

After the rogue wave hit, "I couldn't stop thinking, 'Nobody can find me here,'" says Sunderland (in Marina del Rey, Calif., in March).

TEEN SAILOR ABBY SUNDERLAND

'I'D DO IT AGAIN'

Her dream to sail the world solo ended when her boat capsized, but this adventurer has no regrets **BY JOHNNY DODD**

Though only 17, Abby Sunderland sounds like an ancient mariner when she describes her "love-hate relationship" with the sea. "Sometimes it's horrible and it's trying to kill," she says. "Other times it's amazing, with moments you live for." Either way, she says, "it's like an addiction."

Last year that siren call took Abby miles from her home in Thousand Oaks, Calif., in a bid to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. After a 60-ft. wave crippled her 40-ft. boat on Day 138, leaving her stranded in the Indian Ocean, Abby and her parents withstood intense criticism—



With seven siblings at home, "there's never a dull moment," says Abby (second from left, with her family).



On June 12, 2010, French fishermen rescued Abby from her battered yacht *Wild Eyes*.

“GETTING BACK TO NORMAL LIFE WAS TOUGH. I LIKE HAVING A PROJECT I CAN POUR MYSELF INTO” —ABBY

she for taking the trip, her parents for letting her (and agreeing to a reality show, which later fell through). Abby hopes her new memoir will change minds. “People who don’t grow up with sailing,” she says, “don’t understand.”

The second of eight children, Abby spent much of her youth living on boats while being home-schooled by her evangelical Christian parents. She began skippering yachts with dad Laurence, a shipwright, at 13. “One day these guys on the dock joked I was going to be the youngest girl to sail around the world alone,” she says. “I said, ‘Why not?’” After a particularly perilous sail, says Laurence, “I asked, ‘Still ready to sail around the world?’ She said, ‘Show me where my boat is.’”

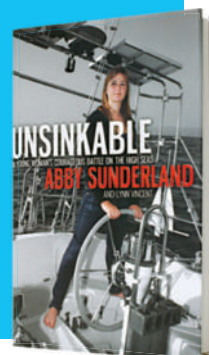
In 2009, the year her brother Zac, then 17, became the first minor to perform the feat, Abby got her par-

ents’ permission. A corporate sponsor agreed to fund her, which mom Marianne saw as a sign. “If God provided a way,” she says, “then we were good to go.” Abby set sail in January 2010, and for the next six months weathered storms and equipment failures but never once considered quitting. “It’s the thrill of testing yourself,” she explains. “I’m really shy, or I was. I like being alone on a boat—having to rely on myself.” Then, on June 10, a rogue wave rolled her boat upside down, tearing off the mast. By the time a French fishing vessel rescued Abby two days later, her parents were battling a different kind of storm. “The most hurtful thing we heard was that we forced her to do this to make money,” says her mother. “We can’t even get Abby to clean her room.”

Now, as Abby completes her senior year, she is compiling a Bucket List. It includes skydiving, hang gliding, getting a pilot’s license. And one more thing: “I’m still going to sail around the world one day.” ●

FROM UNSINKABLE

An invisible hand picked me up and flung me across the cabin. My back slammed into the bulkhead above my bed, and my head hit the hard metal gauges. My vision went fuzzy. A howling roar filled the cabin like a jet engine, and the boat heeled crazily to port. Now I was lying on the bulkhead . . . and not popping back up again. This wasn’t a knockdown. I’m rolling, I thought blearily, and the world went black.



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