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## Family Boats

*By Morgan Hunter*

People sometimes ask me what it's like having a divorce happen to your family.

I simply tell them this. Divorce is like owning a boat. Not just any boat. This is no dinky rowboat or clunky rental houseboat. Our boat is a sleek, fifty-foot yacht. It is a beautiful piece of art, with state-of-the-art navigation systems and the most powerful engine to date. It boasts all the best bells and whistles.

We love it. It's reliable. It can weather any storm. It has steered us clear of more hurricanes than we can remember. We always reach the harbor safely. We have total confidence that when problems arise, we are protected.

Lately there have been odd hiccups in the system. The engine just doesn't sound right, and sometimes we have to wrestle with the controls. Thinking that everything will right itself, we don't look closely at the engine. We don't dig deeper. Why should we? We've always been fine. There have never been any mishaps in the past.

We go out power sailing. It's a perfect calm. Then, silence. The engine stopped.

We shrug. It's probably nothing. We click off the controls, reset, and push the buttons to turn the engine back on again. Nothing happens. Engine is dead. Controls are unresponsive.

We climb down to the engine room, and throw open the hatch. A stinking cloud of black smoke greets us. What? We want to scream. When did this happen?

The gentle currents that rocked our boat become terrifying riptides, waiting eagerly to drown us. The formerly protective walls trap us in a rotting prison. The sea we sailed so many times is foreign and frightening. In the space of a heartbeat, we realize three things:

One, we passed out of sight of land hours ago, and are a far-cry from help.

Two, our boat is taking on water at a terrifying rate.

Three, despite all the warning signs, we didn't check the engine.

In our defense, we had no reason to inspect the engine room. We are just kids and everything up until this point has led us to believe that nothing was amiss.

Before we know it, our family boat has sunk and we're floating among the wreckage of our beautiful craft. Somehow we manage to crawl onto a broken piece of wood from the floating deck. The yacht is lost and we can't stop mourning. Panic stricken, we hover on a chunk of the former family stronghold as we attempt to remember a few important items:

1. None of this was our fault. Even if we had suspected the decomposition of our boat, there was nothing we could have done to stop it.

2. These were forces outside our control. Nothing we did contributed to the loss of our craft.

We have two choices.

1. We can stay lost in this sea of grief forever.

2. Or we can buck up, dry our tears, and start paddling.

The strangest thing happens as we choose survival with option two. We look around us to notice hundreds of other stragglers struggling to stay afloat on their pieces of flotsam. It dawns on us that together we could build a raft and paddle to safety. Who knows, with all the experience we have accumulated in the sailing world, we can be the captains of our own ships. This time not only will we tie the knots and hoist the sails, we'll check the engines. We will not be shipwrecked. We will pilot the family boat to forever.

We will survive.

Morgan Hunter is a junior at Campolindo High School. She enjoys writing, drawing, red pandas, not doing things in a conventional manner, being helpful, and watermelon.

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

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