

THE ENCOUNTER

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They spent days and weeks at the waterfront. Skubba spent all his time in the water and Fred at the side of the lake. Skubba tried everything they made, while Fred pondered on the problems and found their solutions.

Then one fine day Skubba was busy sorting his hoses when he noticed a few oddly dressed people. Although they were not far away, he had only just noticed them. It took him a while before he realised that they were divers. Real divers!

And there were more of them. They all wore a slick black suit and most of them had a big bottle strapped to their backs. Some stood with their feet in the water, while others were walking towards it.

Then he saw air bubbles breaking the surface in front of two divers with their feet in the water. The bubbles grew larger and larger.

And suddenly...there were two heads piercing the surface. Divers!

He stopped breathing and felt his heart skip a beat. With his eyes wide open, he stared at them, in their suits, their masks, the large bottle with hoses on their backs, their...

He gathered all his courage and decided to go over to talk to them. When he was nearer the group, he saw that Fred was already talking with one of two divers. One was a woman in full diving gear. Her name was Nella.

Skubba and Fred hung onto every word the diver said. They asked so many questions and she was able to answer all of them.

“How did you learn to dive?”,
“Where do you go to dive?”,
“What age must you be

to start diving?” And so on and so on.

She invited them to come to a pool training and have a look at some of the junior diving courses. Being older than 8, they could learn to dive like real divers. They noticed that the other diver was a girl about their age!

Fred had once told Skubba about junior divers, but Skubba had not believed him. Standing next to them now was a real junior diver to prove it and they were invited to try a course. Skubba could become a real diver. His dreams of underwater adventures could come true! Very soon!

In all his excitement, he couldn't utter another word. Fortunately, Fred wasn't speechless. He took a piece of paper and wrote when and where they needed to be. They were allowed to join the junior divers a couple of times during practice to see if they liked it. Or not.

Skubba was already convinced. This was what he had always wished for. He would love it! But Fred hesitated. He suffered from hydrophobia!

