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Age: 16 years old.

Theme: Moving Forward  
Topic: Make your move

This is based on a story I wrote when I was twelve, about a girl named Mia who thought she had the world figured out and possibly her future. She's planned a life that included adorable children, a loving husband and a successful career. But when that vision is abruptly shattered, she must set herself free from the burden that sinks her. Torn between, what others want her to be and who she really is she must make sacrifices in order to move on. However, you can't keep a ship floating, if you're the one with holes. But you can choose what to do.

There's a slight difference between moving on and moving forward. Moving on is basically letting things happen. But when we talk about moving forward, we're talking about making things happen. Mia was lost and confused in the beginning. She wanted everything a little girl could possibly dream of. But instead of making the things she wanted true, she was caught up in her mother's and father's expectations. They wanted her to live their dream which was causing her frustration because that's not what she wanted. Every time she made a mistake she's worried she'll let her parents down and disappoint them. Unfortunately, that's exactly what happens. She's receiving too much pressure and too much weight on her shoulders.

In school, she keeps her head down to avoid getting pushed around by the other girls in class. She's been called names and she's the last one picked for everything. The good thing is she never lost her hopes and dreams because she still believed in herself, the bad thing is that she's not making them come true. She's just letting every second of everyday slip by. Every precious minute, gone. It turned into days, weeks and months. She couldn't take it any longer. She let the words get to her head and it was hurting her mentally. Yet, no one knew how much pain she was in.

Many years later, she attended college. She told herself "Smile. Be confident. It will be okay" at least twenty times a day. Even though she knew from the very start what was likely to happen. She wanted to study in Sea Biology because she had a love for sea animals and wanted to do whatever it takes to keep endangered animals from getting wiped to extinction. One day after school, she decided to tell her parents about her love and passion for marine biology. When she did their reactions made her heart break. They laughed and told her how silly she was to ever think she could be a marine biologist. They believed it was absurd. On one hand, her parents still wanted her to live the life they wanted and on the other hand, she's lucky to have friends in college. Who support her through every decision she made. They were the only loving family she had.

After she graduated, Mia finally got what she worked so hard for. You see, she never gave up hope and she held on to her dreams. Even when the people around her tried to bring her down. I understand her completely because this story was based off a true story. My story. No, I have not graduated from college. But this is what I've predicted. This is what I want and I'm willing to do anything to make that possible. If I was close to my destination but I happen to be in a sinking ship, I wouldn't want to wait for help or wait to drown. I'd think fast and dive right off the ship and swim my way to my destination.

How is this, in any way, related to the theme moving forward?

- Mia kept a tight grip onto what she wanted the most. Even when people tried to pull her down and knock her out of her path. She was in so much stress and frustration that she decided to move on rather than move forward. As she grew older, she realised that the terrible things she's been through were not just bad memories, they were lessons and she took them as a motivation to push her up and move forward from square one to square two. She became the voice for the animals she loved and she made sure everyone was aware of the lives of animals that are at stake.

I wrote this story also to express my feelings and tell you what I've been through in my previous years.

I used to get teased by the other girls for wanting to be a singer or an actress.

I used to get picked on for being ugly.

I used to get called names because I was different.

I used to get bullied for being half English.

I admit, I let it get to me once and it towered over my thoughts making me the saddest person ever.

Life will throw things at you, don't dodge them – challenge them! Then you'll know that you're moving forward.

You are a unique and beautiful individual, don't let the invalid opinion of others drag you to the pits or take advantage of who you really are. Never lose hope. Even if it turns out to be a little false hope, remember it's better than no hope at all.

I am now a volunteer as a sea mammal trainer.

This is exactly what we need. We need people to start acting and moving into the right direction. It is possible but it all depends on you.

Are you just going to hang around being told what to do and how to do them or are you going to stand up and do what you're happy about and what your heart wants most?

If you are going through similar situations. Be strong. I know it sounds boring when people say to be happy when you aren't. But trust me if you can keep an open

mind and an open heart good things will come your way. But you must be brave enough to conquer the consequences that you may face along the way.

As a daughter, student, sister and friend it's best to do what's right and what's best for me but as a human being with dreams I'm willing to follow my heart to my own path in order to step forward.

It's not about stepping your way into the future, it's about what you are willing to do or even sacrifice to become your future.

So I ask, are you going to question every step you take? Or are you willing to risk everything and make your move.

I'll leave you to think about that.