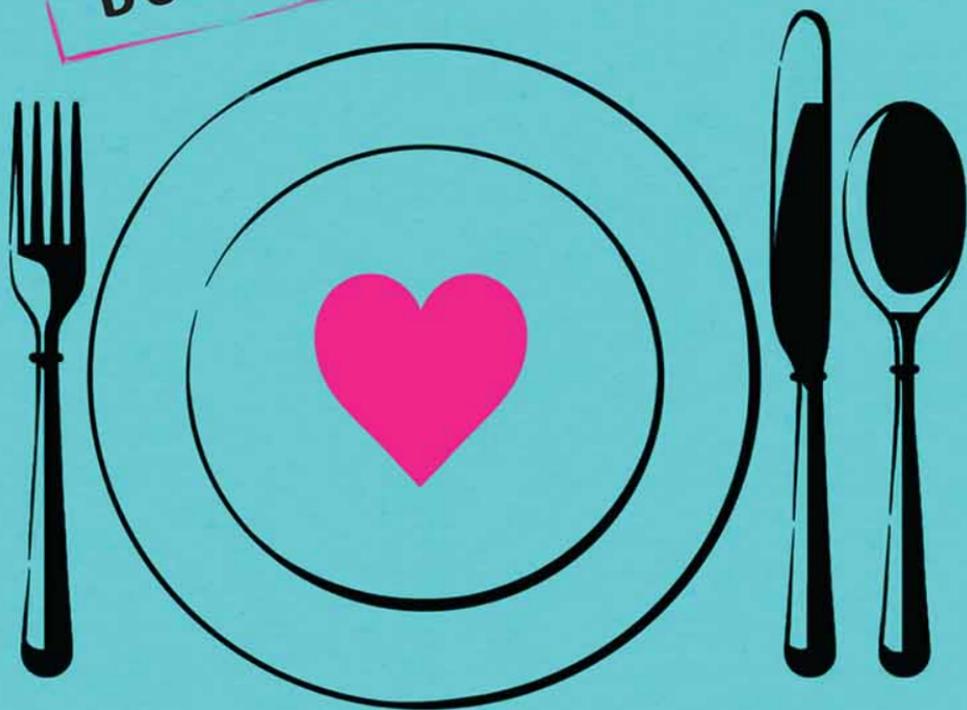


# ONE HAPPY DIVORCE

HOLD THE  
BULLS#!T



*Jennifer Hurvitz Weintraub*

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Amy Ashby



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*For Jonah and Zac: The reason I never give up.  
And for Mark: The reason I'm "Happily Divorced."  
I love you all to the moon and back.*

# Introduction

FIRST OF ALL, NO ONE WANTS TO GET DIVORCED.

 You're not walking down the aisle, planning the end before it begins. No one whispers to the rabbi, "See ya at my next wedding," or, "Is this a buy one, get the next free?" Yeesh. We all go in hoping for the best!

Let me give it to you straight, OK? (Are you holding onto your panties?) Statistics show more than 52% of all marriages now end in divorce. So, maybe you should be worried. Maybe it *is* a good idea to approach the chuppah with trepidation. What? Too negative for your Martha Stewart sensibility? Fine then, put me down. Go on, drop my ass. I'm not for everyone; I tell it like it is. I don't sugar coat shit, y'all. Willy Wonka, I am not. This book is for truth seekers only.

So, are you in?

Then listen up.

## I'M NOT BEING PESSIMISTIC, I'M BEING REALISTIC.

With over half of all marriages headed to splitsville, I know it's sad, I know you're mad, but don't be a baby. I can show you how to do it right. The kind way, the way it should be done. Drama-free, stress-free, and as simple as possible. And if kids are involved, the *only* way – happily! Children should be a game changer.

