron absorption. Plus have your heavy periods investigated.



Dental woes

Q My daughter's dentist wants to remove some of her teeth and fit her with braces, but I'm worried about the consequences of that in the future. What

is the best option?

Anushka, Peterborough

A There is some evidence that tooth extraction in childhood predisposes you to neck pain as an adult, especially if there's trauma later. If this is simply for aesthetics, consider treatment without extraction.

Arthritis diet

Q I suffer with rheumatoid arthritis and get terrible joint inflammation. I've heard changing my diet might help. What should I be eating?

Mara, Bedford

A Change to a Mediterranean diet, with colourful fruits and vegetables and plenty of fibre, but consider reducing 'nightshade' family members, such as potatoes, peppers and aubergines.



CONTACT US

For advice, contact us via one of the methods below. Letters and emails are selected randomly for publication. Sorry, Dr Onslow can't reply personally. **WRITE TO:** Pick Me Up!, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP. **EMAIL:** pickmeup@timeinc.com

Health On Twitter [Follow me @DrBellyButton](#)



TRUE or **FALSE**

Hyperthyroidism

- It means that too few thyroid hormones are produced. True False
- Symptoms include weight loss. True False
- Hyperthyroidism is treatable. True False
- The cause is unknown. True False

1 FALSE Hyperthyroidism is where the thyroid gland, found at the front of the neck, produces too many thyroid hormones.

2 TRUE Among the common symptoms are mood swings, sleeping trouble, fatigue, heat sensitivity, weight loss, twitching, neck swelling and an irregular heartbeat.

3 TRUE Main treatments include medication, radioiodine treatment and surgery to remove some or all of the thyroid.

4 FALSE The most common cause is Graves' disease, where the immune system mistakenly attacks and damages the thyroid. Other causes include certain medications and lumps on the thyroid.

For Gemma Corder, 32, from Wallington, weird symptoms ran in the family

The signs had been there since I was little. I'd suffered severe pain in my fingertips. It was so agonising when it struck that I couldn't use a pen or pick anything up.

It was like a very severe form of pins-and-needles.

My stomach also posed problems. If I wasn't constipated, I had terrible diarrhoea and was always rushing off to the toilet.

Teachers thought I was making it up, probably for attention. I'd be in tears, begging for another bathroom break.

I wasn't making it up, but my GP couldn't explain my symptoms.

When I was 16, my dad was suddenly diagnosed with Fabry disease.

A rare, incurable genetic disorder, it meant he lacked the enzyme needed to break down certain kinds of fat, causing harmful build-ups.

'The condition is hereditary,' his doctor said.

So me and my two brothers had to be tested.

'I have it, I know I do,' I told my mum Sharon, 55.

Thinking he'd had IBS, Dad had always had similar stomach problems to me, and Fabry could cause all kinds of health problems, including episodes of pain.

It explained Dad's

145,000
...that's how many people in the UK live with Parkinson's, according to the charity Parkinson's UK

JUST LIKE DAD



Me and Dad: he'd be proud



I love my burlesque outfits

defined by my illness any more. I wanted to try something out of my comfort zone.

So when I saw an ad for burlesque dancing classes, I thought, *I'm going for it.*

It was nerve-racking, but I loved every minute of it. Before long, I was performing on stage.

Bursting with confidence, I also started entering pin-up competitions in 2016. I even made it to the finals of Miss Pinup UK two years in a row.

As for my illness, the treatment is keeping my symptoms under control.

Dad would be proud that I'm not letting our condition hold me back.

problems, so I knew it was going to explain mine.

My brothers were both clear, but doctors confirmed that I had Fabry disease, too.

The double diagnosis was a shock to everyone and, reading up on the condition, I was worried about the potential complications – kidney failure, heart attack, stroke...

Treatment began right away, with Dad and I travelling to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge every two weeks for intravenous enzyme replacements to control our symptoms.

Hospital staff trained us in administering the treatment ourselves, and six months later we were both receiving our treatment at home.

The last thing a 16-year-old girl wants is to stand out, and

this disease made me feel different from everybody else.

In my 20s, I felt no better.

I was embarrassed by having to run to the bathroom so often, and was self-conscious of the needle marks left on my hands by the treatment.

'I look like a drug addict,' I'd grumble.

On 2 September 2014, my dad passed away.

He'd suffered kidney failure as a result of Fabry disease.

Devastating.

In my grief, my mind wandered to the realisation that this could happen to me.

Fabry causes different symptoms in each case and, though Dad had far more symptoms than me, I was scared of developing more.

As my 30th birthday approached, I didn't want to be

FACT FILE

Fabry disease is a rare genetic condition. Common symptoms include episodes of pain, gastrointestinal problems, reduced sweating, dark red skin spots and hearing loss. There's also a risk of serious complications such as kidney failure, heart attacks and strokes. Though incurable, it can be treated.

Men's health

With Dr Arabella Onslow



Q My erection isn't hard any more and it doesn't last long. I do get turned on, but I'm now avoiding physical contact with my partner. Help!

David, Tring

A As men age, testosterone levels can drop, resulting in a reduced erection. If your libido is intact, consider a medication that sustains an erection once you're sexually stimulated. Your GP may be able to prescribe it.

What's normal, what's not

Itchy bottom



An itch on your bottom can be as normal as an itch anywhere else. But a very strong urge to scratch the skin around the anus is sometimes a sign of something else, such as haemorrhoids, a bacterial infection or a skin condition like atopic eczema. If it's been itching for more than a few days, see your GP.

WORDS: JAMES HANMAN, TRACY GAYTON. PHOTOS (INSTANT APPOINTMENT, TRUE OR FALSE, MEN'S HEALTH, WHAT'S NORMAL, POSED BY MODELS): ALAMY, GETTY, PRIME FEATURES

TAKEN FAR TOO SOON

Famous at a young age, these three child stars were brutally killed in cold blood...

UK: MURDERED ON THE STREET



Rob (right) with his mum and Jamie



BISHOP

Robert Knox, 18, had been working as an actor since he was 11, winning roles in *The Bill* and the reality show *Trust Me, I'm a Teenager*. In 2007, he got his big break playing Marcus Belby in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. He had already been signed up for the planned sequel. In May 2008, days after filming finished, Rob was in a bar in Sidcup, Kent, with his brother Jamie, then 17. Drunk and angry, Karl Bishop, 21, accused the brothers of stealing his phone – actually taken by a female friend. A fight broke out. Rob and his friends fought off Bishop and the police arrived. 'I'm going to come back and someone's going to die,'

Bishop had screamed. The next week, he did return to the bar. He was refused entry, but started threatening Jamie and his friends outside. Protecting his brother, Rob stormed out and confronted Bishop. Bishop pulled out two knives, swinging wildly. Bottles were thrown, and a chair. Trying to stop Bishop, Rob rugby tackled him. Seeing Bishop still with the knife, Jamie tried to pull him off his brother. But it was too



Emma Watson paid tribute

late. Rob had been stabbed four times in the chest. As Rob lay dying, Jamie phoned their mum Sally, who rushed to his side. Bishop was arrested, but Rob was pronounced dead. Karl Bishop was found guilty of murder at the Old Bailey in March 2009 and was jailed for life, with a minimum of 20 years. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* was released in July that year. The cast and crew wore white ribbons to the premiere, in memory of their murdered colleague.

USA: SCRIP

Judith Eva Barsi was the cutest thing on American TV in the 1980s. With her brown eyes and dimpled chin, she starred in films, ads and sitcoms, such as the hit series *Growing Pains*. But, behind her cheeky smile, was a scared child, abused by her violent father Jozsef – a heavy-drinking, Hungarian immigrant with a vile temper. In 1984, a TV producer had spotted Judith, then 5, at an ice rink. Within a year, her TV appearances were making her around \$100,000 (£71,000) a year. But, as Judith's success grew, her dad's temper – fuelled by booze – grew, too. He struggled

MEXICO: KI



Juan Luis went too far

WORLD OF CRIME



With her *Growing Pains* co-stars

T OF FEAR

to maintain control over his famous daughter.

When Judith was filming *Jaws: The Revenge* in 1987, she arrived on set with bruises on her face.

She started plucking out her eyelashes, as well.

In 1988, Judith broke down at an audition. A child psychologist saw signs of abuse and social services were contacted.

But they backed off, when Judith's mum Maria promised she'd leave Jozsef.

On 25 July 1988, Judith, 10,

was seen riding her bike outside her house.

But, that night, Jozsef shot her in the head as she slept, before shooting her mum. He set fire to their bodies before taking a call from Judith's agent.

'I need some time to say goodbye to my little girl,' he said, before shooting himself.

The family slaughter shocked the world.

Judith's last film *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, was released a few months later. The final credits song *Love Survives* was dedicated to Judith's memory.



Her final movie



LLED OVER A JOKE?

Mexican teenager Juan Luis Lagunas Rosales, 17, became a YouTube sensation when he posted videos of himself downing whisky.

Over a million fans started following the chubby, baby-faced teen on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

He began making money from his videos. He'd film himself with beautiful women, post pictures mocking his own weight. Mexican rock stars asked him to be in their videos.

But, in one video he posted, he went too far. Sitting in a bar, surrounded by women and booze, he shouted insults about a man named Ruben

Oseguera Cervantes, 51.

Cervantes, also known as El Mencho, was head of a deadly cartel. It was said he'd 'execute your whole family based on not much more than a rumour'.

Weeks later, in December 2017, Juan was with friends in a bar when four men burst in.

An hour earlier, he'd posted a video on Instagram, revealing his location.

The men fired 15 bullets into the social-media star's head.

Many say he'd signed his own death warrant when he'd mocked El Mencho.

Police investigated, but El Mencho is still one of the most wanted men in Mexico.

SHOT BY HER DAD

Genius or TOTALLY BONKERS?

We put some truly original products to the test...

ElectriQ Automatic Dog Ball Launcher with Treat Dispenser, £59.97, laptopsdirect.co.uk

If you're too busy to play ball with your pooch, this gadget's just what you need! It launches balls into the air for your dog to fetch, and will even reward with a treat each time they bring the ball back!



Verdict: GENIUS!
Dogs absolutely love it!

Power Energy Toothpaste, £14.99, firebox.com

Forget your morning coffee as this toothpaste unleashes just as much caffeine in one brush. Plus you'll have minty breath!



Verdict: BONKERS!
But you won't need to buy posh coffee!

Natura Siberica Black Cleansing Micellar Water, £12.99, naturasiberica.co.uk

It may seem odd cleaning your face with murky-looking water, but this cleanser is actually packed full of charcoal, which works like a magnet to draw grime and dirt out of your pores.



Verdict: GENIUS!
Don't judge a cleanser by its colour!

WIN PUZZLE 3 £300!

Crack it!

Work out which letter each number represents. When you've filled the grid, put the correct letters into the Prize Answer boxes at the bottom to spell out a word. Enter on page 45.

9	7	18	4	12		13	19	16	26	12		7	
7		25		19		11		15		17	20	25	2
18	25	24	4	7	16	25	14	20		20		12	
12		16		13		12		22	20	19	17	8	10
17	18	19		6	8	20	6	18				18	
		25		16		18		25	11	17	18	25	21
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12	16	4	4	16	19		4		3		7		
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	16		4	18	22	18	12		2	11	5	19	10

A B C D E F G H ~~I~~ J K L M N O P Q ~~R~~ S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			S	I	R							

PRIZE ANSWER

8	20	7	25	12	16	2
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Your Dilemmas

Can't make your mind up? Write to us at *Pick Me Up!* for good advice



Include Dad in the wedding?

Sue, 59,
Leigh

My ex-husband and I split when our only daughter was 14. He'd met someone else and they're now married with an 8-year-old son. Though we're all on good terms and see each other a lot, my daughter has never fully forgiven her dad.

Now 26, she's getting married. She has invited her dad to the wedding, but she's asked my partner to give her away and me to make the speech. Her dad is devastated. He's always been a good father to her and she's only known my partner for three years! I think she'll live to regret excluding her dad from these traditional roles. Should I ask her to reconsider?



YES

Pick Me Up! reader Charlotte Ellis says, 'She

will definitely regret this, whether it's in a year or a decade. If he's been a good dad to her throughout her life, it seems ridiculous to choose a man she's known for three years to give her away instead. I can understand why she feels the need to punish her father, but an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.'

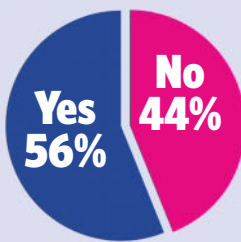


NO

Pick Me Up! reader Julie Hilton says,

'Your daughter is an adult and has a right to her own feelings. Just because you've moved on doesn't mean she isn't allowed to feel as she does. It's her wedding, not yours or your ex-husband's. And he has to accept this as a consequence of his selfish actions all those years ago. Respect her wishes and say nothing more.'

f Reader Poll



Stop ex feeding our child junk?

