

# Confessions of a divorce lawyer...

Amazing real-life tales of love split rows and revenge



EXCLUSIVE: PAGE 26

## FIVE-ORGAN SWAP JOY

# HE'S MY LITTLE MIRACLE

Jay, 7, has life-saving transplant from one donor



SMILES Jay with mum Katie

**EXCLUSIVE**  
BY MARTIN FRICKER

**A BOY of seven has had an "incredibly rare" transplant of five organs in one go.**

Jay Crouch received a small intestine, two kidneys, a liver and a pancreas in a 10-hour op.

A month later he is home. Mum Katie, 28, said: "Everyone is amazed at how well he has done. I call him a superhero!"

**FULL STORY: PAGES 4&5**

Picture: ROLAND LEON

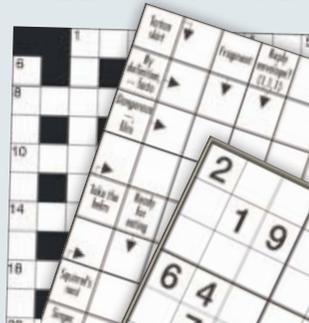


UNDERMANNED The Army

Our Army has only 60,000 combat soldiers

EXCLUSIVE: PAGE 7

PUZZLES  
PULLOUT INSIDE



# AS NEW FAMILY DRAMA HITS BBC WE HEAR...

## Sizzling tale depicts love under siege

**WHAT IS THE SPLIT?**  
This explosive drama throws us head-first into the fast-paced world of London's divorce law circuit. From screenwriter Abi Morgan, who wrote *The Iron Lady* and *The Hour*, the BBC1 series is emotionally charged with a sizzling script. Nicola Walker heads the bill as lawyer Hannah, who has walked out on her mother's firm Defoe's, where one of her two other sisters works. An old flame threatens her marriage and her dad reappears - last seen walking out to buy a newspaper 30 years ago. See last night's episode on iPlayer. Continues Tuesday, BBC1 9pm.



**WHO'S WHO**  
**NINA** Being Human actress Annabel Scholey is the middle daughter, a lawyer with warm sibling rivalry.  
**ROSE** Fiona Button, of BBC drama *Outcast*, plays youngest sister Rose, a nanny planning a scary wedding.  
**RUTH** This formidable single mother to her girls is played by Cranford's Deborah Findlay. She's hurt Hannah has left her firm, Defoe's.



**NATHAN** Episodes actor Stephen Mangan plays Hannah's barrister husband Nathan. He thinks they are happy, but it doesn't stay that way.  
**OSCAR** Anthony Head, known for *Merlin* and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, stars as the girls' long-lost dad Oscar, who returns out of the blue.



**DAVEY** Stephen Tompkinson (*Wild At Heart*) plays a ghostly sportswear mogul who dumps his wife.  
**GOLDIE** Meera Syal (best known for *Goodness Gracious Me*) is Davey's childhood sweetheart whose life is turned upside down by divorce.

**SHOUT OF ORDER**  
Emotions run riot in a relationship break up



“My wife had started to look and sound like her mother.”  
VANESSA LLOYD PRATT REVEALS MOST COMMON EXCUSE GIVEN TO HER BY MEN WHO COMMITTED ADULTERY

# Confessions of a divorce lawyer

**EXCLUSIVE**  
BY RHIAN LUBIN

As a specialist divorce lawyer with 40 years' experience, Vanessa Lloyd Platt has seen it all. Couples carrying out ruthless acts of revenge, divorcing over a tarantula, and arguing over the garden furniture is just part and parcel of the job. While it can have its glamorous side, Vanessa, who has represented stars such as Les Dennis, Anne Diamond and TV's Dr Hilary Jones, says working as a divorce lawyer is tough too. "People think it's easy," Vanessa says. "Actually we have to deal with huge emotional fallout from clients. We're like psychologists in a way. There are times when you feel you are living in a soap. Some of the things people do to each other are ridiculous." Vanessa is dishing the dirt as BBC One drama *The Split* began last night. The six-part show is set in London's divorce law circuit and follows the lives of three sisters - lawyers Hannah and Nina and their youngest sibling Rose. Most of the divorce lawyers