## LOOK AT THOSE KIDS, AND REMEMBER TO ACT LIKE GROWN-UPS!

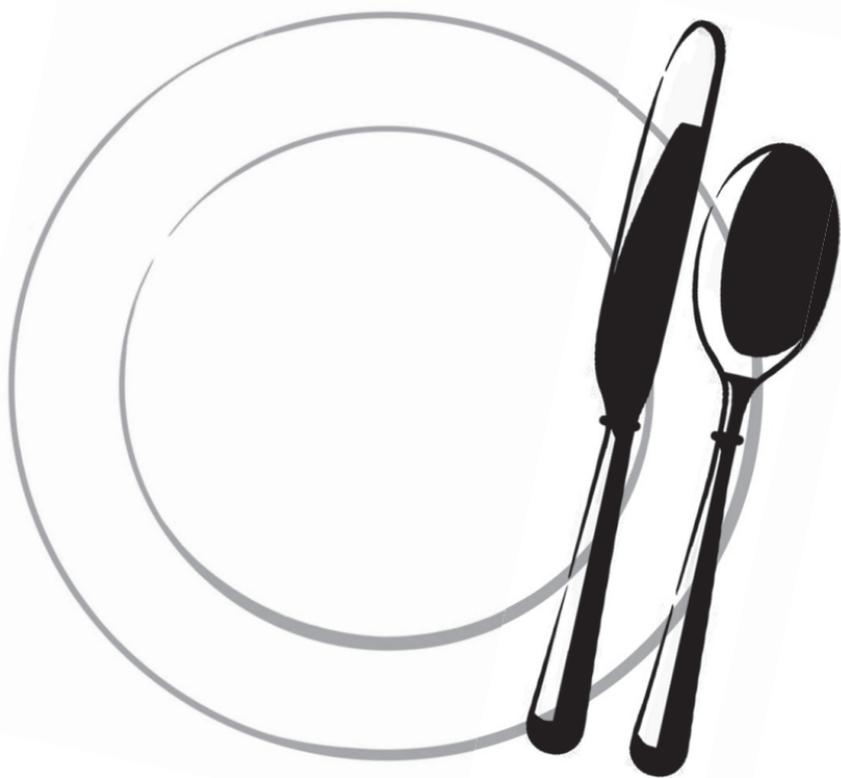
Easier said than done. But divorce doesn't have to be a disaster or destructive.

Work on one thing... Get happy.

I am happily divorced. I did it. Whoop whoop! I know, it's not easy, it *wasn't* easy. But you can do it, with work – and wine! Keep reading with an open mind and you will get there. And, I can help.

Trust me.

What do you have to lose?



# KIDS FIRST, DUH!

I REALLY DIDN'T GET IT AFTER THE SEPARATION.

WERE WE SUPPOSED TO SWEAR AT EACH OTHER AT CARPOOL? SAY HORRIFIC THINGS AND ROLL OUR EYES?

MAYBE GIVE EACH OTHER THE SILENT TREATMENT OR FLIP EACH OTHER OFF AND MAKE EVERYONE ELSE FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE?

WHAT WAS THE NORM FOR DIVORCED COUPLES THESE DAYS?

 I didn't *feel* normal let alone understand what normal looked like. My girlfriends couldn't look at me and most of Mark's friends didn't call to see if he was OK. I lost my marriage, and was about to lose my kids for *half of their lives*. Half of their lives. I wanted to puke. I was moving out of our family home and moving into an apartment with my ex.

Wait, what?

Let me explain.

We were "*nesting*" for a few months so the boys could adjust to the separation. You see, "*nesting*" was all the rage in 2013. It's when the kids stay in the family house, and

the parents get an apartment. Yes, *the same apartment*. (No, they don't share bedrooms.) Then the adults, as caregivers, move back and forth from the family home. The kids don't have to go anywhere. They never pack a bag or a toothbrush. They never leave their dogs. Or their beds. It's kind of amazing if you think about it. I know, it's a little unconventional, maybe. But hear me out. It's the new thing, and, it's amazing, and selfless.

It was the most selfless thing I ever did in my life. I put my kids first, 100%. This was not like, oh, you get the first donut, or sure, go ahead, name the flippin' dog. No. I mean, putting them totally and completely first. Got it?

And pay attention now:

### **YOU HAVE TO BE READY TO GIVE UP YOUR LIFE TO MAKE "NESTING" HAPPEN.**

It's no picnic. In fact, it's a fucking nightmare. Imagine this, OK? You live in a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment with your new ex, the person you now cannot stand in every conceivable way. You hate the way they chew! When they clear their throat you want to kill them. And you alternate weeks. In and out. Packing your stuff every Monday. Can you imagine that? My clothes, and shoes, even my underwear, (which he did not get to see anymore, thank you very much). I had to remember everything, and then for the work week, what would I need? I couldn't forget one little thing. And we'd see each other in passing, try to be civil, touch base with each other about how the kids were doing, make sure the kids were adjusting, try to avoid any bodily harm and throat clearing. Not easy, I'm telling you.

## GOING BACK AND FORTH EVERY OTHER WEEK, MOVING ALL YOUR STUFF, SCHLEPPING, AND SWITCHING BEDS, UGH!

Think about that.