Nadia, 35,
Thatcham

My 11-year-old daughter has been struggling with body image and confidence. She's started to put on a lot of weight and is getting pretty big.

I cook her healthy meals and encourage fruit as snacks, but when she's with her dad - my ex - he lets her eat whatever she wants. We share custody and are on good terms, but when I mention her weight, he gets defensive. I'm concerned for her health and mental wellbeing. Should I insist that my ex stop giving her junk food?



YES

Pick Me Up! reader Michelle McGrath says,

'There's no mincing words in this. Your daughter's health comes first. Your ex needs to be man enough to accept there's room for improvement. You need to explain that you're only pointing these things out for your child's benefit. And keep going with the healthy food at home. In time, she may prefer those choices.'



NO

Pick Me Up! reader Andrea Jones Savin

says, 'Maybe you could start cooking with her. It could be a fun, bonding time where she learns to make healthy meals. If she enjoys it, she might take it to her dad's. Don't mention weight as it may make her feel worse but do explain the health benefits of each food used. If her father won't help her, then you having fun preparing meals might just be what she needs.'

ADVICE LINES

● Family trouble? You can always call the Family Lives helpline on 0808 800 2222.

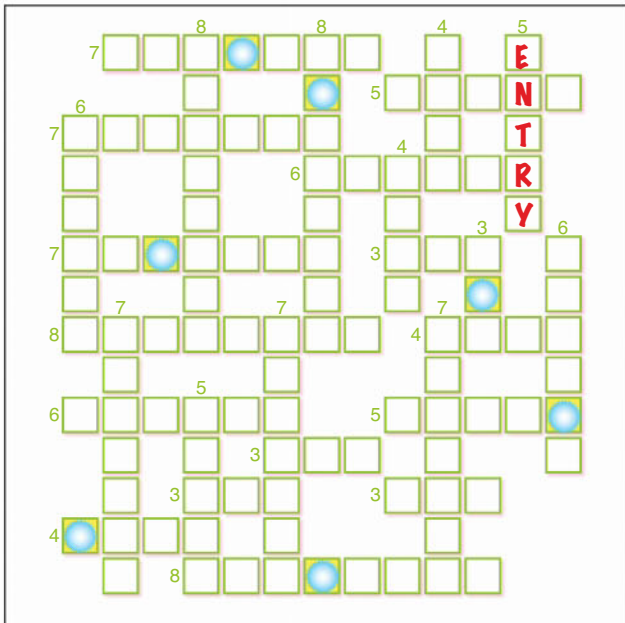
● Relate offer support in all kinds of family turmoil. Head to relate.org.uk or call 0300 100 1234 to see how they can help you.

● For advice on encouraging children and teens to develop healthier eating habits, visit kidshealth.org and search 'healthy eating'.

WIN £25!

Cross it!

Solve the puzzle to find a word. Fit the words back in the grid and the letters in the highlighted squares spell out the answer. We've put in one word to help.
Enter on page 45.



- | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 3 letters | 4 letters | Entry | 7 letters | 8 letters |
| Ale | Arch | Franc | Ethanol | Alleyway |
| Gap | Crab | Rumba | Joyride | Dodderer |
| Log | Spay | 6 letters | Rockery | Drudgery |
| Man | Talc | Anyone | Scapula | Yardbird |
| Pun | | Dither | Seminar | |
| | 5 letters | Scorch | Untried | |
| | Bairn | Unused | | |

WIN £25!

Sudoku!

To solve the puzzle, each 3 x 2 box, each column and each row must contain the numbers 1 to 6. Solve the puzzle, then read down the numbers in the highlighted squares for the prize answer.
Enter on page 45.

		2	1	4	
	6			5	4
5	3			1	
	2	3	4		

A hound

AHA

When Kristen Horton, 25, from Virginia, took on pooch Strudel, she had a massive mission on her hands...

The moment I saw Strudel, I fell in love with her. Maybe it was the big brown eyes. Perhaps the huge, cheeky smile. Or maybe the fact that this gorgeous golden retriever was, well, a little on the tubby side.

OK, make that a *lot* on the tubby side!

Weighing 5st 12lb, the porky pooch was nearly double the 3st recommended for her breed.

'Aww, look!' I said to my hubby Wynn, 25, as I perused the Hearts for Hounds Facebook page, an organisation that found homes for unwanted dogs.

We'd helped them out a few times, fostering 10 dogs before a permanent home was found.

It turned out that Strudel needed a foster home, too.

'Let's have her!' I said to Wynn. 'We could even help her to lose weight.'

'Why not?' Wynn agreed. An animal lover like me, we shared Chloey, a 4-month-old rescue dog, and a rabbit called Oliver.

We wanted a second dog to keep Chloey company, but

didn't have the time or money for another full-time pup.

Going to collect Strudel in August 2017, I was smitten.

'She's adorable!' I cooed, as her tail wagged frantically.

She was so sweet and gentle, but also slow and heavy.

'There's no way I can lift her!' I told Wynn as we got ready to take her home.

'You'll have to do it!'

Watching Wynn try to haul Strudel into the car, I sighed.

We were going to have our work cut out, getting our chubby chum's weight down.

'She *needs* to lose the pounds,' a vet confirmed, when we took her for a check-up.

Turned out she had a high fat content, crunchy joints and a thyroid problem.

'No more fatty treats for you,' I told her firmly.

We found out Strudel had spent most of her life with an elderly woman who'd been unwell, hadn't been able to take care of her properly. Strudel had eaten a poor diet, with very little exercise.

When the lady died, her family took Strudel to a shelter to make sure she got a good,

She'd eaten a poor diet, with very little exercise

d and ALF

GRR-EAT BIG REAL LIFE

Strudel was a very porky pup indeed!



She became part of the family

'forever' home.

'We'll find you a new family,' I promised Strudel - we just had to get her into shape first.

Under the vet's guidance, we started by putting her on a strict diet - half a cup of dry food and a spoonful of wet food twice a day, plus a pill for her joints and one for her thyroid.

And we took Strudel for two-mile walks every day.

At the weekend, we'd make sure it was at least three miles, maybe even four.

To begin with, it was tough. Strudel would get tired after less than a mile, stop in the middle of the pavement, and have a lie down, before walking a bit further and doing the same again.

Tempting though it was to push her to walk more, we had to remember she hadn't had an easy life, and wasn't used to so much activity, or even being outdoors much.

'We don't want to overwork

her,' Wynn and I agreed.

So we were careful, always carrying water, making sure Strudel was hydrated.

Chloey loved the company, too!

Our patience paid off. Within a month, Strudel's energy levels were through the roof, and she was always waiting by the front door when she saw me getting her lead for walks.

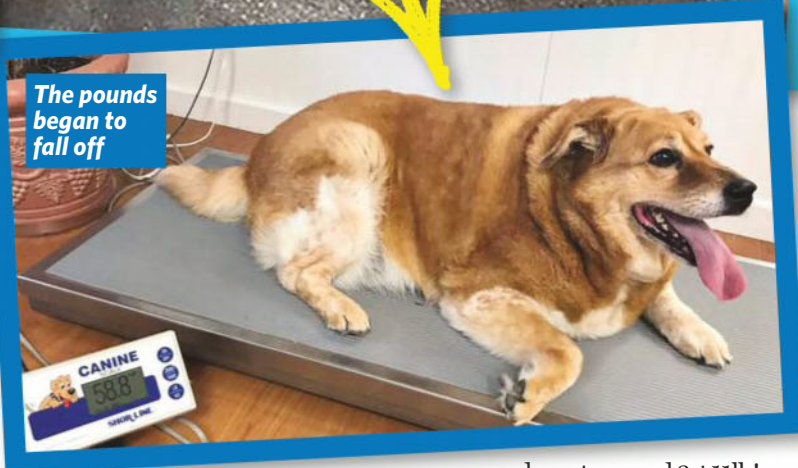
Her tail wouldn't stop wagging from the minute we'd go out, until we got back again.

'Look at her! She's like a completely different dog!' I laughed to Wynn.

'You can see the confidence in her!' he agreed happily.

We signed her up for weekly agility-training classes, which helped with the weight loss

The pounds began to fall off



Seeing her come out of her shell was amazing

and strengthened her joints.

Seeing Strudel come out of her shell was amazing. She was with us for four months, and we never heard her bark once!

Even when she lost the weight, and was bounding around chasing squirrels and rabbits, she never made a peep.

At the end of November, it was time to pass Strudel on to her new, permanent family.

We were sad to see her go, as she'd become part of the family, but were thrilled she was leaving so much happier and healthier.

At her weigh-in, she was

down to a good 3st 11lb!

The great thing is, she's gone to a home nearby. Wynn used to take her to work sometimes and a colleague showed interest in adopting her.

Strudel is a special dog, so we knew she had to go to a special home. Her new owners were looking for a therapy dog for their daughter, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Strudel is a gentle giant and has a lot of love to give, so we knew she'd be the perfect fit.

We get email updates and pictures regularly, and even get to see her sometimes.

It's great knowing she's with a caring, happy family, and still running around and keeping off those unwanted pounds!

'I want to get

PREGNNA

He was the only dad that Sammy, 30, had ever known, then he unleashed his sick plan

had her period and it's ruined them.' Oblivious, Mum believed his sick lies. A while before, Mum had taken

My face close to the sketch pad, I concentrated hard as I worked on my drawing – it was a picture of a cute puppy.

'Very good,' my stepdad Peter Hayes, then 25, smiled.

Before I knew it, he was sitting cross-legged on the floor next to me.

'Here, draw the ears like this,' he said, showing me how.

Aged 7, I loved drawing with Peter. We'd spend hours together, just the two of us.

Peter had been in my life since I was 5. My biological father and mother had split up when I was 4, and I didn't have a relationship with my real dad.

Peter was the only father figure I'd ever really known.

If we weren't drawing together, he'd cuddle me and read me bedtime stories.

But, when I was aged 11, things changed.

One day after school, I was doing homework in my room when Peter came in.

Mum was out and I assumed he was just going to ask what I fancied for tea.

Instead, he sat on the bed next to me and began touching my legs.

Frozen, I didn't say a word. *What was happening?*

As his hands slid up my skirt and into my knickers, I started trembling.

Outside, I could hear the

chimes of the ice-cream van.

I focused on that, tried to block out what was happening.

Minutes passed, then... 'Don't tell your mum,' Hayes told me sternly, getting up and walking out.

I was too young to understand what had just happened to me.

So I bottled it up, didn't tell a soul.

But it happened again and again. Hayes would grope me in my bedroom after school, often as the music from the ice-cream van chimed outside.

I'd think about all the people buying choc-ices, unaware of what was going on behind my bedroom curtains.

I longed to be out there with them. Free – away from him.

By 12, I'd learnt about sex at school and I knew what Hayes was doing was wrong.

He's a pervert. I'd think, my skin crawling.

But he'd make threats to scare me out of telling anyone.

'Just remember the beating you'll get,' he'd warn menacingly.

When I was a teenager, Hayes hated the idea of me having a relationship.

'You're too young!' he'd shout. 'I'd better not find out that you've got a boyfriend.'

Mum thought he was simply

being a protective stepdad.

But I knew the dark truth. Hayes wanted to be the only one who touched me.

One day when I was 16, Hayes and I were at home alone together.

I was in the living room when he came charging at me.

Forcing himself on me, he bent me over the sofa.

Then he held me down and raped me.

Pain ripped through me.

'Peter, stop!' I begged, terrified.

'Shhh,' he replied.

'I want to get you pregnant.'

Blood trickled down my legs and, after he'd finished, he went upstairs to run a bath.

'Get in there and clean yourself

up,' he ordered sharply.

I felt so dirty and ashamed. I wanted to scrub away every trace of him from my skin.

After, I shut myself in my bedroom, hugging my knees. I couldn't stop crying, shaking.

Hayes, the man I saw as a dad, had brutally stolen my virginity.

And I was terrified of his plans to make me pregnant...

Mum's bathroom mats were stained with my blood, so Hayes stuffed them into the back of my wardrobe.

'I'll have to buy you some new ones, love,' he told Mum when she got home. 'Sammy's

As his hand slid up my skirt, I started trembling

me to the doctor to be put on the contraceptive Pill, because we were told it helped with period cramps.

After that, Hayes would hunt for my Pills and throw them away.

'Tell your mum you've been taking them,' he instructed. 'I'm going to get you pregnant, and you'll tell everyone it's a boy from school's baby.'

He had it all worked out. His twisted plan gave me the chills.

I lived in fear of him and, every time he touched me, it was as if my body went into shock – paralysed with fright.

Then one night, when I was still 16, Mum and Hayes came home after an evening out drinking with friends.

Mum went to bed, but Hayes had other ideas.

'I'll be up in a minute, get yourself ready,' he winked, as I climbed the stairs.

My whole body trembled.

And finally, in that moment, I just snapped.

There was no way I was waiting around for Hayes to rape me again, so I threw some clothes into bags.

