

# ASIA Reader's digest

MOST TRUSTED  
&  
MOST READ

## 6 NEW Treatments That Can SAVE Your Life

PAGE 36

Learning  
the Art of  
Conversation

PAGE 52

Why *The  
Crown* Twists  
the Facts

PAGE 28

A Caving Trip Turns Deadly

PAGE 100

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Smart Animals.....           | 16  |
| Silent Thyroid Symptoms..... | 18  |
| Puzzles and Crossword.....   | 124 |

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PHILIPPINES P 199

# Contents

JUNE 2018

**28 COVER STORY**  
**FOOLING WITH THE FACTS**  
Sorting fact from fiction in *The Crown*,  
Netflix's retelling of the events of Queen  
Elizabeth II's reign. **DONYALE HARRISON**

**36 MEDICAL ADVANCES**  
**6 NEW TREATMENTS  
THAT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE**  
Profound advancements changing the  
way we treat medical conditions.  
**ANITA BARTHOLOMEW AND SAMANTHA KENT**

**44 WISDOM**  
**HAVE BESTSELLERS  
BECOME DUMBER?**  
Has there been a dumbing down of reading  
skills over the past 50 years? Number  
crunching the bestsellers lists reveals some  
surprising facts. **BEN BLATT** FROM THE BOOK  
*NABOKOV'S FAVORITE WORD IS MAUVE*

**52 ART OF LIVING**  
**CAN WE TALK?**  
How smartphones are affecting our  
communication with others. **LISA FIELDS**

**58 EXTRAORDINARY TRUE TALES**  
**OPENING HEAVEN'S DOOR**  
A journalist investigates spiritual  
experiences. **PATRICIA PEARSON**  
FROM THE BOOK *OPENING HEAVEN'S DOOR*





# Contents

JUNE 2018

## Lifestyle

- 66 DATING E-STYLE**  
A divorced mum of two goes looking for love online, and meets lots of silver-haired doctors, and a few very picky potential partners. LISA FIELDS

## Recollections

- 70 MY MOTHER'S TORMENT**  
A traumatic event brings both happy and sad memories. NOELEN GINNANE

## Photo Feature

- 76 OUT OF AFRICA**  
Tanzania is a land of amazing beauty and diverse wildlife, but is grappling with the worsening impacts of climate change. BARBARA DOMBROWSKI AND CORNELIA KUMFERT

## Psychology

- 90 FALSE MEMORIES**  
As much as we all like to think we can trust our own minds, we can be tricked into remembering events that never happened. ANNA WALKER

## Who Knew?

- 104 JAPAN'S BLUE TRAFFIC LIGHTS**  
There is no shortage of interesting sights on the streets of Japan. Take the traffic lights, for example. BRANDON SPEKTOR

## Bonus Read

- 118 TRAPPED UNDERGROUND**  
It's the stuff of nightmares. Stuck in a dark underground cave with rising water and no way out. LISA FITTERMAN

## THE DIGEST

- Health**  
**24** Silent thyroid symptoms, blood pressure, medical news
- Travel**  
**24** Why you board a plane on the left side
- Home**  
**26** Fire dangers
- Pets**  
**27** Purrfect pets
- News Worth Sharing**  
**114** Positive stories that caught our eye
- RD Recommends**  
**117** All that's best in books, films, podcasts and DVDs

## REGULARS

- 6** Letters  
**10** My Story  
**14** Kindness of Strangers  
**16** Smart Animals  
**86** Look Twice  
**97** Quotable Quotes  
**113** That's Outrageous  
**124** Puzzles, Trivia & Word Power

## CONTESTS

- 7** Caption and Letter Competition  
**8** Submit Your Jokes and Stories

## HUMOUR

- 50** Life's Like That  
**64** Laughter, the Best Medicine  
**84** All in a Day's Work



P. | **27** ▲



## H1 HIGHER EDUCATION SPECIAL

It is essential to choose quality higher educational institutions that provide the best tools and knowledge for success. With their experience and expertise, these institutions understand that education is an investment for the future.



