

TREASURE ROOM

STORY BY PATRICK VAN HOESERLANDE ILLUSTRATION PETER BOSTEELS

It was morning and Skubba and Fred were sitting at the breakfast table. Today, they would go diving again. Skubba could now move underwater and he was looking forward to new discoveries. Fred wondered what his friend would ask him to solve next. He felt that there was still much to discover, but had no idea what that would be.

Skubba's mother listened to all their stories of buckets, pumps and windows... until she suddenly told them to put their coats on and wait for her outside. What was his mother up to?

She drove the car out from the garage and asked the boys to get in.

"Mommy, where are we going?" asked Skubba.

"Wait and see. You'll know soon enough," was all she said.

They both looked around to try and guess where they were being driven to. After a while, the car stopped and she parked the car along the side of the road. Where were they?

"Get out of the car boys. We are here," she said.

"Where to?" asked Fred, who had not said a word since they had left the house.

"Over there!" she said as she pointed towards a building with a blue and white flag. Fred thought it was a strange flag, because there was a piece missing.

The moment they stepped through the door, the boys stood rooted to the spot. They were in a room filled with treasure. There were strange things everywhere they looked. And all those things had something to do with water. They looked around with their mouths and eyes wide open.

"Where are we?" asked Skubba.

"In a dive shop. For a dive mask," answered

his mother.

"A what?" asked Skubba.

"A dive mask," she said. You have dived long enough with your bucket. It is time we get you a real mask now."

The man from the dive shop showed them a lot of different masks. He said it was important that the mask fits well on the face. The mask had a strap to fit around the head which also had to fit well. Skubba had to pinch his nose while he tried a mask on.

"This way you can clear your ears," said the shop keeper.

Skubba had no idea what the man meant by that. He was not really listening either, as he was too curious about all the other things in the shop.

Fred, who did not want a mask, was wandering around the aisles. He touched everything. He looked at everything with great attention to detail and read everything there was to read. With all this information, he would be able to help his friend later on.

As Skubba regained himself from the surprise, he now clutched a bag with a mask and a snorkel inside. He looked at them as if they were lumps of gold.

On the way back home, both boys were silent. Skubba dreamt of all the dives he would be able to do with his mask and all the things he would discover.

Fred wondered what all the things he had seen in the store were for. Thick rubber suits, big shoes with which you certainly could not walk. Belts with heavy blocks...

It was only once they had arrived home that they started to talk about all the new things they had seen, and all the things they were planning to do with them.

Skubba's mom? She just smiled.