Minutes later, I crept downstairs and realised Hayes had passed out on the sofa.

I ran out of the front door, didn't turn back as I made my way to Mum's friend's house.

'What on earth?' she cried, opening the door to me.

'Peter's been raping me,' I sobbed, blurting it all

**you
DON'T!**



Hayes told me not to tell anyone



Aged 15, I was in a living hell

out to her.

'You need to tell the police!' she cried, shocked.

She held my hand, as I phoned them. And she was so supportive when they arrived and I made a statement.

'I'm not going back home,' I told officers.

So the Social Services were called, and I was moved into a safe house.

Shortly after, I was told Peter Hayes had been arrested.

But I was so scarred by his abuse, I struggled to move on. I kept getting awful flashbacks.

Every time I heard the sound of an ice-cream van, my nerves were shot to pieces.

Just hearing those chimes made me feel physically sick.

In the end, it all became too much for me and I was put on antidepressants.

Then in July 2006, Peter Anthony Hayes, then

37, appeared at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court.

At the last minute, he pleaded guilty to a string of charges, including indecent assault on a female and rape.

He was jailed, and it was a relief to know he'd spend years behind bars.

I refused to let Hayes destroy my future, though.

So, while he was locked up, I started living my life again.

By that time, I'd met my boyfriend Joe, while out for drinks with friends.

I'd accidentally spilled a drink on him at the bar, and he'd seen the funny side.

We'd fallen for each other

and, when I told him about Hayes, he became my rock.

As the years passed, Joe helped me to move on and forget about Hayes.

But, one day in 2016, I received a letter from the parole board.

Hayes had applied for parole.

I felt my heart pounding. He'd served 10 years, but it didn't seem enough for what he'd done.

'He doesn't deserve to be let out of jail!' I cried.

It brought everything flooding back again.

The rape, the touching, the music from the ice-cream vans... It all triggered my

anxiety and depression again.

I decided to write to the parole board with my victim-impact statement, explaining the effect Hayes' abuse still had on me.

Thankfully, it was enough to keep Hayes locked up.

For now, he remains in prison. But his minimum sentence has passed now, so I know he could be released any day.

That's why I've moved to a different area.

I can't bear the thought of bumping into him.

Hayes destroyed a huge part of my life, but I'm just relieved his vile plans to get me pregnant were scuppered.

When I have a baby, it'll be with the man I love. Not with some sick, twisted pervert.

I wasn't going to wait around for him to rape me again

Your style

Jeans



Shirts



Skirts



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Simply Be

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Lipsy



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Matalan



£29.99
Zara



Animal magic

Show us what your pets are up to and get **£25 CASH**

I adopted Hugh Huffner from the National Exotic Hedgehog Rescue Service. He now enjoys a life of luxury in his 'playhog mansion'!

Krissie Cope, Manchester

I'm still very ssssssmall

Our boa constrictor Beau is now 5ft long, but still has lots of growing to do!

Hannah Sterriker, Farnborough

Poppy seems to prefer my daughter's doll's house to her own bed!

Heather Sutcliffe, Hebden Bridge

A room with a mew

Fancy a cuddle?

I'm sure some will disagree, but I think my tarantula Ellie Eight Legs is the cutest!

Demi Agius, Cardiff

Keep your paws off!

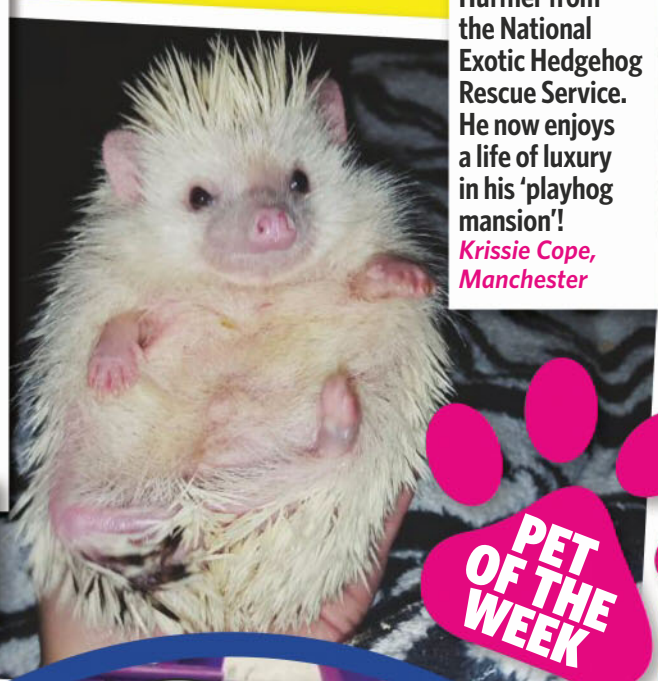
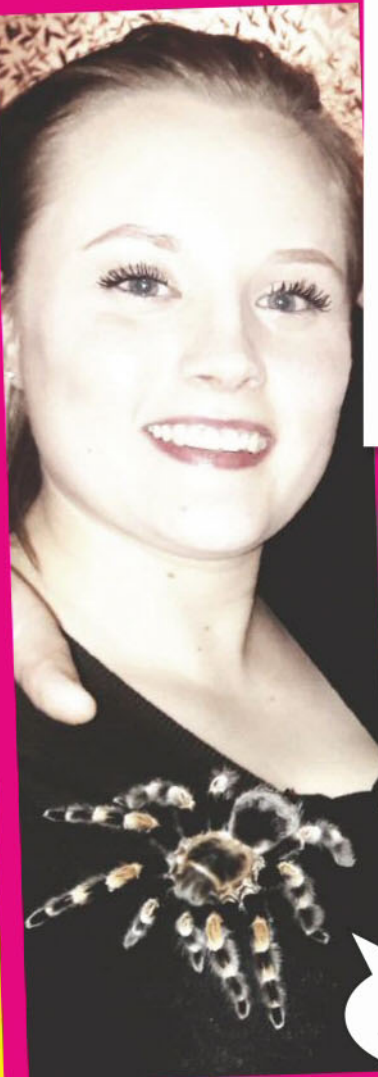
Bailey has never been too keen on sharing his favourite toys!

Jack Cliburn, Welling

Here are our 2-day-old guinea pigs Jenny, Sapphire and Teddy with their mum Willow and dad Hospie.

Kirsty Main, via email

Leaves? I prefer biscuits



Pick Me Up! Bingo

PROMOTION

I won £1,000

TWICE!

Karen spoils her family with her winnings...



Karen Carder, 46, Woking

Last April, it was just after 10pm, and I'd agreed to pick up our daughter, 17, from her chip-shop job.

I had a bit of time before I had to leave, so I opened up my laptop to have a few games of Pick Me Up! Bingo.

I'd joined a few years ago. I loved bingo and the site has lots of great games.

My favourite was Tiki, a 90-ball bingo game. I also enjoyed Diamond Bingo. I'd had a big win on it in February 2015.

My husband, 47, had been

playing darts with mates and wanting 'me time' I'd bought tickets for Diamond Bingo and let the games play out.

Only, before I knew it, there was a message on screen.

Winner! it read.

I'd scooped the £1,014 jackpot – and when I phoned my husband, I could hardly speak! 'He'd been as shocked as me.

When it had sunk in, we chatted about how to spend my winnings.

Our eldest daughter, 19, wanted driving lessons, so I put the money towards that, and spent the rest on bits for the house.

Winning was so nice and

It's about having fun. Winning is a bonus, but I just enjoy the games

I still played Pick Me Up! Bingo! when I had the time.

For me, it was about having fun. Winning was a bonus, but I just enjoy the games.

Like now, as I waited to pick up my daughter from work.

I bought a few tickets for Tiki bingo, then I let the games play out while I watched TV.

When I looked back at my laptop, *Winner!* was flashing. I'd scooped another £1,000! My husband was getting ready for bed, so I raced upstairs to find him.

'I've won again!' I told him.

'Yeah, right!' he laughed.

So I showed him my laptop and his jaw dropped. We were over the moon.

But I didn't have very much time to celebrate my win, as

I had to dash out to pick up my daughter as promised.

She was so happy for me. 'How about I buy you some driving lessons, too?' I asked.

It was only fair, after I'd spent my last win on her sister's driving lessons.

'Brilliant!' she grinned. 'So Mum's taxi service can go out of business!' I teased.

I'm putting the rest of the cash towards a few nights out and I'll treat my other two kids, aged 14 and 12, to something nice.

I still can't believe I'm a double winner – but I'm proof that it can happen to anyone!

Thanks Pick Me Up! Bingo!

CHATROOM CASH: WIN UP TO £10!

Work your way through our Bingo rounds to make it to the Royal Rumble and grab a cash prize! Make sure that you're in the Cloud chatroom between now and Wednesday 28 February for your chance to take part in our game. Let's get ready to rumble!

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WORDS: CHER HEASMER

Pick Me Up!
Bingo

I WON

£3,458!

Thrilled to bag a jackpot!

Phyllis Elliot-Tingley, 62, Brighton

local football team play. 'I hope you win!' I cried, as he was tying his shoelaces.

What shall I do tonight, then? I thought.

'Why don't you play a game of bingo this evening?' David suggested.

It was almost like he'd read my mind!

I'd been a member of Pick Me Up! Bingo for

It was October last year, and I was about to have a night in by myself, which was very rare.

My husband David, 64, had ordered a cab and was waiting for it to turn up. He was going to see our

WORDS: EMMIE HARRISON



Cor-phew!
We're off to sunny Corfu

ages – since January 2011.

Although I'd won a couple of hundred quid here and there, I hadn't had any really big wins!

I mainly played for the friends I'd made online and in the chatrooms.

At 7pm I bought some tickets for

Lounge Bingo – this was one of my favourite games along with the Double Bubble slot games.

Lounge Bingo isn't like your typical game of Bingo – you have to match up different game patterns to win.

The patterns can be anything

'Come on number 59! I was cheering out loud to myself

from an elephant to a barbell. On this particular game we were playing for a complete blackout.

'Hi, how are you?'

I typed to my usual friends in the chatrooms.

We gossiped to each other about our lives and we always ended up having a good laugh.

'Good luck!' we all typed to one another.

Then in the second game, I suddenly noticed that I only needed one more number.

'Come on number 59!' I was cheering out loud to myself.

I'd win £2,150 for a full house if I got that number.

'That's not bad at all!' David said smiling as he walked off to get his coat.

Then I realised that another number had popped up.

It was 59!

My screen started flashing

BINGO
Lounge

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Play bingo with patterns and blackouts! Make winning patterns on your cards to enjoy great cash prizes – there is a Game Jackpot and a fantastic Progressive Jackpot to be won. Tickets are just 10p each, but check out Pick Me Up! Bingo for daily offers, such as buy one, get one free.



JACKPOT

Phyllis
Three Thousand
And Fifty

33

72

63

66

70

72

PROMOTION

NOT A MEMBER YET?

Get £35 to play

when you deposit just £10*

THAT'S

3,500

CHANCES TO WIN**

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POT WINNER!

£3,458

£3,458
Three Thousand, Four Hundred
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How to claim:

- 1 Visit pickmeupbingo.com
- 2 Enter promo code PMUK8
- 3 Deposit £10 and we'll top it up to £35*

with lots of bright colours. *Jackpot!* It said on screen. I'd won £3,458! I was totally speechless. Then, in shock and with joy I started screaming. 'What's wrong?' I heard David call out. He ran into the kitchen where I was playing. 'I've won!' I cried. 'Have you won more?' he said, puzzled by my reaction. As I'd won before, he must have wondered why this time I was screaming. Shaking my head, I turned the laptop screen towards him. 'I've just won the jackpot!' I cried - and then I burst into happy tears. David was gobsmacked. It turned out that I'd not only won the full house - but I'd also bagged the

progressive jackpot of £1,308! David and I kissed and danced around together. Then he gave me a massive bear hug. 'I can't believe it!' David told me, still stunned. *I think she might have fainted!* somebody in the chatroom typed. They had seen on the site that I'd won the jackpot. They were lovely all sending me their congratulations and being really kind. *I still can't believe I've won!* I typed back in reply. But by now, my hands were shaking. Although David still went along to the football match, he said after that he wasn't able to

concentrate while he was there! The win really did come at the perfect time for us. Our tumble dryer had blown up three days earlier! 'We should definitely get a new one,' I smiled. It didn't really settle in until I saw my bank balance three days later. Safe to say, we went on a bit of a spending spree! We got ourselves a brand, spanking new tumble dryer. And treated our family. They were spoilt rotten! My daughter chose a lovely new coat and our granddaughter got some

designer clothes and perfume. It was a delight seeing their faces, opening their pressies. We managed to put some savings away for a holiday, too. It's been ages since we went away together. So, this May, we're heading off to Corfu. We've never there been before. 'It'll be lovely enjoying being in the sun together,' I told David. So, it's a massive thank you to Pick Me Up! Bingo. For my big win, and my new friends in the chatroom. I'll also send you some photos from my sunlounger - with a cocktail in my hand to celebrate!