P. | **70** ▲



P. | **76** ▲



# Ocean Challenge

Facing a long-held fear had an unexpected outcome

BY DENISE STRONG

*Denise Strong lives in Cronulla, NSW, and is the mother of three children and grandmother of six. Denise enjoys walking, swimming, art, African drumming and creative writing.*

**FOR ME, SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN** was more than a fear – it terrified me. As I had never had the courage to venture out past my depth, why I agreed to do the Bondi Beach Ocean Classic – an ocean swim of one kilometre – at the age of 63, is beyond me, but I did.

Together with a group of five long-time girlfriends – we dubbed ourselves the ‘Six Pack’ – I’d signed up to do the swim, which involved committing to three months of training leading up to the event in February. Training would be split into two sessions – Wednesday evenings in the pool, then Saturday mornings in the ocean.

Training began on a Wednesday evening at Sans Souci pool, in Sydney’s south. It involved different swimming drills and doing lap after lap. The instructors were tough, yelling from the side of the pool as we swam: “Now get rid of those flippers, do another ten laps, stretch those arms, keep kicking.”

To keep up with the others, I used flippers. They were



my security blanket. I’d groan at the thought of giving them up. It was tough going but as my confidence grew, I came to enjoy the sessions and the clean, sparkling water. Seeing the setting sun change the colour of the clouds from hues of red to mauve, and hearing birds chirping in the surrounding trees brought an unexpected pleasure. Added to this was the surprising sense of accomplishment I felt after each session.

Ocean training, on the other hand, was totally different. The second training session was on Saturday morning at Elouera Beach, and it filled me with dread.

ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK

The power of the ocean, the thought of creatures, silent, lurking beneath me, frightened the hell out of me. Everything about ocean swimming was new: wading awkwardly through the foaming water, diving to the bottom, grabbing the sand as the turbulent waves washed over my body. I’m still haunted by the panic I felt after my instructor screamed out to me: “You’re out the back, now swim!” Weeks of training soon turned into months, and the big day arrived.

A mini-bus had been organised to transport the Six Pack and our ever-so-proud partners and families to the big event. We felt euphoric, and with our enthusiastic entourage in tow, we were ready for the swim ahead of us. Banter and laughter filled the mini-bus as we weaved through the heavy weekend traffic to Bondi Beach.

The scene when we arrived at the beach is best described as organised chaos. We arranged a meeting place and manoeuvred our way through the vast crowds to pick up our brightly coloured swim caps.

Nerves raw, we donned our caps and goggles and headed to the start. We felt like celebrities, lining up and posing for photographs; the comradery we experienced as the Six Pack was incredible and has without doubt cemented our friendship.

I was thrilled with the weather, the cloudless blue sky reflected on



# Need a Lift?

After an accident, I had a long journey to recovery in front of me

BY DINO VIRGILIO G. MONZON III

*Dino Monzon lives in the Philippines and used to work as a local community juror. Writing is his passion and the works of Ian Fleming and Tom Clancy are among his favourite reads.*

**IT WAS EARLY ONE HOT MORNING** in 2015 when, accompanied by my mother, I was gently wheeled across our quiet street in my wheelchair to the taxi stand. Three weeks earlier, I had broken my left ankle at home when it unexpectedly gave way. Now, with my ankle in a cast, I finally had an appointment at the Philippine General Hospital to be assessed for an operation to repair the bad break.

I was feeling nervous as I'd never had surgery before and the thought of it worried me. After waiting for a taxi for more than 90 minutes, we were still standing across the street from our house, trying to hail a ride. It usually only takes a few minutes, but on this particular Sunday taxis would pass by us either already filled with passengers or unwilling to take us. Perhaps they weren't equipped to carry my wheelchair. My mother was starting to get frustrated as we were fast running out of time; our appointment was scheduled for 10.45am and we still had



to go through the admissions process and it would take up to 40 minutes to get to the hospital. Then a black SUV pulled over and stopped in front of us. The driver, taking a look at us, said, "You two look like you could use a lift!" He told us he'd seen us earlier as he was taking his son to a weekend school activity. He was now returning home and saw that we were still waiting there.

