

## Personal Narrative #1

Cold waves lap at my back. The wind roars. The capsized kayak bobs crazily like a runner's short ponytail. My arms and legs tingle with the thought of an underwater creature dragging me down into the watery depths.

"This is just like T.V.," I think as I anticipate a shark jumping out from the water and eating us. I shiver involuntarily.

"Help!" I cry, small-voiced.

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Earlier, that day had felt like any old vacation. The weather was warm, and there was a pleasant breeze licking at the waves in the lagoon. My mom's book club invited my brother, sister, mom, and me, along with two other families, to a beach house. The house was on a tranquil lagoon with rippling water. No one else was in the water that day. The house had kayaks, body boards, and a paddle boat: the perfect set-up for a large group of kids. All was going well until the two of the boys started to get bored.

It felt like we would all go crazy if we didn't do something exciting soon. We had been lying in the sun for too long, and were swiftly accumulating girly tans. Suddenly, a boy I had just met named Josh had a marvelous idea: "Why don't we let one floaty go drifting downstream and then chase it in one of the kayaks?!" The idea seemed perfect, but there was one catch: the pleasant breeze that had been blowing gently was now a gushing whirlwind of energy, and no one had noticed this. Tino and Josh climbed into the bright plastic two-person kayak, and pushed it into the river. I stood on the shore and watched as they tossed a "floaty" (an inflatable arm-band) into the river. Instantly, the wind and the speed of the current caught the floating object, and started to carry it away. The boys laughed and screamed as they started to paddle after it.

The floaty was rapidly growing smaller and smaller, with the boys close in tow. As they got closer, Josh started to climb onto his knees. My eyes strained to see what was happening, because at this point, they were almost too far down the river to be seen. Josh was trying to reach the floaty by leaning out over the front of the kayak...and in the attempt, the kayak lost balance.

"Tino! Joshua!" I screamed and yelled, but it was to no avail.

"JOSHUA BURCH! COME BACK HERE!" His sister Madison hollered.

Our mothers came up behind us. "Looks like they're going to need a rescue team," Madison's mom said. We looked at her for only a second, and then jumped into action. Madison and I took a two-seater kayak. We pushed off of the shore like soldiers on a mission!

When we reached them, the situation was worse than we had thought. Tino and Josh were flailing about in the water. Madison had tied the two boats together, hoping to give the capsized one a tow because the current was too strong to flip it back over. The boys were still in the water, unable to get in the boat. Madison, realizing her plan wasn't working, untied the kayak. Finally, Josh managed to get in the paddle boat, leaving Tino to fend for himself.

Seeing Tino swimming towards us, we made room for him on board. He reached us and tried to heave himself on. I threw my weight on the opposite end so we wouldn't capsize. When Tino made it into the boat, for just a moment he sat with his legs dangling, resting over the edge. I knew he shouldn't do that, but before I could warn him, we tipped over, and we all went spilling into the lagoon.

The cold water hit me, and I surfaced, sputtering water. I prayed to God, thanking Him that we had life jackets. My first concern was that we had to right the kayak. Unfortunately, this was easier said than done. We tried again. And tried again. And after our fifth try, the kayak reluctantly flipped over with a loud squelching sound.

During that time, some of the mothers arrived to help. They brought us our paddles, which had floated away, and, exhausted from the strenuous effort of flipping the kayak, we paddled back home against the current.

Back on shore, Tino and John were lying on their backs, a bit out of breath. Everyone was tired. Our mothers were angry. Despite all of this, I couldn't stop smiling. What was to my mom a disaster was to me an adventure. The day started out unmemorable, and if it wasn't for the stupidity of my new friends, it might have remained that way. Instead, it became the most memorable event of the summer. I'm a suburban kid who lives in a quiet neighborhood. I go to a quiet school where nothing extraordinary happens. To me, an event like a flipped kayak is equivalent to going to war, playing in the World Cup, or flying to outer space. What I mean by that is this:

A simple challenge can be the grandest adventure in the mind of a kid.

(865 words)