

SAVE THE SHARKS

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“Safe diving means that you have to visit the doctor every year”, Nella told Fred and Skubba. And so their mothers had made an appointment and they were on their way to see the doctor together. It was quite busy in the streets. People walked out of shops with heavier loads than when they went in. They also saw some strange posters hanging in some of the shops front windows. In the middle of a big blue page, a shark swam, but the big fish did not look dangerous. In fact, it made you feel rather sorry for it and very sad. The shark had a bandage around his dorsal fin and it wept. Why was that? The poor thing.

Further down the street, they saw two girls hanging the very same poster up.

“Shall we ask them?” Fred asked.

Both boys hurried over to the girls. One of them turned around and looked at them.

“Why are you hanging these posters?” Skubba quickly asked.

“We are hanging them because we want to protect the sharks,” the girl replied.

“But sharks are strong. Can they not protect themselves?” Skubba asked. He had always seen sharks as big and strong hunters. Such large animals can take care of themselves, can't they?

“Normally they can, but people catch 100 million sharks every year. Some are eaten, a bit like we eat fish, but most of them are only killed for their fins. The fins are cut off and the finless shark is then thrown back into the water. The shark suffers and dies a terrible death and we don't want that! The fins only serve to thicken a soup and have no taste at all.

It's such a waste!”

“Oh, that's terrible. But why do you want to protect sharks? They kill people, right?” Meanwhile, the second girl joined them.

“Yes, sometimes sharks attack people, but never to eat them. There is an average of about 7 people killed by sharks each year. That is very little compared to the 40 people who die struck by lightning, or the 150 who die each year because a coconut falls on their heads. Sharks are not as dangerous as most of us think they are.”

The boys had to think about that. The second girl took over the defense of sharks, “Sharks are important for our seas because they eat the sick and the weak. They ensure only healthy fish survive and so they keep our seas healthy. We do not want sharks to go extinct!”

The girls were very convinced of their case. They wanted to chat a little longer, but the boys had their appointment with the doctor to get to. Skubba and Fred were given two posters which they had to promise to hang up when they got home. Fred would certainly look for more information about sharks on the internet.

Skubba was already thinking about how he could protect sharks as a diver. He strangely felt less afraid of sharks now. He felt sorry for them. They deserve to be protected.

Would he be able to see a shark when he dives? Hopefully the girls project succeeds so sharks do not become extinct before he gets a chance to see them. Better still would be for them to swim in the seas forever. Maybe he and Fred could help?

Reflecting on this encounter and new information, they walked on to their doctors appointment.

