

# THE FIN KICK

STORY BY PATRICK VAN HOESERLANDE ILLUSTRATION PETER BOSTEELS

Today Skubba would test his homemade foot triangles. ‘Fins’, Fred had called them.

Fins. The word sounded special and that made Skubba feel even more like a fish. He now had fins like them. And because he felt like a fish, he was confident that he would succeed this time.

He stepped into the old sandals that were attached to the fins. He fitted them properly and checked everything one more time just to be sure that they would stay on his feet. He shook a foot. The triangle did not fall off. Good.

After he had checked the other one, he made his way over to the waterfront. Well, walking on land was not easy. He waddled like a duck and had to be very careful where he landed his fins. He almost dropped his mask into the water in doing so.

“I think you had better walk backwards,” Fred said smiling.

“Backwards?” wondered Skubba, as he did not understand why.

“I think that when you go backwards, it will be easier to walk with your fins on. That way they’ll easily drag over the ground without bothering you too much or making you fall.”

When Fred suggested something, Skubba had learned to try it. And it worked quite well. Walking backwards went smoothly. He just had to look over his shoulder from time to time to see where he was going.

Having arrived at the water’s edge, he carefully stepped into the lake. When he thought he was deep enough, he let himself fall over. He had already learned to hold on tight to his mask so that he would not lose it. He looked around and dove.

Although diving was his plan, he seemed

to be going nowhere, no matter what he did, he barely moved at all. Maybe he would succeed if he tried breaststroke?

Wow, that was hard. He really had to work hard with his legs to move forward. Maybe Fred would know what to do?

“You have to move with your legs!” he heard when he surfaced.

“I’m doing just that!”

“No, don’t swim breaststroke, only use your legs.”

“I already did that, but that didn’t work either,” replied Skubba.

“Yes, I saw that, but you’re bending your knees. It’s like you’re trying to ride a bicycle underwater.”

“What should I do?”

“Can you swim in front crawl?”

“Yes!”

“Try doing that, but without using your arms. Just use your legs and you’ll do a fin kick. But do not bend your knees!”

Skubba focused on his legs and began to move. Hey, it seemed to work. The harder he kicked, the faster he went.

Bang! Skubba hadn’t been paying attention to anything else other than his legs and he smashed his head against a tree root hanging in the water. The pain did not lessen the joy he felt though. At last, he had now come up with how to swim in water. A pair of fins and the right way of moving. He felt ready for some real diving.

Here comes Skubba...!