The win really did come at the perfect time for us...

JOIN NOW AT

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PHOTO (NOT ACTUAL HOLIDAY): GETTY IMAGES

Would you hire 'MANNY'?

How comfortable are you leaving your kids alone in the care of a man?

When you picture a nanny, who comes to mind? Whether it's Disney's Mary Poppins or her modern-day counterpart, Jo 'Super Nanny' Frost, we bet the person you pictured was a woman.

It's not just nannies who are mostly portrayed as female, either. Jobs in nursery nursing, childminding – in fact, any that involve caring for young children – tend to be seen as 'women's work'.

It even affects teaching,

as Department of Education figures from 2016 show. According to the DoE, just 15 per cent of primary school teachers are male.

Why is this? Could it be that we don't like the idea of leaving our kids alone with a man?

Research by Direct Line Home Insurance reveals that 12 million UK parents – 36 per cent of those surveyed – would never consider hiring a man to care for their children.

Of those, 72 per cent admitted the reason they wouldn't hire a male nanny is that they would feel more comfortable with their

children being cared for by a woman.

And a whopping 41 per cent didn't think childcare was a suitable career for a man to even consider, showing that traditional gender stereotypes are still very much alive.

So is looking after children really not a job for men?

Kristen Harding, a childcare expert for Tinies babysitter and nanny agency, believes the view is slowly changing.

She said, 'We've been lucky at Tinies – whenever we have a male nanny, he tends to get hired very quickly. While there are still low numbers of male nannies, we've seen the number start to grow slowly.'

'We've also seen an increase in the number of men looking for roles in nurseries – we're excited to see the shift, and are doing everything we can to support this.'

Whether you're hiring a childminder – male or female – the most important thing to consider is their qualifications.

Surely if a man's training is up to scratch, there's no reason not to give him a job looking after your kids?

But in the Direct Line survey, parents and expectant parents who were looking for childcare were given two identical CVs – one with a male applicant's name and photo, the other, female. Only 28 per

cent of parents offered the man an interview, compared with 48 per cent who wanted to interview the woman.

Also, the male candidate was asked for criminal background check details considerably more often than his female counterpart.

Could this mean fear of male aggression or paedophilia may be behind the wariness?

Katie Lomas, Direct Line's Home Director who conducted the research, said, 'It is surprising to see that, in our modern society, we are still discriminating

based on gender.'

'Men are increasingly interested in pursuing childcare as a career and, as a society, we should be accepting of the breakdown in gender stereotypes, and embracing equality.'

Some people say that there are distinct advantages to hiring a male childminder.

For example, they could

It's estimated that 3% of men work in pre-primary education worldwide

CHOOSING CHILDCARE

- To find out what's available in your area, contact your local authority, which will provide details on all registered childcare in the borough, including childminders, pre-school play groups, before- and after-school clubs, and holiday play schemes. These will all be DBS (formerly CRB) checked.
- If you're looking for more short-term childcare, such as a babysitter, ask friends and family for recommendations. Or consider advertising at a local college that teaches childcare courses, and ask applicants for references from other families.
- Trust your gut instinct. If you've got any doubts, look around for someone else.

Manny to the



Britney Spears



Gwyneth Paltrow

ea

?

HOT TOPIC

Here's what YOU SAY...

If he's qualified, are you willing to hire him?

'If a man is a childminder and has the same qualifications as a woman, why should it matter? As long as my child is cared for, then I'm happy!'
Claire Taylor, Harlescott, Shrewsbury



'Unless it's family or close male friends then, no, I wouldn't trust a "manny" to look after my daughters.'
Sharon Sutton, Bowburn, Durham



'I wouldn't employ a man to babysit my children. Most women have a natural instinct when it comes to babies and small children. They have softer voices in general, and probably more experience than a man.'
Lorna Dutton, Weymouth, Dorset



'I think it says more about the parents than it does anything else. To assume a male will abuse your daughter means you've already made sweeping generalisations about an entire sex.'
Louise Warren, Swadlincote, Derbyshire



provide a male role model for a child who doesn't have a father at home.

Kristen has found this is the case at Tinies.

She said, "There are certain clients who request a male nanny. We often find that single mums who are looking for childcare will ask about hiring a "manny".

But, of course, it's not only parents' attitudes towards male caregivers that are relevant to the discussion.

Significantly fewer men than women may be drawn to pursuing a career in childcare in the first place, possibly because it's not seen

as a traditionally 'manly' role.

So what's it like to be a man in what's still widely regarded as a woman's profession?

Ben, a Tinies nanny from Brighton, said, "I have found that being a male in the industry helps me.

"More and more people seem to be open to male nannies now, and I think it's great! I've had two different

long-term nanny jobs, and both clients said that me being male was one of the main reasons

I got the role – so I can't say I have ever come across any sexism as yet."

Kristen is also optimistic about a more widespread

change of heart

when it comes to the nation's parents hiring male caregivers.

She said, "In many cases, all it takes is the endorsement from someone else about the benefits of having a "manny" to get people to consider the option."

So, in the future, are we likely to see just as many men as women working as nannies and childminders?

That remains to be seen.

But, as in many other areas, the breakdown of gender stereotypes can only be a good thing for both sexes.

London is the city (out of those canvassed in a survey) most likely to hire a 'manny'

e stars

All these celebs have hired male nannies to care for their kids...



Elle Macpherson



Madonna



Jennifer Lopez

**HELLO
BABY!**



Celebrate your new arrival and get **£25 CASH**



Batboy

At just 6 weeks old, my son Arlo adores Batman, and looks pretty convincing as a caped crusader himself!
Kim Coopey, Cardiff



Happy face!

My beautiful daughter Riley is only a few months old, but she already has the most beautiful smile!
Maxine Stevens, via email



Pink lady

Here's my 6-week-old daughter Willow Rose Brook. Isn't she sweet? I'm sure I don't need to tell you what her favourite colour is!
Leigh Thewlis, Bradford

Fighting

WITH A SMILE

Told her little boy was constipated, Katie Carter, 30, from Hull, had no idea of the true battle that lay ahead

My youngest son Daniel snuggled up close to me. 'It hurts, Mummy,' he said, crying and rubbing his belly.

It was early 2016, and Daniel was then 5 years old.

He hadn't been able to go to the toilet for a couple of days.

All he wanted was cuddles with Mummy – it wasn't like Daniel at all.

He was usually a boisterous little boy.

A happy chap, always wanting to get stuck in with his older brothers David, then 7, and Liam, 6.

Now, he didn't want to play and there was no sign of his cheeky grin.

Worried, I decided to take him to the doctor's.

Thinking Daniel just had a tummy ache, they suggested we try giving him Calpol.

But we were soon back at the surgery with the same problem.

This time, we were given

laxative sachets in the hope they'd ease his constipation.

'They're not working,' my husband Kevin, then 29, said after a couple of weeks.

He was right, Daniel had been off school and seemed in more pain than ever.

For the next few months, we were back and forth from the doctor's, but they were baffled.

Nothing we tried helped.

'Maybe we should get a second opinion,' I said to Kevin.

By then, Daniel was in so much pain he couldn't get up and walk.

We took him to a new GP, where the doctor felt his stomach and gave him a check-up.

'Something's not quite right,' the

doctor warned. 'You need to go straight to A&E.'

Panicking, I jumped in a taxi with Daniel and my older boys, and we rushed to Hull Royal Hospital.

Kevin joined us there, and Daniel was seen straightaway.

'We just need to listen to

his chest,' one doctor told us.

But soon, more doctors swarmed round Daniel's bed as we waited for a diagnosis.

It was painful, not knowing what was going on while medics fussed over our boy.

Daniel was kept in for tests for a few days, before he was whisked off for a CT scan.

'It's something bad, I know it,' I sobbed to Kevin.

'At least they're taking it seriously,' he said, holding me.

That night, as we waited for the scan results, I couldn't sleep.

What was wrong with our little boy?

The next day we went in to see Daniel's doctor, shaking with nerves.

'We're really sorry to tell you, but Daniel has a large cancerous tumour on his chest and spine,' he said.

'No!' I wept, devastated.

Our poor boy hadn't had constipation, or a tummy ache.

He had cancer!

We found out it was rare neuroblastoma, at the highest, most aggressive Stage 4.

And the worst part was that doctors said he'd been living

Daniel had been off school and seemed in more pain than ever



Daniel with David (left) and Liam



My little trouper

we'd been through, we didn't have the time or money.

Then we were approached by a local charity, called Nice 2B Nice.

It said it could help us raise the money – £9,000 to convert Daniel's garden into an accessible and safe play area for him.

We made a video online to help raise awareness. It was full of pictures of Daniel smiling in his hospital bed, messing about with his brothers and hugging his doctors and nurses.

It really brought home how brave he'd been and, in no time, the money was raised and the work began.

Daniel's eyes lit up as soon as he saw his new garden and now he loves playing in it. His brothers are so lovely with him.

But we all have difficult days. 'Why am I in a wheelchair?' Daniel asks me sometimes, and it's hard for me to find the right words.

He still doesn't quite understand when I tell him it was because of a tumour.

He's gone back to school, but only for an hour a day.

Soon he'll move to a more specialised school which is designed for wheelchair access.

He'll continue to have scans every three months, but he has to have the all-clear for five years before he's officially in remission.

For now, we're just taking it one day at a time.

We'll try to make his life as ordinary as possible.

But, most of all, we're so glad that he's come out the other side of cancer.

So many people don't survive what Daniel's been through.

Our brave, smiley little boy is back at home where he belongs.

That's the only thing that really matters.

brother often and they played as though Daniel wasn't even ill. Despite everything, his face would light up whenever he saw them.

That cheeky smile of his was never far away, even through the hardest of times.

But the treatment was brutal. 'Doctors say the next round of chemo could put him into Intensive Care!' Kevin cried to me on the phone, a few weeks after the surgery.

Watching our boy have painful chemo was heartbreaking. But he was a real trouper, giggling and smiling through his treatment.

Luckily, Daniel was strong and, by February 2017, he'd made it through the chemo. And after that he had three weeks of radiation.

Then CT scans showed the cancer was being kept at bay.

By March 2017, he was no longer having treatment and we were so relieved that he could finally come back home.

But Daniel still had to cope with life in a wheelchair.

He'd always loved the outdoors and playing with his brothers, so that summer, we moved, hoping to renovate the garden for him.

But after everything

paralysed from the waist down. 'My poor boy!' I wept.

He'd never walk again and would spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

But there was no time to come to terms with the shattering news, as Daniel needed to start intense chemotherapy.

'Daniel is poorly, but doctors are giving him special medicine to make him better,' we told the older boys.

'Will he lose his hair?' Liam asked.

'Maybe,' I replied. I knew the answer was yes, but I didn't want to scare Daniel.

He was started on a low dose of chemo to see how his body would respond.

His hair did fall out and it was hard watching him get so sick.

Then doctors decided to put him on a higher dose.

It was tough on us all. While Daniel was in Leeds, with Kevin at his bedside, I was looking after Liam and David at home in Hull. It was so hard being apart.

But I took the boys to see their

with it for the past two years.

The cancer had spread to his pelvis and under his arms.

Wiping away my tears, I could barely look at Daniel in his hospital bed.

He was so small and innocent, yet so very sick.

'We need to take you to a special hospital,' Kevin finally told him, with tears in his eyes. 'We need to make you better.'

Daniel needed an operation to remove the tumour straightaway.

A few days later, my parents looked after David and Liam, while Daniel was taken to Leeds General Infirmary.

The next day, as our little boy clutched his teddy bear, I was heartbroken to see his confused face as he was wheeled down to the theatre. I was a wreck.

As the tumour was sitting on Daniel's spine, the 12-hour surgery was complicated.

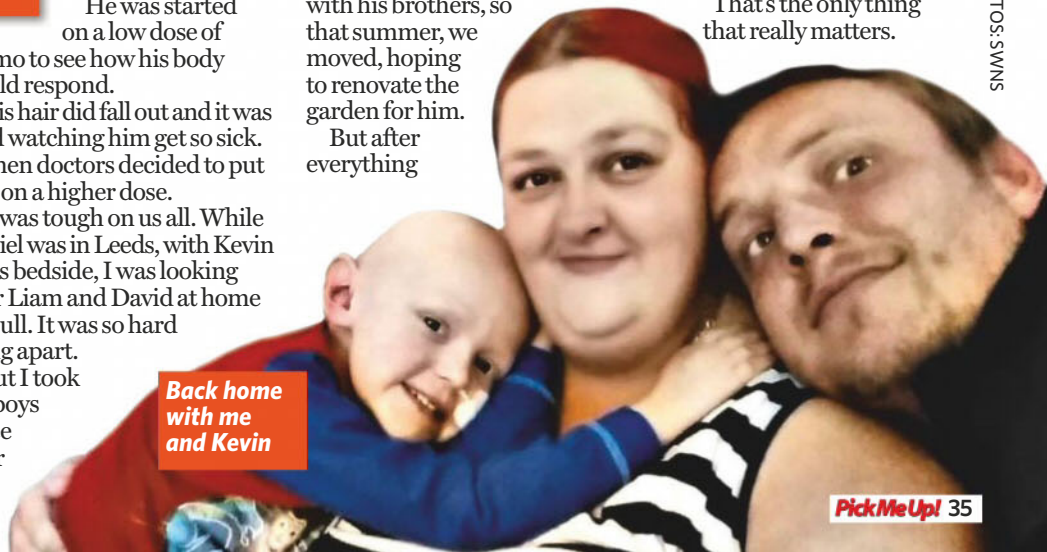
'How did it go?' I asked, as soon as the doctor emerged.

