

# READERS' REALITY

REAL NAMES • REAL ADDRESSES • REAL PHOTOS

## Janette said: 'We're family now'

**I** was on the sofa watching TV and I felt fed up. My husband Richard put his arm around me and I said: 'We should be lying in the sun right now instead of being stuck at home.'

We were newly married and I had booked a Mediterranean cruise for our honeymoon. But at the last minute we'd been forced to cancel it.

I suffered from a hereditary kidney disease and was on the waiting list for a transplant. No insurance company would cover our trip.

Then the phone started to ring.

**I answered and a voice said: 'We've got good news, Trina. We have a kidney for you.'**

It was my transplant co-ordinator.

I told Richard: 'The donor is a perfect match.'

He said: 'See, I knew something good was going to happen.'

I was admitted to hospital

for emergency surgery.

Next day a nurse helped me out of bed and into a chair. She did the same with the lady next to me.

The woman looked at me and smiled. Her name was Janette Torres and it turned out we lived in the same area. Soon our consultant appeared.

He told us: 'You both received organs from a woman who died yesterday morning. Trina, you had



Us on holiday



Richard, me and Janette

the left kidney. Janette, you got the right one.'

After that the nurses would ask us: 'How are the Transplant Twins today?'

We'd talk for hours and I learnt we had birthdays around the same time. We both had grown-up children and, like me, Janette had recently remarried.

The time in hospital flew by. As well as being great company, she understood my doubts and fears.

**I said: 'Everyone expects me to be happy but what if things go wrong and my body rejects the kidney?'**

A week later it was time to go home. We swapped numbers before we were discharged.

I needed tests three times a week to make sure the kidney was working. Janette did too so we decided to go to our appointments together.

In addition we both sent letters to the family of the donor.

In mine, I wrote: *I'll never be able to thank you all enough for everything your relative has given me. My children have their*

*mother back and my husband has his wife back.*

After a couple of weeks my blood tests revealed a problem.

**My consultant said: 'Your body might be rejecting the kidney. You need to stay in hospital.'**

Although I was worried, there was an important date I couldn't bring myself to cancel.

I explained: 'It's my transplant twin's birthday tomorrow. I promised to take her out for lunch.'

I agreed to come in afterwards.

The following day when I told Janette she said: 'You have got to go to hospital now. I can't believe you've been so stubborn!'

Hours later I was hooked up to a drip delivering anti-rejection medication. I began to feel really unwell.

I thought: *If I lose this kidney I'll have to go back on dialysis. My new life will be over before it's even started.*

I felt increasingly bitter and refused to speak to

anyone, even Janette.

Days went by and she sent me a text.

It said: *Why aren't you talking to me? It's times like this when you need your friends.*

I replied: *I don't know why you are bothering with me.*

But Janette wouldn't give up. My phone rang and rang until I finally answered.

She told me: 'Don't forget, we're family now.'

She came to visit as often as she could and weeks later I was well enough to go home.

Soon I was able to meet Janette for coffee.

We went bowling and enjoyed evenings at the pub — things I couldn't do when I was on dialysis.

**It felt good to be able to go out after years of being restricted.**

On the first anniversary of our operations, we went for dinner with our husbands. We wore sashes that said: *Our First Birthday.*

Later that evening I gave Janette a small box. I said: 'This is how I feel about you.'

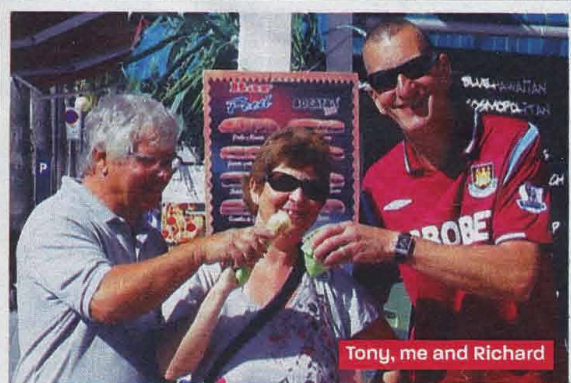
Inside was a gold necklace saying: *Number One Sister.*

Months later we went on holiday to Salou, Spain, with Richard and Janette's husband Tony. It more than made up for our missed honeymoon.

Janette, 55, and I still support each other through hospital appointments.

I have a whole new life and a best friend. I couldn't be more grateful.

**From Trina Furness, 48, of Parsonage Lane, Basildon, Essex**



Tony, me and Richard



Janette and me