



Where - There's - a Will...

By Olev Edur

happen to you and yours, the authors hasten to point out that it can and does happen to anyone – and more often than is commonly believed.

There are villains aplenty in these tales, but sometimes the guilt lies with simple omissions, ambiguities, dated information, or all of these in the will. The result can be delays at best – at worst, provincial authorities can take over the execution of an estate and distribute the assets according to a government formula. The vignettes in this book provide glimpses into the types of issues that can be damaging to an estate.

There are also some heartwarming episodes among these vignettes to help offset the venality, as with the sister who gave from her own inheritance when her sibling refused to honor a pledge to her dying mother to make a final charitable bequest on behalf of the deceased. “At least one of us respected Mom’s last wishes,” she says.

All in all, it’s an easy read on an uneasy subject, and the knowledge you’ll glean could be helpful in arranging your own estate. Particularly useful for those planning their estates are the 26 examples at the back of the book that describe problems and mistakes that the authors point out in a selection of wills brought to their practice for review.

The Wills Lawyers: Their Stories of Money, Inheritance, Greed, Family and Betrayal can be ordered as a digital download through the authors’ website (thewillslawyers.com) or in paperback form by calling, toll-free, 1-877-439-3999. ■

Thinking about drafting a will or updating your existing will? If so, then before you begin, you might want to have a read through *The Wills Lawyers: Their Stories of Money, Inheritance, Greed, Family and Betrayal* by Barry Fish and Les Kotzer, two estate lawyers based in Richmond Hill, ON, who have a combined 68 years of wills and estate practice experience between them.

As the title suggests, this book provides a collection of short vignettes illustrating how greed and treachery have frequently arisen in the transferral of people’s worldly belongings. While the subject matter might normally be considered uncomfortable, the book is written in a gentle manner, with clear straightforward prose (not legalese at all) that renders the subject matter easy to understand.

Some of the tales of deceit are truly eye-opening, with testators unaware of the dire machinations going on behind their backs by erstwhile devoted family members who now see only gold. And while it’s easy to assume that such things couldn’t