With no questions asked, this good Samaritan welcomed us aboard and got us to the hospital in 45 minutes. We arrived at 10.30 - just in time for my appointment. He refused any compensation, saying people should help one another. He left with a smile.

ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK

As it turned out, there was an available slot for me and I was finally operated on. A lengthy rehabilitation process and physical therapy followed and now I am able to walk again.

To this day we have not crossed paths again with this friendly driver who went out of his way, but his generosity towards us has stuck in our minds. I am very grateful to this kind stranger who has taught me to keep watch for and help others in need.

**Share your story about a small act of kindness that made a huge impact. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute and earn cash.**





Juggling monarchy and marriage: Claire Foy as Queen Elizabeth II and Matt Smith as Prince Philip



# FOOLING with the FACTS

For first-rate entertainment, you can't look past *The Crown*. But Netflix's epic series isn't exactly an accurate history lesson

BY DONYALE HARRISON

It's almost expected that a television series based on a book will have a slightly different storyline. But when a series portrays someone's life – a life that is well documented – you'd expect accuracy would be important. Not necessarily so.

A few episodes into watching *The Crown*, something odd begins to happen – so assiduously detailed is the Netflix series that it takes on the flavour of a documentary. After

spending more than \$130 million making the ten episodes in season one, Netflix went to great lengths portraying the British royal family's super-rich lifestyle. Season two was no different, taking 398 different sets to recreate the opulent interiors of royal aeroplanes, trains and yachts – as well as Windsor, Balmoral and Sandringham Castles, and Buckingham Palace. The scenery and fashion are first-rate, but the series plays fast and loose with historical facts.



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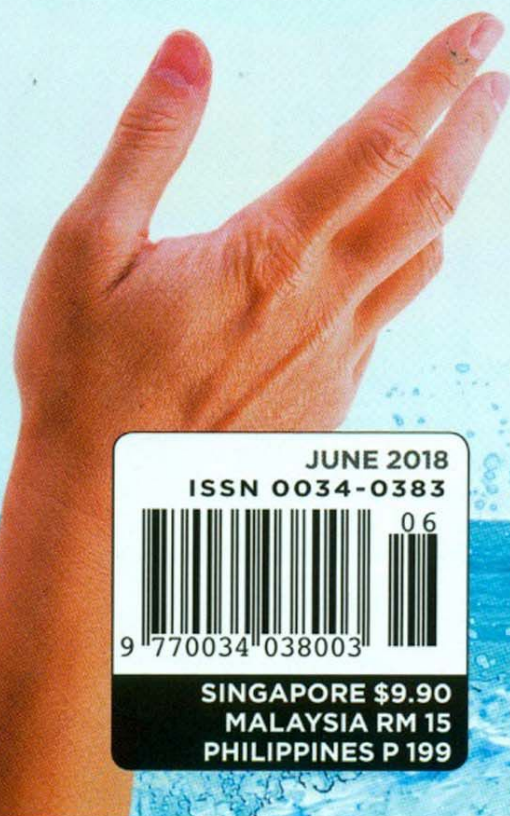
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|                              |     |
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Cancer, stroke, hepatitis are words we once feared. Thanks to great medical breakthroughs, there are now ...

