

THE FIRST OPEN WATER DIVE

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After spending a fun hour in the pool, Nella told the boys that they were ready to dive in open water.

“Why do you say ‘open water?’” Fred asked. “Is there something like closed water?”

“By open water we mean a large area of water that can be a lake or sea. A swimming pool is confined water. A pool is very good for training, but that is not open water.”

“So, we are going to dive outside!” Skubba concluded

enthusiastically.

It was not that he had not yet dived in a lake, but now he could do this with real diving equipment. And as a real diver.

“When? When?” he insisted.

“This Saturday,” Nella replied.

And so, it turned into Saturday. Skubba and Fred were not alone. Other young divers were there too, and they were all looking forward to their first dive. They would finally get to do what they had all dreamed of. Some were in a bit of disbelief and some of them a little stressed. A lake is not a swimming pool. The water was not very clear and there were real fish. And it was cold.

As they stood in a semi-circle, the instructor gave them a briefing to tell them what they would do, what they should pay attention to and who they would buddy with to dive. Skubba liked that he was appointed to dive with Nella, because apparently, she was not the only one that was allowed to dive with them.

The other instructors looked friendly, but he knew Nella best.

After the briefing, Skubba collected his diving equipment with Fred’s help: the tank, the regulator and the BCD. Together with Nella they put his equipment together. After a final check, they carried it down to the waterfront including his weight belt, mask and fins. There they laid everything out neatly. Then she told

Skubba that he could put on his wetsuit. She would join him when she was ready.

Exciting! Skubba was so nervous that Fred had to help him into his wetsuit. He could not even put his gloves on without his friend’s help. Nella had told them during the training that divers assisted each other and, although Fred did not really dive, he felt like a diver by helping his friend.

Skubba was barely ready when Nella stood fully dressed and equipped next to him.

“Ready?” she asked him while she carefully checked everything.

“Yes!”

“Then we can go over and report to the ‘safety diver’.”

Skubba had paid close attention during the briefing so he knew who the safety diver was, and where she stood. He gave her his and Nella’s names. Then he moved towards the water and put his equipment on. Skubba checked Nella’s equipment after which she checked his. Everything was OK.

Together, they stepped further into the water. Another quick check. And...

