

TO SINK OR TO SWIM

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It seemed a simple plan. Skubba dove with the hose in the bucket. With one hand he held onto his homemade diving helmet and in the other hand, he held the hose. Before he went underwater, he saw Fred start to pump.

The ffft-sound told him fresh air was coming into the bucket. The water level dropped slowly and after a while, he saw air bubbles escaping from under the brim. It was working. Now he could remain underwater.

He had to occasionally surface because he lost some air due to a sudden movement. But, when it all went well, he could fully enjoy the underwater world for as long as possible. He got to see little red dots, and long wires that resembled plants (or were they plants resembling long wires?). Every time he came up, he could share the discoveries with Fred. At last he was diving!

The attempts to refresh the air in the bucket by turning it from time to time, failed. Sometimes Skubba was lucky to catch some air, but it was never enough to breathe more than a few times. It was only when he dragged the heavy bucket up to solid ground that he could successfully refresh all the air in it. Although it was a tiring job, it meant that he could continue diving without getting a headache. After being in and out of the water a few times, he could no longer see Fred anymore. What was Fred up to?

The dives went on for days. Fred pumped while Skubba dived. They were both happy and they would have stayed that way if Skubba had not tripped one day.

After yet another trip back up from the water, he finally ran into Fred. His friend stood there with an air pump and a long hose in his hands.

That dive day, Skubba wanted to observe a fish up close. He had already found out that he could dive deeper by extending the hose on the bucket, but he had not figured out how to yet move forward. In fact, he could, with difficulty, only move up and down. But at that very moment he wanted to follow the fish. The first step went well, but during the second one, his right foot got stuck on the hose, causing him to lose his balance. Trying to recover, his left foot hit a piece of a train rail. In an attempt to stay upright, he pulled on one side of the bucket causing it to turn upside-down. With a 'clock'-sound, the air escaped. Entangled in the hose Skubba surfaced.

"Do you want to refresh the air in the bucket with that?" asked Skubba.

"Yes. I will attach one end of the hose to the pump and put the other end into the bucket. If you take care to keep the end of the hose in the bucket, then I will do the pumping."

"I want to be able to move!" he shouted at Fred who was still pumping.