You big dummies. This swapping is exactly what your kids do every time they switch houses! **Nesting is putting yourself in your kids' shoes.** We got a taste of what they would eventually face, moving between our two houses. Packing a suitcase and changing settings. New sheets, different smells and sounds, one parent instead of two. Their special belongings, things they only had one of like their blankies and stuffed animals. I remember my little guy telling me, “It’s the only thing the same between both houses, and it smells like you, Mom.” He was talking about his plush rabbit and he held onto that thing tighter than ever. *It smelled like me.* I’m sobbing as I’m typing this.

He still has that rabbit. Sometimes, he makes me sleep with it so it can get the “smell back.”

So, nesting was a complete clusterfuck. I did it for my boys so they could see how it would feel to be alone with each parent. A pseudo-separation period. Make sense? It made sense to us; putting our kids first. And that my friends, is how being *happily divorced* begins.

**“HAPPILY DIVORCED” BEGINS BY RECOGNIZING THAT YOUR CHILDREN COME FIRST. THEY DID NOT ASK FOR THIS SEPARATION. THEY DID NOT CHOOSE A DIVORCE, YOU DID.**

Plain and simple. So if you can do that, and mean it, then keep reading. If not, then set this book aside and

read it later, when you're ready. You'll get there. Come back to it. Being happily married takes effort, so does being happily divorced. That's the mantra, y'all.

I love those people that say, "Oh, my kids are fine going back and forth. They love the 2-2-5 schedule. It's so easy; they are great with it." Really? Have you tried it? Give it a shot. Go on, go! Set yourself up in an apartment, and then go back and forth to another place on a 2-2-5 schedule. Then add homework and sports. Throw in your work, and dance. Grocery shopping. Feeding the dogs. Then, have someone "forget" something back at the ex's house. Yup. That's about how "easy" it is for your kids. Try it. Then, get back to me.

Oh, what's a 2-2-5, you ask? Ha, silly me, well it's really more of a 2-2-5-5 and it goes like this: Each parent has two set weeknights and the weekends rotate. Your kids spend two weeknights with you and the next two weeknights with the other parent. They then come back to your house and spend three weekend nights and the first two weeknights you are assigned, equaling five nights. Guess what's next? They go back to the other parent and have their two assigned nights along with the three weekend nights, again equaling five nights. Known as a 2-2-5, or 2-2-5-5. Completely simple, right? *Wrong*. It's crazy. Here's what it might look like in picture form. I think it's nutso.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Parent A	6 pm switch	B	6 pm switch	A	6 pm switch	B
Parent B	B	B	6 pm switch	A	A	A

For parents, it's easy, you have assigned weeknights. Some claim it is more consistent. More consistent than what?

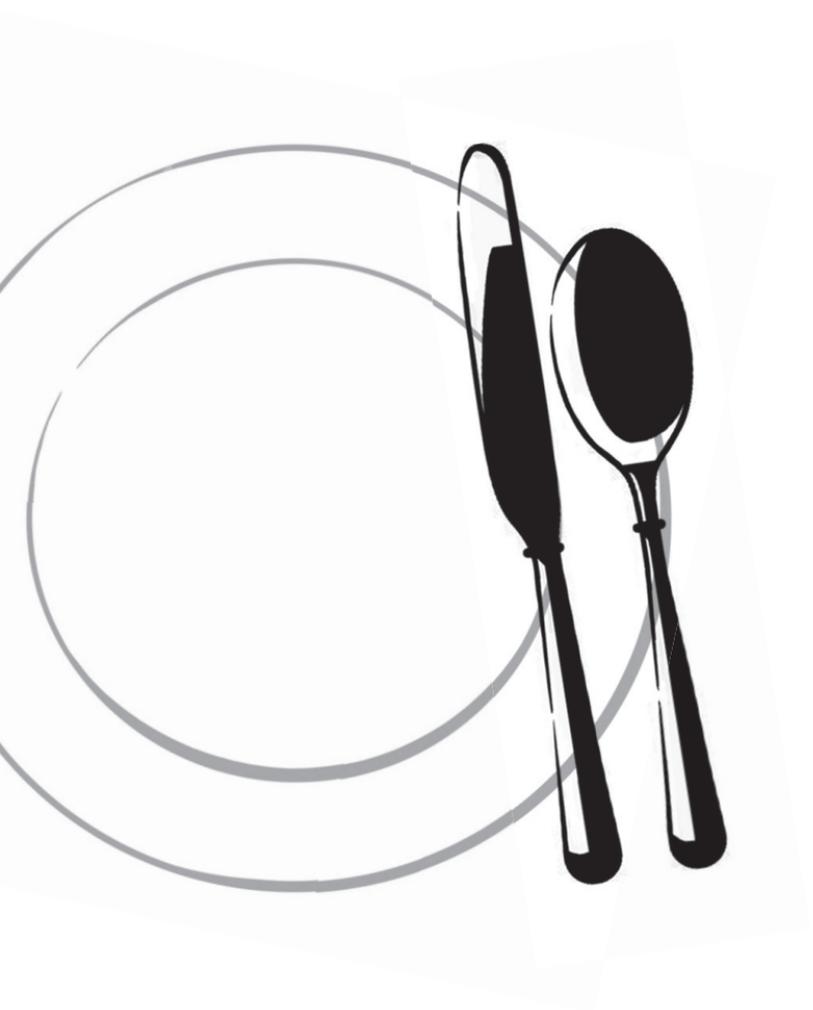
Look, I never said reading this book would be easy, but I did promise the truth. I nested and went between two houses bi-weekly for six months. I know exactly what your kids are feeling. And, I'm sorry to drop the bomb, but it's anything but "great." And sure, they are resilient. And yes, they get used to it. And of course, two houses are all part of a divorce. But if you could make the transition easier, wouldn't you? (Rhetorical.)