But it wasn't good news. They'd managed to remove most of it, but the tumour had damaged his spinal cord.

It meant that Daniel was

My poor boy was paralysed and would never walk again

Back home with me and Kevin



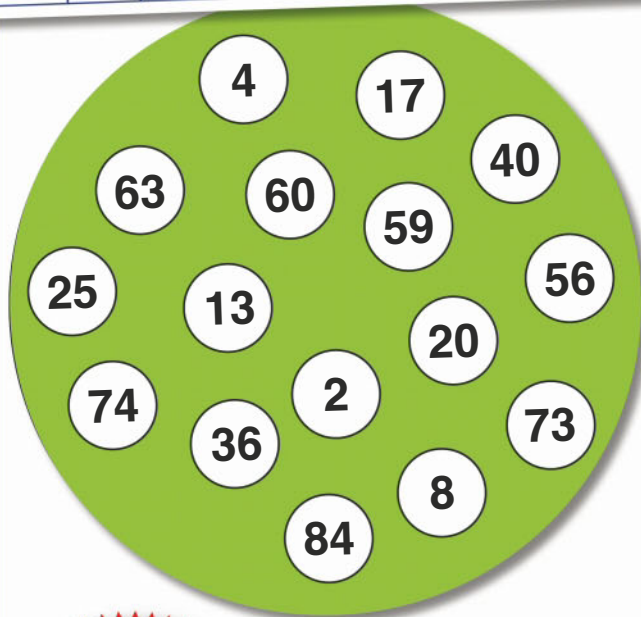
WIN £100!

PUZZLE 6

Strike it!

On your bingo card, cross out all the numbers that appear on the balls. Read the letters beside the remaining numbers on your card from left to right to spell out your answer word. To enter, complete the coupon on page 45.

	A	R		N	T	I		T
	9	25		46	51	60		84
L	D	V				U	N	
2	14	27				67	73	
	E		E	S		R	E	
	17		33	56		76	89	



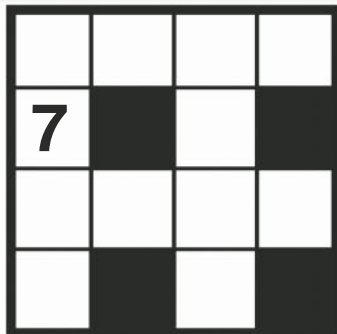
WIN £25!

PUZZLE 7

Number fit!

Which one of the listed numbers won't fit in this mini grid? Enter on p45.

- 4024 6047
- 4062 6720
- 4742



What a WORK

When Sarah Moore, 26, from North Ronaldsay, ditched city life and a dull job, she'd no idea what she'd be taking on...

Rushing around the stockroom, I was up to my ears with deliveries as usual. Busy, yes, but... *This is boring,* I thought, miserable.

It was May 2014, and I'd been working as a stockroom processor in a clothes shop in Edinburgh for almost three years, hating every minute.

I popped out for lunch, but my mood didn't improve.

Cars beeping, people rushing around... I'd never been much of a city girl.

'We'll be off on holiday next week,' my mum Jennifer reminded me later.

Mum, my dad John and I were going back to the Orkney Islands for the second time - a group of 70 beautiful, peaceful, remote islands north of Scotland.

My little piece of heaven...

'I can't wait,' I sighed.

Stepping off the plane a week

later, I felt a rush of happiness.

Surrounded by blue sea and rolling hills, it was hard to believe all this was just an hour's flight away.

'I just love it here,' I said.

'I know you do, love,' Mum said, smiling.

The next two weeks exploring the islands were incredible. There were no traffic jams and no queues.

With a population of just 22,000, you could go ages without seeing anyone.

But thoughts of life at home were like a black cloud hanging over me.

'I can't face going back!'

I cried on our last day.

'Back to reality,' said Dad.

I felt crushed.

But an idea started to form...

The minute I was home, I got out my laptop.

How to live in the Orkney Islands, I typed into the search-engine bar.

I read that an ageing





Shining light!
Cleaning the
lighthouse lamp

HORSE!



**In need of a
firefighter?**
That'll be me



Hot wheels!
Yes, I drive
diggers, too

population meant the islands were crying out for young people like me, to go over there and work!
‘This could be the answer,’ I told Dad.
‘We all want to escape the rat race,’ he sighed. ‘But it’s harder than you think.’
I knew it’d be tough, but I’d nothing to lose.
At 23, I lived with my parents, hated my job and was desperate for a new start. Prepared to try my hand at

anything, I knew that I could find work.
I’d my heart set on moving to one of the smallest of the islands, North Ronaldsay.
But, with a lack of housing there, the hardest part would be finding somewhere to live.
So I signed up to a housing website and, meanwhile...
‘I quit,’ I told my boss.
Walking out, I’d never felt so elated. *I was finally free!*
‘You did what?!’ cried Dad.
It was hasty – but, within weeks, I found work at a local kennels. Then, in December, I got the email I’d been waiting for. A two-bed bungalow had come up for rent on the island.
At the bottom of a hill, with just one other house nearby, it looked cosy and idyllic.
‘I’ll come to see it with you,’ Dad said to me.
‘Coming round to the idea, then?’ I smiled.
‘Let’s see this place first,’ he

said, rolling his eyes.
When we arrived, the bungalow was even better than the photos.
‘I love it!’ I cried.
‘Won’t you get lonely?’ Dad asked, worried.
‘No,’ I replied. ‘But I’ll miss you and Mum.’
The island was tiny, only five miles wide with a population of just 45! But I knew it’d be easy to meet people by visiting the other islands, too.

‘You’ll be the youngest person here,’ grinned the estate agent.
‘As long as I have plenty of work,’ I said.
As luck would have it, he knew an old lady who needed some help.
And so my decision was made.

In February 2015, feeling terrified, I moved into my little cottage on North Ronaldsay.
What have I done? I thought, struggling to work the boiler.
But, later that day, my new neighbour popped over to help.
‘How do you feel about sheep?’ he asked over a cuppa.
With over 2,000 on the island, they desperately needed people to help herd, shear and care for them.
Before I knew it, I had

20 sheep in my back garden!
My care job involved making breakfast for an elderly lady each morning, leaving plenty of time to be a shepherdess, too.
And, as I met more islanders, more job offers came in.
Before long, I was a carer, a shepherdess, and I worked at the airport a few hours a day.
There, I had several roles – as firefighter, baggage handler and air-traffic controller!

A couple of years on, I heard the postman was retiring. It wouldn’t take more than an hour every few days to deliver the mail, so I applied – and got the job!
Since then, I’ve taken a job as the town clerk,

I drive diggers on a farm and I do tours of the lighthouse.
That’s nine jobs!
It may sound crazy, but I’ve never felt so free. Nine jobs here is better than my one dull one back in Edinburgh!
Last October, my parents retired out here. I’m so happy, I’ll never leave this island.
Yes, juggling nine jobs is a handful, and I don’t get much time off. But, to me, every day is like a holiday!

Prepared to try my hand at anything, I knew I’d find work



Herd about my job as a shepherdess?

Look Amazing!

This week: Here's to our hair heroes



HASK Monoi Coconut Oil Nourishing Shampoo, £6.99, Superdrug
HASK know a thing or two about adding shine. This shampoo works on all hair types for locks so soft you won't be able to stop playing with them.

Nioxin 3D Care System Kit 3 for Coloured Hair with Light Thinning, £32.10, available in salons
This kit works to improve the thickness of your tresses by up to 50%, as well as protecting against colour fade.



Charles Worthington Instant Root Concealer in Dark Blonde, £9.99, Boots
This spray provides even coverage and lasts for up to 72 hours, so say bye to pesky greys!

Quick fix



Shea Moisture Argan Oil & Almond Milk Smooth & Tame Conditioner, £10.99, Boots
This mask is great for anyone with thick, curly hair. But be sure to only use a little at a time to avoid greasy tresses.



CoLab Dry Shampoo in Paradise, £3.49, feelunique.com
Spritz on to your roots to revive greasy locks in between washes. The coconut scent is dreamy, reminding me of summer holidays.

Noughty To The Rescue Anti-Frizz Serum, £8.99, noughtyhaircare.co.uk
Smooth over frizzed ends and flyaways for a sleek 'do. Even better, it's made from 97% natural ingredients and hasn't been tested on animals.



Vegan friendly



Tried and tested

TRESemmé Runway Max The Volume Root-Lift & Texture Foam, £6, Tesco
Apply to towel-dried hair before styling. Don't let the sticky texture put you off - it leaves even super-fine locks bouncy.



Toni & Guy Illuminating Hair Perfume, £8.25, Superdrug
A few sprays of this will buy you a little extra time between hair washes, and add shine to brittle ends. We love the floral scent.



Pretty Gorgeous Beauty Formula supplement, £19.99 for 30 capsules, Holland & Barrett
This amazing supplement contains biotin, vitamin C and zinc to maintain your skin, hair and nails all year round.

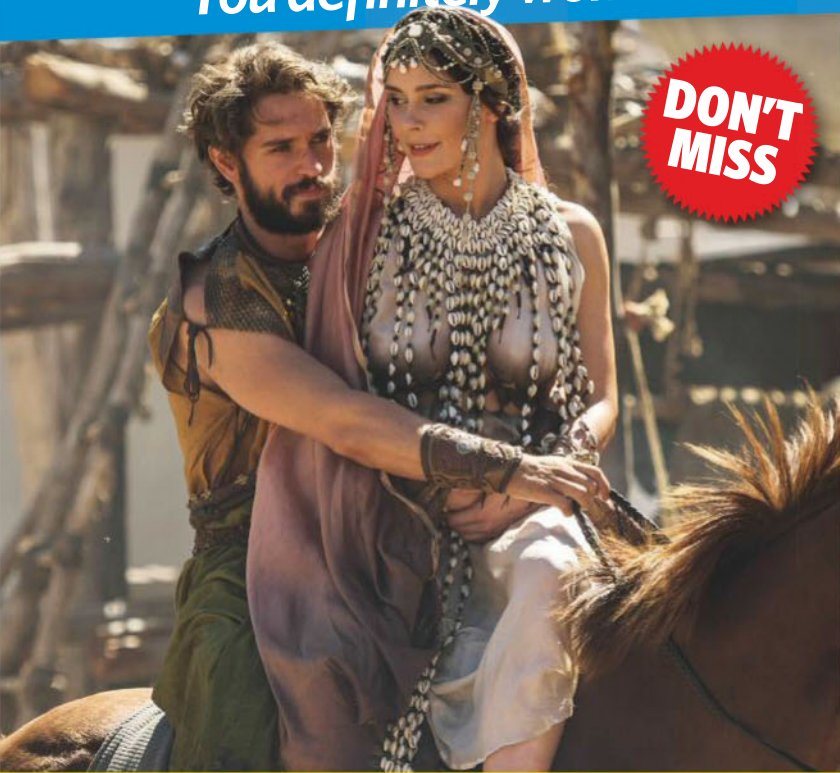


WORDS: JESS BEECH

Your telly

Pick of the week

You definitely won't want to miss these TV treats



DON'T MISS

Troy: Fall of a City, BBC1

Romantic intrigue, betrayal, battles, mysterious gods and, of course, the wooden horse feature in this epic eight-part drama based on the Ancient Greek legend. Louis Hunter and Bella Dayne star as Paris and Helen (above), whose affair

sparks a war. David Threlfall and Frances O'Connor play the King and Queen of Troy and Jonas Armstrong is the King of Sparta. David Gyasi is warrior Achilles, who has the infamous showdown with Trojan rival Hector, played by Tom Weston-Jones.

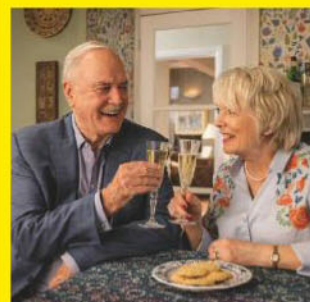


The Brit Awards 2018, ITV

Expect jokes galore at the music industry's expense from Jack Whitehall, as he hosts the Brits from London's O2. Dua Lipa leads the way with five nominations and Ed Sheeran has three. Other hopefuls include former One Directioners Zayn Malik, Liam Payne and Harry Styles, plus Paloma Faith and Jessie Ware.