# 6 New Treatments That Can **SAVE** Your Life

BY LAM LYE CHING

In the past, some disease diagnoses used to strike fear in all of us. But today, thanks to medical advances, this is no longer always true. Today, vaccines protect our families from once deadly diseases. Antibiotics vanquish infections that used







The language in today's most popular novels is far simpler than it was just a few decades ago

BY BEN BLATT  
FROM THE BOOK *NABOKOV'S FAVORITE WORD IS MAUVE*

# Have Bestsellers Become DUMBER?





Why more conversations,  
and fewer texts, are good for  
your relationships and your  
emotional health

# Can We TALK?

BY LISA FIELDS

**N**ot long ago, when out-of-town relatives would stay with me for the weekend, my favourite part of each visit happened after the kids went to sleep. We'd pour ourselves a wine and chat until nearly midnight, laughing about old memories and sharing new stories.

These days, the dynamic is completely different. The first adult who returns from bedtime duty doesn't reach for the wine glasses; he parks himself on the couch and reaches for his smartphone. Just until the others show up, he tells himself.

ILLUSTRATIONS: CARL WIENS





# OPENING *Heaven's* DOOR

I had no idea there was this kept-hidden world all around me

BY PATRICIA PEARSON

FROM THE BOOK *OPENING HEAVEN'S DOOR*

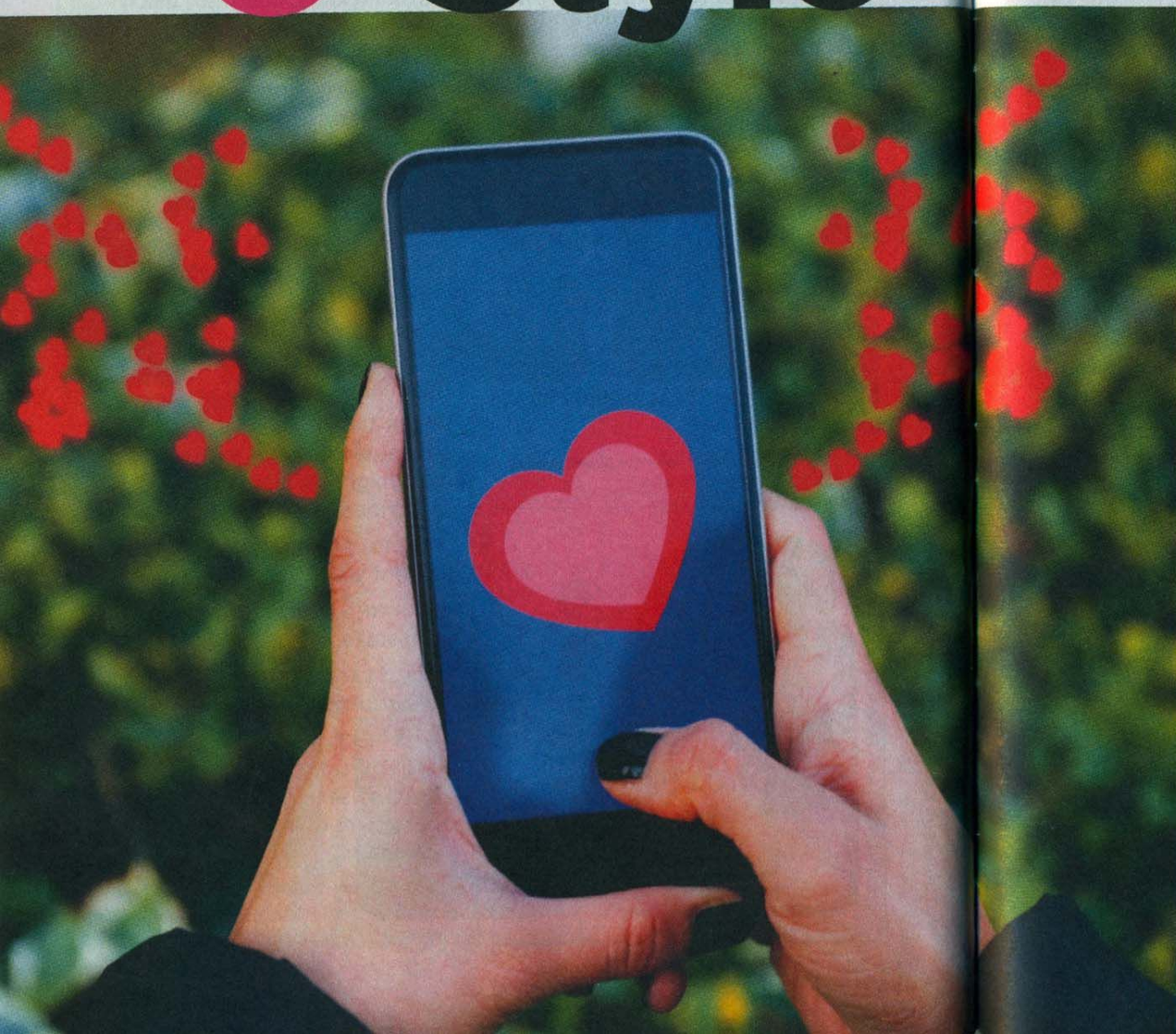
**M**Y FATHER DIED UNEXPECTEDLY of cardiac arrest in his bed in the spring of 2008. He was 80. The next day, we all got the phone call. But my sister Katharine, 160 km away, received her message differently.