in the drama are female, reflecting changes in the profession. "When I first started, there were very few women lawyers in divorce, but they're now the force to be reckoned with." The ruthless world depicted is one of cheating and betrayal - and the warring couples aren't much better. Adultery is one of the most common causes for divorce, although straightforward lust may not always be the reason. In her book, *Secrets of Relationship Success*, Vanessa found men making this admission about infidelity: "I asked 80 men who had committed adultery to set out reasons. One of the most common given was, 'My wife had started to look and sound like her mother.'" Some of the more shocking cases involve revenge, but Vanessa warns it comes back to bite people. She says: "A wife drove her husband's Mercedes to a cliff-top, got out, took off the handbrake and allowed it to topple over the edge. It was destroyed, but what she didn't realise was that the court would deduct it from her settlement. Revenge isn't sweet. The car was worth £60,000 and her capital claims were severely affected. A wife who poured paint stripper over her estranged husband's car was found guilty of criminal damage. "One of the funniest incidents was where my client's wife wanted to end the relationship. She was so annoyed that she strutted into his meeting with high-flying businessmen from Japan and all she was wearing was a fur coat. She exposed herself to everyone. The husband was furious - he thought he'd lose this really important deal. The businessmen said it was the best meeting they'd been to, but we got injunctions to stop her doing it again." A bad smell lingers over two other stories of revenge. One wife arranged for manure to be delivered to the home of her husband's mistress. Another woman hid a prawn inside a lamp the couple were fighting about. For weeks he had a foul smell in his new flat until he found the decomposing crustacean. Vanessa recalls: "Afterwards, he got a plate of prawns delivered to her and said, 'I'd heard revenge was a dish best served cold but I hadn't heard about prawns!' They both laugh about it now. "Love and hate are so closely linked. People can flit between feeling so in love to feeling so much anger that is beyond control. Our job as divorce lawyers is to control it." A trend Vanessa has noticed is couples fighting over pets. She had to draft her first "pet-nup", the animal equivalent of a pre-nuptial agreement. One case involved a tarantula called Timmy. "The client's husband insisted on having Timmy in a glass case next to the bed. She said, 'Either Timmy goes or I do.' She went." Arguments over possessions are common but one of the stranger objects her client fought over was a trowel and fork garden set. "The couple had dealt with the house, the properties and the children," she says. "But they were fighting over a garden set. This went on until I bought a shiny new one for my client and said, 'Can we call it a day?'" So if you find yourself in a divorce hole, stop digging. Vanessa Lloyd Platt is founder of Lloyd Platt & Co divorcesolicitors.com

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## Top 10 things you need to know before hiring a solicitor

TOP lawyer Vanessa Lloyd Platt gives her 10 tips on how to approach divorce - for free.  
1 Choose the right lawyer. Your personalities must match. If you are someone who is a bit nervous and frightened, you don't want someone you cannot communicate with.  
2 Choose someone at a price you can afford.  
3 Write out a short history of what's

happened before you go to see the lawyer.  
4 Write down a list of all the questions you want to ask your lawyer.  
5 Don't carry anger too much into your meeting with the lawyer. It might obscure some of the important things.  
6 Tell your lawyer everything. Often people say just as they're leaving, 'Oh does it matter

that he's got a child by someone else?'  
7 Be careful with your expectations. Just because your friend has got a big settlement, doesn't mean you are going to.  
8 If you do get a settlement, do not blow it with the first person offering an investment.  
9 Your children are not deaf. So be very careful where you have any conversations

about your case and how you have them.  
10 Do not think there is some kind of a free-for-all that allows you to go into your partner's laptop or mobile phone without permission. People think it is acceptable, but a lawyer is not permitted to look at it if it is unlawfully obtained.  
GOOD ADVICE Lawyer Vanessa



ADVERTISING FEATURE

## Mirror MONEY

Equity release

## Get the retirement you deserve with equity release

Bryan needed a bit of extra money during his semi-retirement as he wanted to update his car and take a trip to see his family in New Zealand. Bryan, a part-time delivery driver, decided to release some of the cash tied up in his home, with an equity release plan. "My family have all got their own homes so don't really need anything from me, but there will still be a bit left in my estate to pass on to them," says Bryan, 79, from Blackpool. "It seemed silly having so much money tied up in property." Bryan released £20,000 via a lifetime mortgage - a type of loan secured against his home. He doesn't have to pay anything back until his home is sold, either on his death, or if he moves into permanent long-term care. Bryan explains: "I wasn't struggling with everyday bills, I have my pension and earn a bit of cash from my part time work. But, I needed to get the cash together to replace my car and couldn't see any other way of getting hold of a lump sum." "I couldn't believe how easy it was to sort this out. I had everything explained to me in simple terms, spelling out all the pros and cons - so I knew exactly where I stood and the effect it would have on my estate. It was the best move for me."

It's really easy to find out more and we'll help you to decide if equity release is right for you. As part of the service, your adviser will complete a free state benefits check to make sure you're not missing out on anything you're entitled to. They'll also explain if equity release could affect your tax status or means tested state benefit entitlement as well as explaining how the value of your estate will reduce. You'll be charged an advice and arrangement fee of £1,100 if you take out a plan HUB Financial Solutions recommends. If you decide not to go ahead, there is nothing to pay. Call us today on **0800 232 1307** to book your no-obligation appointment and to get your **FREE** guide to equity release.

*"It was the best move for me"*



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