Hold The Sunset, BBC1

This new comedy stars acting royalty! Edith (Alison Steadman) is a widow with adult children.



Phil (John Cleese) is her old boyfriend who lives across the road and wants to marry Edith and move abroad. She says yes to his proposal, but then her son Roger (Jason Watkins) turns up and ruins everything!



Benidorm: 10 Years on Holiday, ITV

The Garveys, including Siobhan Finneran and Steve Pemberton, are back in Benidorm for a one-off documentary to celebrate 10 years of the comedy. They talk about being on the show and we see the real locations used for the Solana and Neptune's bar.



The BAFTA Film Awards, BBC1

Joanna Lumley will be Ab Fab hosting these awards at the Royal Opera House in front of the best British and Hollywood acting talent. Among the movies up for Best Film are *Dunkirk* with Tom Hardy (above), *Darkest Hour* and *Call Me By Your Name*.



Marcella, ITV

Anna Friel is back for a second series of the police drama. Marcella, newly promoted DCI Tim Williamson, again played by Jamie Bamber, and the team investigate when the body of a schoolboy turns up. The lad just happens to be her son's friend. Nigel Planer, Keith Allen and Victoria Smurfit are new to the cast.

WORDS: NICK CANNON PHOTOS: BBC/WILD MERCURY PRODUCTIONS, DAVE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES, REV/SHUTTERSTOCK, WARNERBROS, BBC

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GO EAST!

Celebrate Chinese New Year with these fast, flavour-packed recipes

Treat
of the
Week

Ken Hom's stir-fried pork with black bean sauce

Serves: 4 Prep: 10 mins, plus marinating Cook: 10 mins

- 450g lean pork
 - 1½tbsp groundnut or vegetable oil
 - 2-3 spring onions, finely chopped, plus sliced spring onion, to garnish
 - 1tbsp shallots, sliced
 - 3tbsp black bean sauce
 - 2tbsp soy sauce
 - 1tsp caster sugar
 - 1tbsp chicken stock or water
 - 1tbsp sesame oil
- For the marinade:
- 1tbsp soy sauce
 - 2tsp sesame oil
 - 1tbsp rice wine vinegar or dry sherry
 - 1tsp cornflour

1 Cut pork into thin 5cm slices, then mix with marinade ingredients. Set aside for about 20 mins.

2 Heat a wok or large frying pan until hot. Add half the groundnut or vegetable oil and, when very hot, stir-fry pork for 2-3 mins. Transfer to a colander set over a bowl.

3 Wipe pan clean, reheat, then add the rest of the

groundnut or vegetable oil. Add spring onions and shallots, then the rest of the ingredients except the sesame oil. Bring to a boil, then return pork to the pan.

4 Stir-fry the mixture for another 3 mins, then drizzle with sesame oil. Transfer on to a serving platter, top with spring onions and serve.



59p
per
serving

Crunchy sesame seed veg stir-fry

Serves: 4 Prep: 5 mins Cook: 10 mins

- 200g sesame seeds
- 1tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 garlic cloves, diced
- 2cm ginger, grated
- 120g green beans, cut into 5cm pieces
- 100g beansprouts
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into slices

For the sauce:

- 2tbsp teriyaki sauce
- 1tbsp water
- 1tsp sesame dressing

1 Toast sesame seeds by tossing in a hot wok or frying pan without oil. When lightly golden, tip out

on to a plate and set aside.

2 Heat oil in the wok or frying pan until very hot. Sauté together the garlic and ginger, then add green beans and cook until beans are almost done.

3 Add beansprouts and red bell pepper, then stir-fry for another 2 mins. Sprinkle in toasted sesame seeds and toss lightly.

4 Add sauce mix and cook until thickened, then serve with rice or noodles.

Recipes and photos from Lee Kum Kee. For more ideas and recipes, visit uk.lkk.com/recipes

WIN
PUZZLE 8 **£50**

Bitesize!

1	2	3	4
5			
6			
7			

ACROSS

- 1 Circular token (4)
- 5 Viva voce (4)
- 6 Unconscious state (4)
- 7 Had learned (4)

DOWN

- 1 Part of a harbour (4)
- 2 Widely used metal (4)
- 3 Identical (4)
- 4 Pincer part of crab's leg (4)

Read down the shaded squares for the prize answer. To enter, see p45.

Marinated chicken with crispy noodles

Serves: 4 Prep: 20 mins Cook: 25 mins

- 225g chicken breasts, finely sliced
- 225g dried, thin Chinese egg noodles
- 5tbsp oil
- 175g beansprouts
- 1tbsp soy sauce
- 2tbsp rice wine or dry sherry
- 2tbsp oyster sauce
- 300ml chicken stock
- 1tbsp cornflour mixed with 1½tbsp water
- 2 spring onions, sliced, to garnish

For the marinade:

- 1 egg white
- 2tsp cornflour
- Salt and pepper

1 Mix chicken and marinade ingredients well and leave in the fridge for at least 20 mins.

2 Blanch noodles for 2 mins, then drain. Heat a large frying pan until very hot, then add 1½tbsp oil.

3 Spread out noodles, turn down heat and brown until crispy for 5-8 mins. Flip and crisp other side, adding more oil if needed. Remove and keep warm.

4 Heat a wok until very hot, then add 2tbsp oil. Remove from the heat and immediately add marinated chicken, stirring often to keep it from sticking. When chicken turns white, quickly drain in a colander set over a bowl. Discard oil.

5 Clean wok with kitchen paper and reheat on high. Add beansprouts, soy, rice wine or sherry, oyster sauce and stock. Bring to boil and add cornflour mixture. Bring back to a simmer.

6 Return chicken to sauce and stir. Turn out noodles, pour over chicken and sauce, and garnish with spring onions.



£1.40
per
serving



Pup POW

Gillian Cassidy, 37, from Bangor, County Down, just knew something was wrong with her baby...

We'll face the future with a smile



LOOK OF LOVE

WORDS: EMMIE HARRISON, JADE BECROFT. PHOTOS: BELFAST NEWS & FEATURES

Looking at my poorly baby, two thoughts flitted through my mind. First... *Something is wrong.* Then... *Is this what they call mother's instinct?*

Lucia was our first child for my hubby Anders and I.

Despite suffering with extreme morning sickness when I carried her, the pregnancy had gone to plan.

And, when she was born in May 2009, weighing 6lb 6oz, doctors had given her a clean bill of health.

That lasted just two days, when she got her first viral infection. She had a rash and a temperature.

'It's normal,' the nurses said, treating Lucia with antibiotics. But that was just the start.

Next, Lucia wouldn't latch on to feed and I had to express breastmilk onto a spoon.

'Lots of babies struggle,'

I was reassured by the medics.

But, even after we took her home after five days, Lucia didn't get better. The viral infections were relentless.

After wasted trips to the GP where I was told not to panic, I stopped taking her.

'Children get all sorts,' I said to Anders.

I'd never been a mum...

How would I know? But deep down, my instincts were screaming...

Something isn't quite right.

Like how, sometimes, Lucia would go days or even weeks without filling her nappy.

Not walking or talking, still like a little baby.

'Is it my fault?' I fretted to Anders. Was I doing something wrong?

Doctors insisted she was fine, just a bit slow.

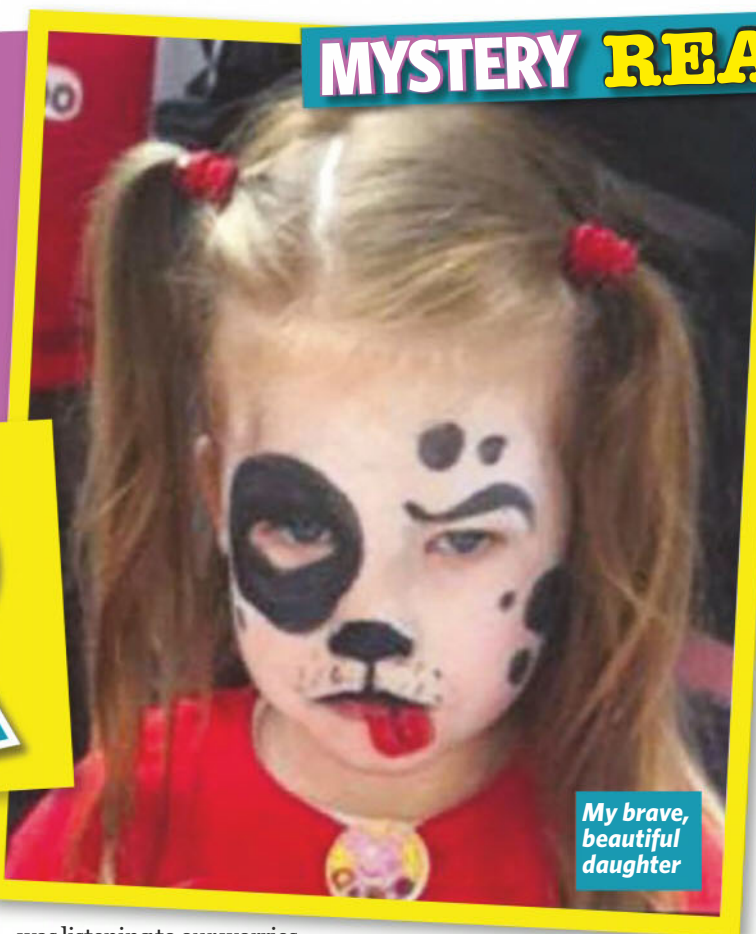
They assured me that all babies got some infections.

Then, one day in 2011, Anders went out to play footie.

'So it's just me and you,

Doctors assured me babies get all sorts of infections

Copy Paster



My brave, beautiful daughter

sweetheart,' I cooed to Lucia. I fed her cocktail sausages, ripped them into tiny pieces. She still struggled with solids. Except after one bite, she started turning blue.

She's choking!

Panicking, I opened her mouth, tried to get the food out, but it was stuck.

Grabbing Lucia, I ran outside, hoping to get help from a neighbour.

Turning her upside down, I started slapping her hard on the back.

And then, suddenly, the sausage flew out.

I crumpled onto the grass sobbing tears of anger and frustration.

Choking could happen to any child. Yet everything seemed to happen to my poor Lucia.

It all had to be connected. And I had to get her help.

Speaking to Lucia's health visitor, I insisted on being referred to hospital.

First, we were seen by a speech and language therapist.

They quickly discovered Lucia had a problem with her oesophagus.

She was put on a soft-food diet till she learned how to eat.

Feeding her liquidised food at least meant she was unlikely to choke again.

And, over the next year, Anders and I took Lucia from one doctor to another.

So many specialists, but not a lot of answers.

Still, at least finally someone

was listening to our worries.

Then, in 2012, when Lucia was 3, she was given a blood test looking for a variety of diseases and syndromes.

On the form, I recognised some names of conditions.

But one stood out – 22q11.

What on earth is that? I wondered.

Back home, I researched it online.

Within seconds, I knew that whatever this condition was, my girl had it...

Children online with 22q11 looked identical to Lucia.

Our little girl had narrow eyes and a long nose with a wide bridge. She had no folds under her eyes. And she had a short stature and tiny feet.

Right then, I was convinced.

Lucia had 22q11.

Sure enough, the blood tests confirmed it.

Known sometimes as DiGeorge syndrome, the condition is caused by a genetic problem called 22q11 deletion.

'Unfortunately there's nothing we can do to help,' a doctor said.

I found out some 22q11 babies die within days of birth, with no immune system.

We were the lucky ones.

It turned out Lucia had heart defects, problems with her immune system

and developmental delay.

She needed round-the-clock care, and her future was uncertain. Her body and brain could only be monitored, especially around puberty.

So I quit my job. I was heartbroken, but I knew Lucia needed my all.

By then, I had Minnie, now 6, and Otis, 5.

Thankfully, tests showed they weren't affected.

But things got worse for Lucia.

She had speech and language delay and, aged 6, she

was diagnosed with autism.

Apparently, it's common in those with 22q11.

Lucia was 5 when she finally learned to speak.

Frustrated, she suffered social anxiety and tantrums.

Instead of bonding with humans, she preferred animals. She adored them, every horse or dog we passed was patted.

'I'm not Lucia, I'm a dog!' she'd say with a woof.

She'd refuse to go out unless she was dressed as a dog. With her face painted like one, she'd crawl on all fours.

She even licked people she knew well, bless her.

But seeing her on some days when she was down was a different matter. It broke my

Some children with the condition die within days of birth

heart. I felt so hopeless.

In the future, Lucia could develop schizophrenia or psychosis.

I needed to do more.

So, in April 2016, I helped open the first 22q11 clinic in Northern Ireland. With over 150 on the books, it was clear people needed my help.

Incredibly, although people think it's rare, it affects one in every 900 births.

I started working at the clinic as a patient advocate co-ordinator, along with a geneticist and psychiatrist.