“It was about 4.30am,” she said at his funeral, “and I couldn’t sleep, as usual, when all of a sudden I began having this amazing experience. For the next two hours I felt nothing but joy and healing.”

PHOTO: AFRICA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK



# Dating e-Style



Recently divorced, writer **Lisa Fields** navigates the e-minefield of online dating in search of new and true love

**L**ast year, after the dust from my recent divorce had settled, I felt ready to attempt a romantic relationship again. For the first time in my life, I created an online dating profile. I selected a flattering, wide-grinned photo of myself, explained that I was seeking a clever, charming man in my age bracket (give or take four years) and then sat back to find out what would happen.

I don't know what I was expecting from online dating, but it certainly wasn't this. For the first month that my profile was live, I was only contacted by men who were ten to 20 years older than me, none of whom I would consider for a serious relationship while raising two young children.

After the third or fourth silver-haired doctor flirted with me electronically, I started to worry. Maybe the mention in my profile of my two children was holding me back. I began thinking about the dating website's success stories that featured couples who had married after meeting online, giving hope to unattached folks like myself. Most were stories about two single people who clicked, but two stories featured divorced dads who married single women. Suddenly, it hit me: none of the stories had featured divorced mums.

PHOTO: ISTOCK



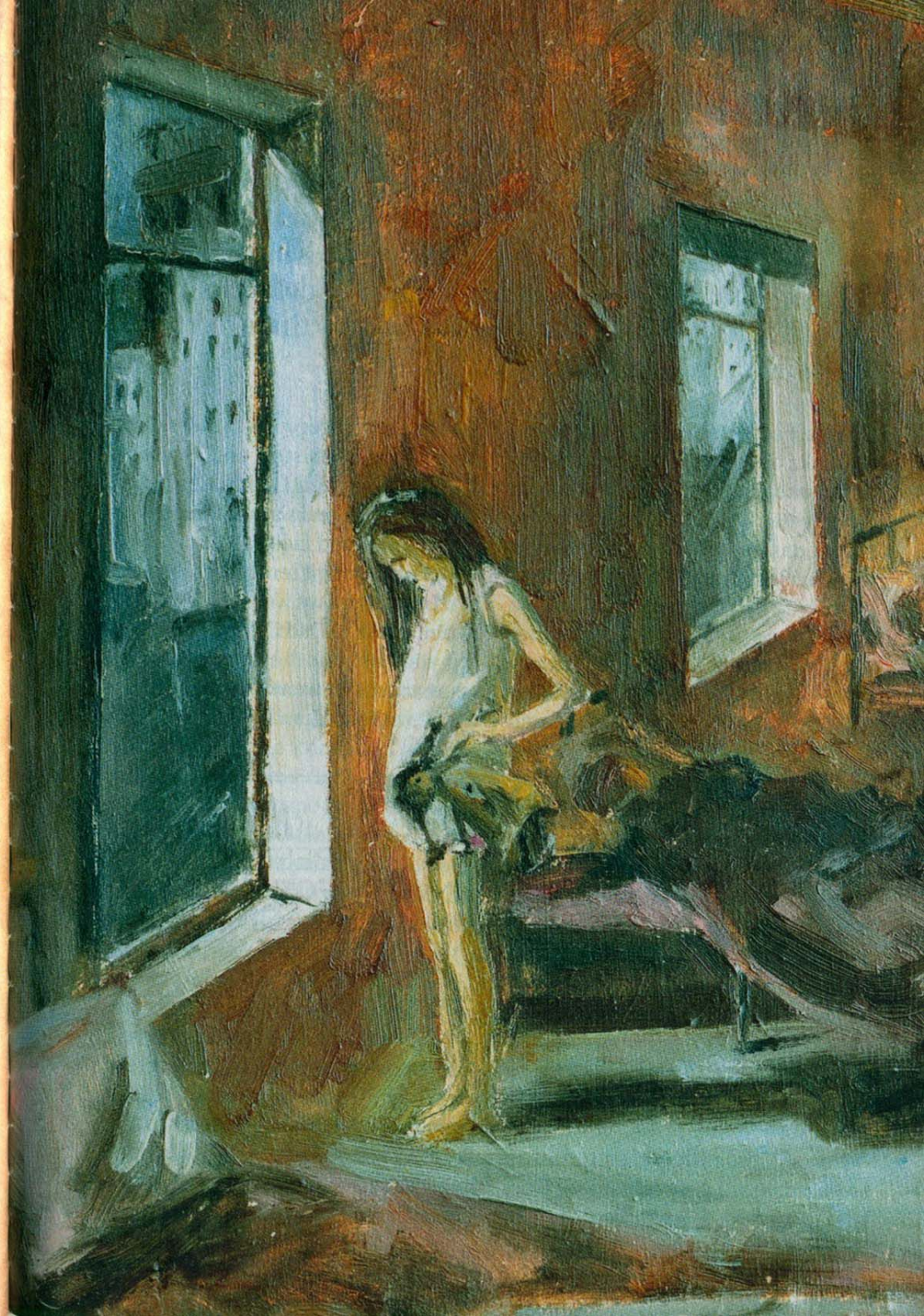


One woman's life is changed forever in a single day. It's only years later that she is called to ponder what could have been

# MY MOTHER'S *Torment*

BY NOELEN GINNANE  
FIELD EDITOR

ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK





# Out of

Glaciers, tropical rainforests and African savannah -

# Africa

Tanzania is a land of diversity. But for how long?

PHOTOS: BARBARA DOMBROWSKI  
TEXT: CORNELIA KUMFERT

The majority of people in Tanzania live as subsistence farmers. Periods of drought and the water shortages pose a threat to both humans and animals alike, but so too do heavy rain and floods. The Masai especially are bearing the brunt of these

extreme changes in the weather.

For eight years, photographer Barbara Dombrowski has visited people particularly affected by the results of climate change, as part of her photography project Tropic Ice. Tanzania is her fourth stop after the Amazon region, Greenland and Mongolia.