Am I saying that nesting is for everyone? Hell no. If you can't get along with your ex for a second and the divorce is wicked nasty then nesting is not good for your kids. It's not healthy, and it is better for your entire family to separate and move on quickly. Or, if you don't have the financial means to support two places, then it is what it is. Nesting is only an option if it works for your family. Do what works for you; don't make an already stressful situation worse. But, consider it. Please. For the kids.

Mark and I continued to nest as long as we could. We lasted six months before we lost our flipping minds. At that point, the boys understood the why and how of things. We were all ready to separate and move forward with our lives. Apart – but together. Two different houses, two different families, one set of parents. Just co-parenting in different places.

See, we have this!

You with me?



# I HATE HIM

I HATE MY EX. I MEAN I REALLY HATE HIM.

I CAN'T STAND TO LOOK AT HIM.

OR BE IN THE SAME ROOM WITH HIM.

 I want to shake him and say, “Do you know how much I want to slap the living shit out of you?” I want to jump up and down and yell, “Clean up your shit, I don’t work for you anymore!”

Ok, whoa. Remember what I said earlier. Nesting is hard, but it is worth it for the kids.

Read on, y’all.

See, I’m referring to the part of nesting where all four of us were living in the same place. Not together, but overlapping. Ya, that. He would come over and hang out to watch a game, or have dinner and leave his empty cans on the coffee table. Or he’d leave his fucking dishes on the counter. Or better yet, make gross-ass sliders and leave the mess (for me to clean). Then he’d be off to the apartment and it was my week. Or every once in awhile, he’d stop by to say “Hi” (super-sweet!).

But he'd open a UPS package and leave deserted packing peanuts all over the floor, the dog would eat them, choke, and puke. *He'd leave dog puke.* Then I'd step in it.

And fuck my life.

And fuck him!

I got so angry. We'd yell at each other and scream. And Zac would say, "Ladies! To your corners!" Even he knew better; no fighting in front of the kids. Never, ever, ever. So, until we could get our shit together, we'd take a break from each other in the nest. It wasn't healthy for the boys – or for us.

It's important to check yourselves. Go to your corners until you can come out with gloves off. No arguing in front of the kids (same rules as when you were married). Take it outside, or via text where little ears can't hear you. Nothing is that important. And remember, your kids are a part of your ex. You may be not be blood-related to him, but they are. And don't you ever forget it. So, when you decide to bad-mouth him in front of those kids, who are you actually bad-mouthing? *Ahhhh, yes.* Check it!

### WE MADE RULES:

- NEVER FIGHT IN FRONT OF THE KIDS.
- NEVER MAKE THEM CHOOSE ONE PARENT OVER THE OTHER.
- NEVER BAD-MOUTH EACH OTHER.
- NEVER PLAY THE VICTIM OR THE HERO.

After a little breather, (OK, months of breathing), we can hang out as a foursome, and it's a good thing. Usually. To be together as a family, it's a great thing, actually, but