Right now, we're monitoring Lucia's movements. Her right shoulder juts out due to spine curvature and she may need a back brace when she reaches her teens.

Lucia suffers with constant abdominal pain and still has viral infections every three weeks.

But she amazes me.

'Aren't I so lucky to have 22q11?' she said out of the blue, age 8. 'I'm the only one in the family to have it, and you can talk about me at work.'

Because of my work at the clinic, Lucia's made lifelong friends with other girls like her. She has 22q11 sleepovers.

We even have clinic trips out with 22q11-ers worldwide!

It's amazing to see my girl chat away to people like her.

But the one thing that will really bring joy to Lucia's life is a dog. We've been told we are getting an assistance dog from a charity called Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland.

The dog will be trained to help her cross the road, as she has no awareness of danger.

And it'll help calm her when she has a meltdown, too.

'When I'm older, I'm going to be a vet with eight pugs!' she grins.

Lucia attends a special school now. But, in order to get her to wear her grey school tights, we had to convince her dogs wear tights, too.

And, yes, I found pictures of dogs in tights – thank goodness for the Internet!

Going forward, Anders and I aren't sure what the future will bring for Lucia.

But I know if our puppy-mad princess can face it smiling, then we can, too.

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Puzzle entry

Issue 8, 22 Feb 2018 Closing date for all entries: **28 Feb 2018** (three working days later for postal entries)

Puzzle 1 A quick word! p3

Final answer

Puzzle 2 Follow it! p8

Final answer

Puzzle 3 Crack it! p20

Final answer

Puzzle 4 Cross it! p22

Final answer

Puzzle 5 Sudoku! p22

Final answer

Puzzle 6 Strike it! p36

Final answer

Puzzle 7 Number fit! p36

Final answer

Puzzle 8 Bitesize! p41

Final answer

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Daytime tel _____

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4 WAYS TO ENTER

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PRIZE PUZZLE ANSWERS

Issue 6, 8 February 2018

Cross it!

```

N U T R I E N T   S H A H
  E   C   R   O
D I E   E   P A P Y R U S
  O   O   W   I   E
C O R P S E   L   Z   L   E
  V   A   U   L   S   O   E
M A L L   P L A T O N I C
  R   I   H   A   T
  Y   L   O   S T U C C O
  N   L E A R N   U   A   R
  O   I   T   S A R
C O M R A D E   D A M O
  S   E
H Y E N A   U N D E R G O
    
```

Crack it!

```

A W F U L   S M E L T   P
C   I   O   P   X   H A I R
H A N D B R A K E   U   G
E   A   E   N   R   E D U C E
D I N   L O G I C   A
  C   I   L   I   N   S O L E
O V E R A W E   S   A   I
  O   E   R   E B U I L D
P L A C E B O   N   L
  U   U   U   A Q U A T I C
S P I R A L   I   N   A
  T   L U R C H   P I E
J U M P E D   I   A   I   L
  O   R   O V E N P R O O F
L U D O   Z   S   P   C   I
  S   D W E L T   Y E A R N
    
```

J A I N Y R S X G K T U B
D E O F Q M L W P V C Z H

Crack it! Mistake

A quick word!
Grandchild

Follow it!

```

P L U H   P U U
R A N G E   A U G U S T
  O   I R E   N   L   S
  S P A T U L A   L I A R S
  U   B   S   I   K   I
O T   S L O P   W H   Z Z I N G
O R B S   S U R G E   O   M A N O N
E H A I T I   A C T U P B
H A L O   O   M A N I A   E L F
S P A N D A   T   A D D E R
G U N   L   R E S E N T   I   A
R R S   I   R   Y A K   E N T R Y
R E V O K E   S I N K   E   I
H H P E N S   Y   O   T   E M P T
L U S H   T   A T   G I N A   A P E
N I T   I M I S E S   C U R L S
E T N A   D E E   N E C K   Y E T
    
```

Win without finishing!

```

B L L L   O   P   R
R E V E N U E   S U B A Q U A
  F   A   K   T   R   L
R O U G H E N   P R E T Z E L
  R   U   W   W   U   Y
F E D E R A T I O N   B E N D
  L   R   N   A   E
C O S T U M E D E S I G N E R
  I   N   O   B   K   D
A G O G   G R A C I O U S L Y
  E   A   G   R   P   E
R E D T A P E   I T A L I C S
  X   H   I   I   I   O
P A G E A N T   U N I F O R M
  M   R   G   U   I   T   D
    
```

Sudoku! 1,2,3

Strike it! Neolithic

Number fit! 573

Bitesize! Fret

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IS YOUR NAME HERE?

Prize winners, Issue 51/52, 28 Dec 2017

£25 an answer

A Summerfield,
Guildford.

Crack it!

M Hassall,
Crewe.

Follow it!

P Bell,
Sleaford.

Strike it!

J Lillywhite,
Fareham.

Cross it!

M Newsham,
Wigan.

Ed's test!

M Ashbrooke,
Nantwich.

Sudoku!

V Fairclough,
Northwich.

Number fit!

C Mansfield,
Liverpool.

Bitesize!

T Clarke,
Nottingham.

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WIN
PUZZLE 9

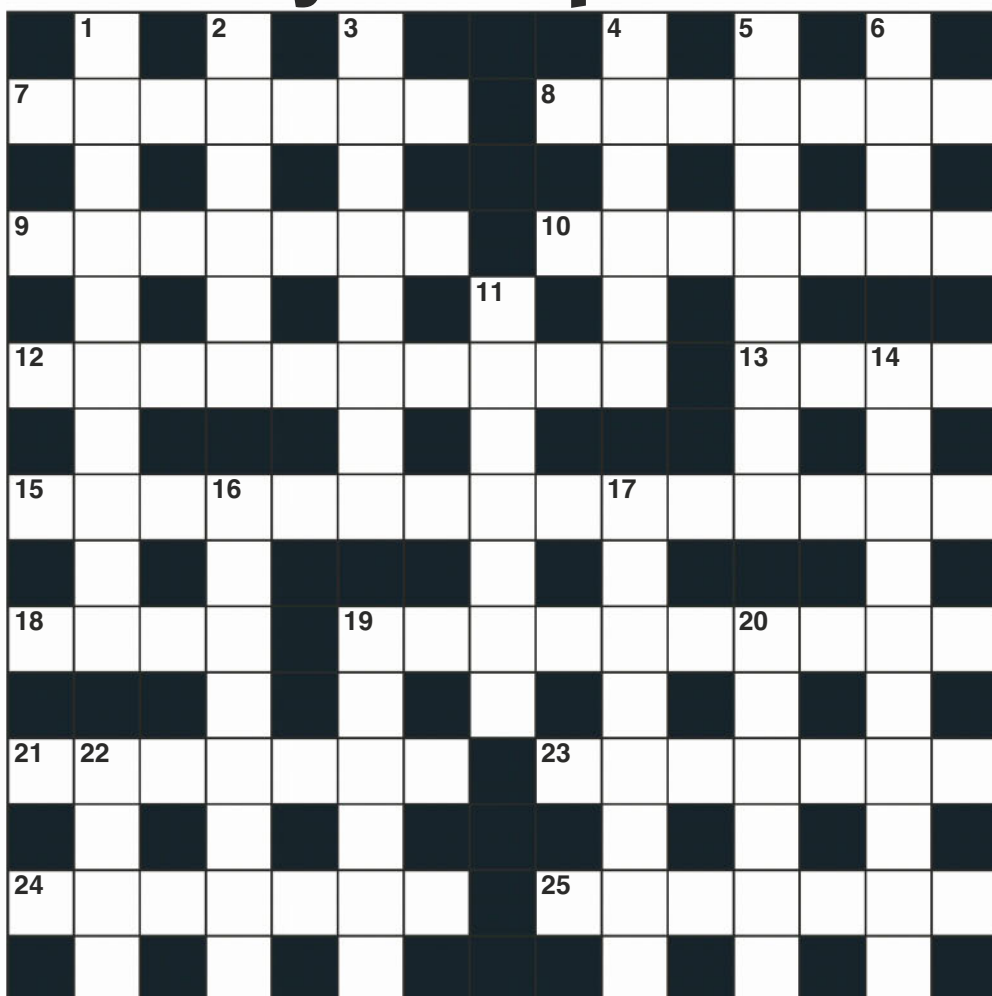
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ACROSS

- 7 On tap (beer) (7)
- 8 Poison (7)
- 9 Angling waters (7)
- 10 Shortened (7)
- 12 Holy and protected (10)
- 13 Roman item of attire (4)
- 15 Hardly weighing anything (5,2,1,7)
- 18 Bicycle-wheel covering (4)
- 19 Harsh treatment (10)
- 21 Blow up (a balloon) (7)
- 23 Audibility distance (7)
- 24 Small tablemat (7)
- 25 Unventilated, stuffy (7)

DOWN

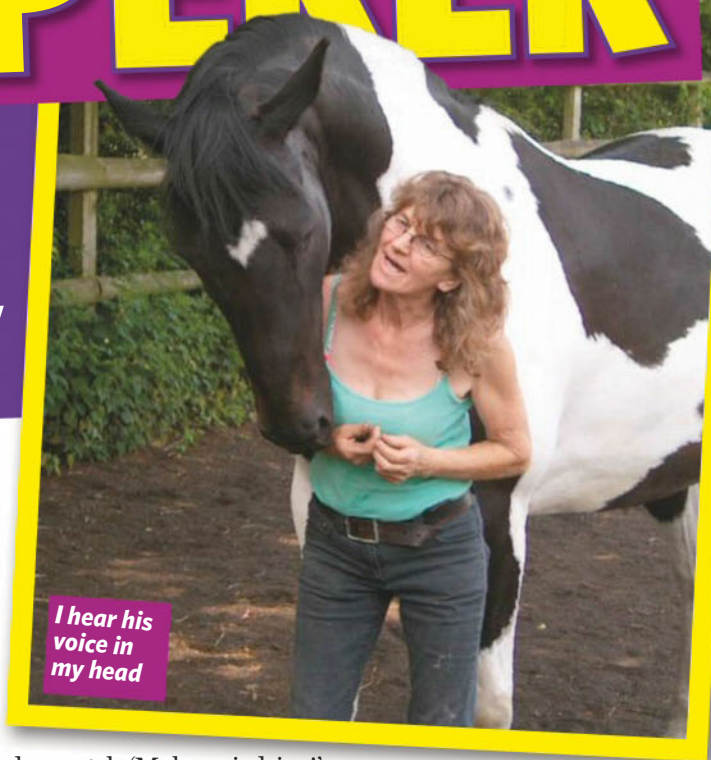
- 1 As a general rule (10)
- 2 Novel's creator (6)
- 3 Force of personality (8)
- 4 Concealed decay (3,3)
- 5 Persevere doggedly (4,2,2)
- 6 Animal pelt (4)
- 11 Spooky, weird (7)
- 14 Glass-covered structure (10)
- 16 Taking no notice (8)
- 17 Highly delighted (8)
- 19 Sales talk (6)
- 20 Bodily tissue providing strength (6)
- 22 Cosy niche (4)



The **only** prize crossword in the world you don't have to finish to win!

The horse WHISPERER

Her beloved pet was dying, but Helen Comerford, 59, from Stratford-upon-Avon, knew exactly who to call...



I hear his voice in my head

When I became the owner of 3-year-old horse Peace in November 2009, I felt our bond was instant.

I knew what he was thinking. I heard his voice in my head.

I was certain we'd been together in a past life as Native Americans.

He was my soul mate.

Then, one day in September 2015, I got up early as usual to go and see him.

But a girl from the stables

where I kept him phoned me.

'Something's wrong with Peace,' she told me. 'I think it might be colic.'

In horses, colic – a serious stomach condition – can be life-threatening.

Panic-stricken, I asked my vet to meet me at the stables.

I could hear Peace calling me in my mind.

'Mummy, I'm dying!' he said. My heart broke.

Arriving, I took one look at Peace and I knew he had a dangerous form of colic where a horse's gut becomes twisted.

'It's serious,' the vet said. 'We must get him to equine hospital to operate.'

Distraught, I rang my friend, psychic medium Morgan Class. She'd always been there for me.

'Please help,' I begged her,

desperately. 'My horse is dying!'

'He'll live,' she promised. 'He's coming home and you'll ride him again.'

Stroking Peace's neck, I led him onto a lorry to get him to the hospital. I was desperate to believe Morgan's words.

All the way there, Morgan said she was sending poorly Peace healing.

'There'll be a surprise soon,' she said.

But, at the hospital, vets gave Peace just a 30 per cent chance of surviving.

He was taken for surgery and I went home.

I was devastated, couldn't face the thought of life without Peace.

When Morgan rang later, I told her what the vets had said about Peace's chances.

'No, he's got a 100 per cent chance,' she said. 'My healing will give him strength.'

Incredibly, against the odds,

Peace made it through. He'd suffered no lasting damage, and would make a full recovery.

'A miracle,' the vet said.

