

A PRO LOOKALIKE

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Fred was full of pride looking on at his friend Skubba who was about to test their scuba equipment.

With his wetsuit, neoprene boots, fins, mask, weight belt and homemade tank on his back, Skubba looked like a Pro. "You look like a professional diver" Skubba's mother remarked. Fred was sad he could not join his friend, but water was not his favourite thing.

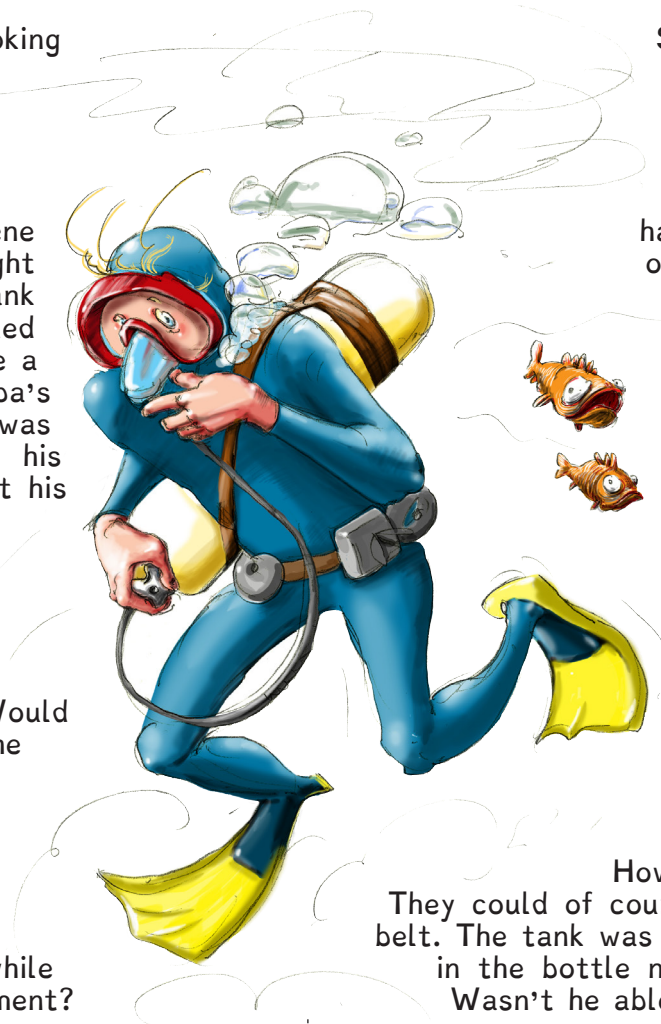
Although he had read almost everything he could find in books and on the internet, he was feeling a bit uncertain. Would the air they filled with the compressor into the tank be sufficient for diving? Would Skubba be able to operate the valve so that he could breathe underwater? Would Skubba be able to dive while handling the scuba equipment?

When Skubba disappeared underwater, Fred was getting even more nervous. His friend stayed under much longer than his previous dives. Was that a good sign? Should he not move closer to the water? What could he do if something went wrong? He had a lot of questions, and very few answers. He could only wait.

His waiting finally ended when Skubba resurfaced with a big smile on his face. Although he wanted to jump for joy, Fred waited quietly on the side. It was only when his friend was back on dry land that he ran over to him.

Skubba enthusiastically talked about the fish he had seen. How he could follow them. How he could breathe by opening the valve. How he felt like a fish. How he... he was a waterfall of words. Fred was enjoying his happiness and their success.

"Everything went well, except...", said



Skubba. What could have gone wrong, Fred thought. They had thought of everything and had solved all the problems they had encountered one by one. Skubba's mum had also done her best by going to the dive shop with them. Fred had seen a lot of things over there. What could he have missed?

"...except that I cannot hover like a fish", Skubba continued. "I have to keep swimming, otherwise I fall to the bottom and see nothing because of the mud."

How could this be solved? They could of course lighten the weight belt. The tank was heavy, but did the air in the bottle not help him to float? Wasn't he able to test this?

Fred asked Skubba to take the tank off his back and put it in the water. He told his friend that he wanted to see if it floated. And no, it did not. So, the weight belt had to be made lighter. The belt should be heavy enough to allow Skubba to dive, but not too heavy to let his friend sink to the bottom. There had to be something else that ensured a real diver to hover...

If the volume of the air in the tank was not big enough, he had to find something to make it bigger. A larger tank was likely to be heavier and thus would also sink. Something light with plenty of air?

Skubba was all too eager to go diving again. But first they had to fill the bottle. Skubba had completely emptied it.

On the way to their compressor they crossed a runner with a CamelBak on his back. Fred thought that maybe a bag like that could be the solution...