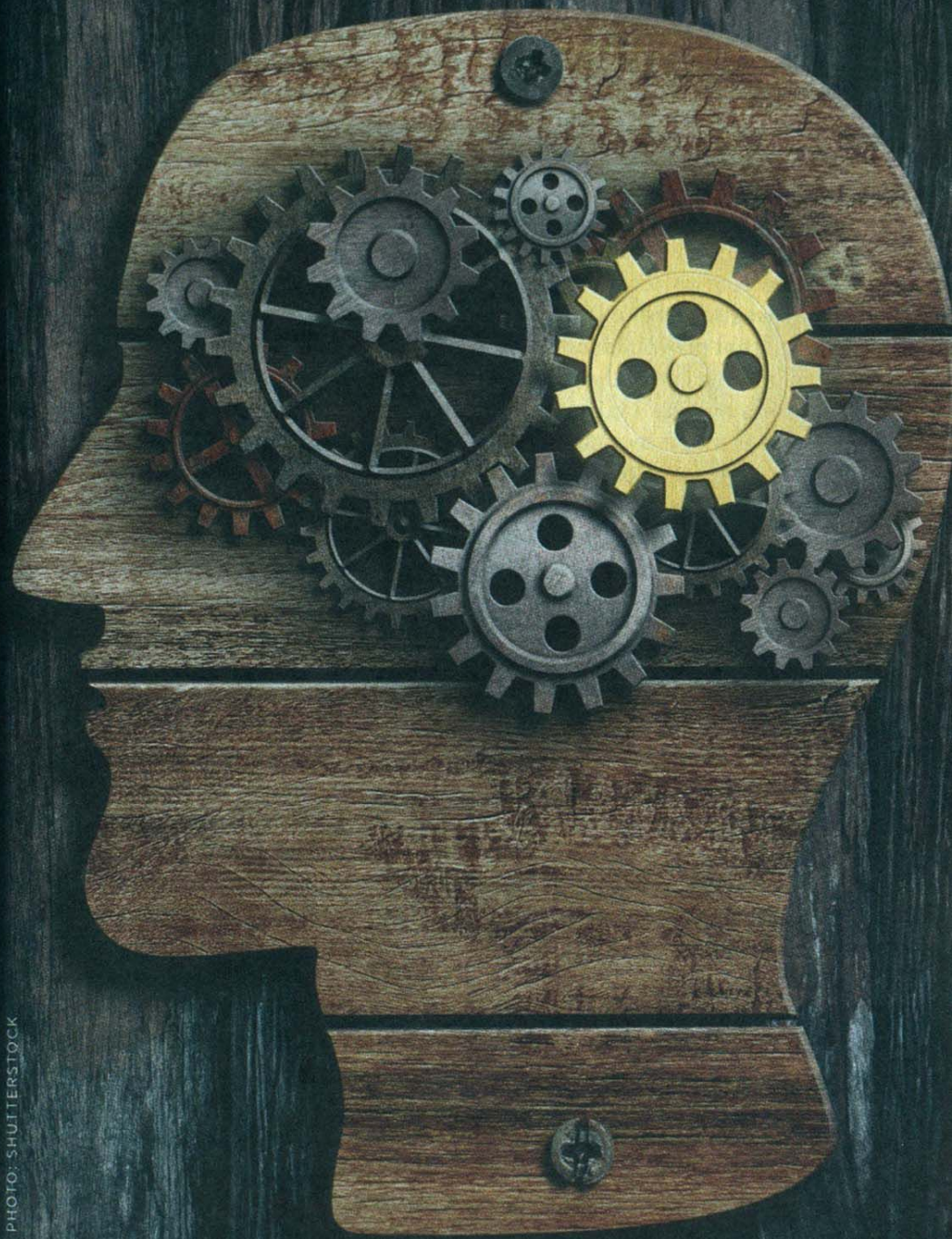
Think you can trust your recollections? Think again. Scientists are uncovering the shockingly common phenomenon of...

# False MEMORIES

BY ANNA WALKER

**EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD PETER REILLY** sat in the interrogation room in a daze. After 25 hours of intense questioning, he'd just signed a confession confirming that he'd brutally murdered his own mother, 51-year-old Barbara Gibbons. "We got into an argument," he told interrogators. "I remember picking up the straight razor, and I slashed towards her throat."

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK





BONUS READ

# TRAPPED UNDERGROUND

They were in a kilometre-long,  
100-metre-deep cave when  
a flood of water blocked  
their way out

BY LISA FITTERMAN



*Andrew Munoz and Jason Stoen*