Maybe. Certainly Morgan psychically sent him healing.

Everyone at the hospital was astonished by how quickly Peace recovered from surgery.

He barely even had a scar.

Six days on, he came home, but I couldn't ride him.

Only, as I fed Peace, he stared deep into my eyes.

He was saying I could sit on him.

As I lowered myself onto his

back, I cried with joy.

Once again, Morgan had been right.

Now, Peace is back to his old self and I ride him every day.

I believe he's only here because of Morgan.

She gave him the strength to pull through.

She is truly a force for good.

All the way to hospital, Morgan was sending Peace healing



Peace - my soul mate

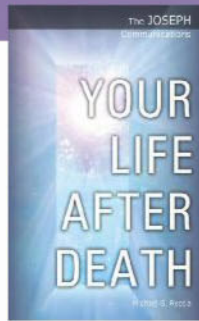


Morgan was right again

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Your Stars

15-21 February 2018

7 days of hope & happiness with Claire Petulengro

ARIES

21 March-20 April

Look on every exit as being an entrance to somewhere else. Yes, a chapter of your life is ending but Saturn and Mars have joined forces to make sure it's one that will be to your advantage. You'll be turning that frown upside down (ie, smiling) before you know it!

Call: 09058 170 710*

TAURUS

21 April-21 May

If your mind can conceive it, then your heart can start to believe in it. This is a feeling that you'll begin to embrace more and more as the days go by. A worry about a family member is given a helping hand by somebody you didn't even realise was 'on side'!

Call: 09058 170 711*

GEMINI

22 May-21 June

Unexpected visitors and good news via email, letter or text will make this week a very constructive one. Don't be afraid to travel far and wide to make your career a better place to be. Those you need to impress will be, if you show just how dedicated you really are...

Call: 09058 170 712*

CANCER

22 June-23 July

This is a really good week to tie up legal or official details. You must agree they've been going on long enough, Cancer. Give those who need to help you a gentle nudge. Look out for an ex who's trying to make an apology of sorts. The question is: can you forgive?

Call: 09058 170 713*

LEO

24 July-23 Aug

You may have to give tough love to a close one who's intent on saying and doing things that are really likely to upset you. Maybe try distancing yourself from them if they don't listen to your needs. It's your life and they've been inflicting unnecessary stress!

Call: 09058 170 714*

VIRGO

24 Aug-23 Sept

There is a sense of nerves to your chart, but actually in a really good way. You begin to realise that you have just been existing and that now you are living. You make decisions that involve major changes later this year. I'm excited for you. This path is your destiny.

Call: 09058 170 715*

LIBRA

24 Sept-23 Oct

Somebody important to you may witness you telling lies to distance yourself from those you don't want to spend so much time with. Could that be awkward? Age differences in love beckon for some of your sign. Make your opinions, don't just take others.

Call: 09058 170 716*

SCORPIO

24 Oct-22 Nov

There's a lot of friction in the workplace but talking through what's been going on can help you to make things easier and indeed to find a solution. Your love life gets more interesting by the day. By the end of this week you'll know what you have to do and why...

Call: 09058 170 717*

SAGITTARIUS

23 Nov-21 Dec

The home comes under the spotlight and you're faced with making decisions you thought you wouldn't have to make for months, if not years, to come. This change is good but only if you ride it out and put your own needs and feelings to the fore and not those of other people.

Call: 09058 170 718*

CAPRICORN

22 Dec-20 Jan

Trust in yourself. I can see just how much you've been doubting yourself lately and worrying about things that aren't even in your control. An older person wants to be more a part of your life and can benefit your future as much as you will be able to benefit theirs.

Call: 09058 170 719*

AQUARIUS

21 Jan-19 Feb

Your family is proving to be the source of much stress and Mars will be pushing you to ask for answers that close ones may not yet be able to give you. Do try and support your close ones to find answers and they'll do the same for you when you need guidance.

Call: 09058 170 720*

PISCES

20 Feb-20 March

Happiness isn't something that comes ready made. It comes from the actions we make and the thoughts we have. Start off this week with a positive attitude. So if you think you can, you will - and if you think you can't, you won't. You now know what you have to do!

Call: 09058 170 721*

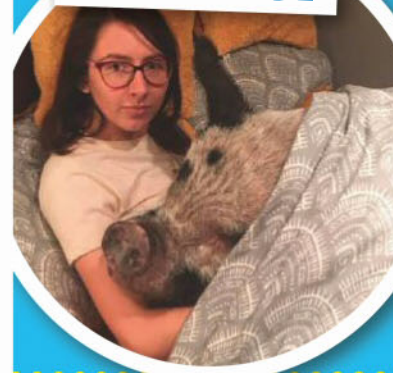
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In next week's **Pick Me Up!**

Party girl hid a **SHOCKING SECRET**



Bedtime snuggles with my **12st PIG!**



MY TINY BABY WAS POISONED



On sale **THURSDAY 22 Feb**

PHOTOS: HOTSPOT MEDIA, JEREMY DURKIN

TAN

TASTIC!

All Ebony Foley, 20, from Burnley, wanted was to be a stunning, bronzed beauty...

Prepping for the weekend, I had a fun Saturday night ahead. Me and my mates had organised a girlie night out in Manchester to celebrate a friend's 21st birthday.

The outfits had been bought, exciting plans made.

All that was left to do was to make sure I was bronzed and beautiful.

Three days before our night out, I ran to the shops in search of my favourite fake bake.

I always make sure I'm glowing and tanned, but I wanted a top-up before the weekend.

Only, I found my fave brand was out of stock!

'I want to be nice and brown,' I told the sales assistant.

'Try this one instead. The colour comes out so well,' she suggested, handing me a can marked 'darker than dark' written across the top.

I noticed the shop assistant had a lovely tan.

'Is that the one you've got on? Your skin looks amazing!' I gushed.

'Yep, I love it,' she smiled.

Without hesitation, I bought a can and headed home.

Spreading the tanning mousse on my legs, I saw them turn a gorgeous colour.

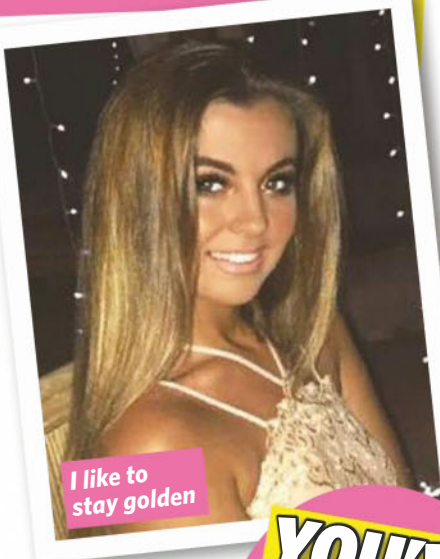
So I covered the rest of my body in the stuff, then my face.

After, I looked in the mirror.

Only, in seconds, my skin turned several shades darker.

'What on earth have I done?' I yelled, panicking.

Filling the sink, I desperately



I like to stay golden

This time, I went too far!



YOU'VE GOTTA LAUGH!

started trying to scrub it off.

But it was too late.

Looking at my reflection, I burst out laughing. Luckily, I

have a sense of humour and don't take myself too seriously – which is just as well, as I looked absolutely ridiculous.

I had to laugh at my own stupidity!

Creeping out of the bathroom, I went to show my boyfriend

Dean, 29.

'Dean,' I said. 'You'll never guess what...'

But before I could explain, he took one look at me and doubled over in hysterics.

'Ebony, what are you like?' he laughed, struggling to get the words out as tears streamed down his face.

'You have to help me get it off!' I begged, still laughing.

When he finally composed himself, Dean helped me scrub

my face with a sponge. But the fake tan just wasn't budging.

'This isn't working, babe,' he said. 'But it's so funny, the mistake was worth it!'

Dean's son, 7, was staying with us that night.

When he saw my face, he burst into tears.

'I don't like it!' he cried. Bless! His reaction was

priceless, and it made us laugh even more.

By now, Dean was howling, collapsed on the sofa.

So was I.

I knew my mates wouldn't let me live it down.

I had to make fun of myself before they did.

I video-called a friend to show her. As soon as my face

appeared, she looked terrified!

Then I took a screenshot, uploaded it on Facebook.

Everyone had a laugh at my expense.

I really didn't want to leave the house. But I had work the next day.

When I turned up at my office job in the morning, feeling sheepish,

they'd all seen the picture I'd posted online.

Everyone cracked up, including me!

I didn't go to my mate's 21st party, though, and spent weeks hiding at home until it faded.

I'm still obsessed with being tanned, just more

careful about which one I buy.

I simply couldn't face another fake-bake fail.

Filling the sink, I desperately started trying to scrub it off

I video-called a friend... Seeing my face, she looked terrified!

Pick Me Up!

Reader Offers

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New England in the Fall

9 days from £1,199 Flying from an airport near you, September 2018 & October 2019

One of nature's greatest sights, some stunning countryside, and two wonderful cities, wrapped up in a classic escorted tour.

Tour highlights include

- ✓ Explore glittering New York and elegant Boston
- ✓ Visit the Yankee Candle Factory
- ✓ A spectacular full-day Fall Foliage tour includes idyllic Woodstock, Quechee Gorge and a drive on the glorious Kancamagus Highway
- ✓ Visit North Conway, in the heart of the scenic White Mountains
- ✓ Discover coastal Maine, including Portland and Kennebunkport
- ✓ Discover historic Plymouth and fashionable Newport
- ✓ Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- ✓ Seven nights' room only touring hotel accommodation, a night on the aircraft, return flights and transfers



Your Touring Hotels

Holiday Inn, Hasbrock Heights

Night 1-2
Across the Hudson River from New York's Manhattan, this popular hotel features a bar and restaurant.

Grand Summit, Mount Snow

Night 3
This lovely mountain-side hotel is surrounded by lush foliage and there's a restaurant and pub.

Jordan Grand Hotel, Bethel

Nights 4-5
This impressive hotel combines quality and service, with an unequalled mountainside location near the Maine village of Bethel.

Nantasket Beach Resort Hotel & Spa, Hull

Nights 6-7
Located just under an hour's drive from downtown Boston, on the seafrost promenade with many restaurants, bars and a handful of local shops, this hotel has its own restaurant and bar as well as an indoor pool.

- ✓ Experience all those 'must-see, must-do' places
- ✓ Unbeatable value, quality and service
- ✓ Comprehensive, thoughtfully planned itineraries
- ✓ Interesting included guided tours & excursions
- ✓ Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- ✓ Comfortable accommodation in hand-picked, good quality hotels

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26 BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS
14 GOLD * 9 SILVER * 3 BRONZE



Elvis Presley's Memphis, New Orleans & Nashville

9 days from £1,399 Flying from an airport near you, March 2018 to November 2019

Infused with the magic and mystique, the sights and especially the sounds of the South, this wonderful holiday begins in Georgia and sweeps through the world of WC Handy, Robert Johnson, 'Fats' Domino, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton and, of course, Elvis Presley. Crammed full of highlights, it takes in New Orleans, the laid-back 'Big Easy', Tupelo, the 'King's' birthplace and Memphis, where he made his home, and finally heads to guitar-pickin', banjo-playin' songwriters' Mecca Nashville, Tennessee.

Tour highlights include

- ✓ Explore Montgomery and Nashville
- ✓ Journey through the sleepy countryside of Alabama
- ✓ Take in the atmosphere of the 'French Quarter'
- ✓ Visit Tupelo, Mississippi - Elvis' birthplace
- ✓ Two nights in Memphis at the Guest House™
- ✓ Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- ✓ Seven nights' room-only touring hotel accommodation, a night on the aircraft, return flights and transfers

Your Touring Hotels

Country Inn & Suites, East Montgomery

Night 1
This popular, modern hotel has a pool and a choice of restaurants nearby. Breakfast is served in the hotel and the welcoming guest rooms have a TV.

Hampton Inn, New Orleans

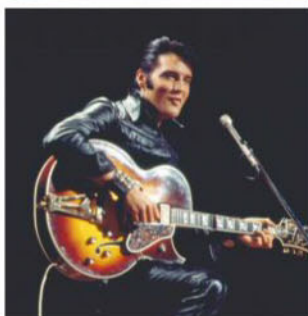
Night 2-3
Set in a beautifully converted warehouse, this hotel features a breakfast room and small outdoor pool.

The Guest House™ at Graceland, Memphis

Nights 4-5
The brand new Guest House™ at Graceland is inspired by the warm hospitality Elvis always showed his guests. You'll find two restaurants, a bar, theatre, gift shop and a seasonal outdoor pool.

Clarion Hotel Stadium, Nashville

Nights 6-7
This impressive modern hotel boasts a restaurant, pub and indoor pool. All rooms have a fridge and microwave.



For a brochure or to book call **0330 160 7988** quoting code **PMU** or visit **pmu.newmarketholidays.co.uk**

Newmarket Holidays

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*visible flakes at 21t: with regular use



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