

BACK TO PORT

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Diving in the sea was fantastic. Skubba had really enjoyed it. Fred had also been there to help out and asked the captain hundreds of questions. The boat no longer held any secrets from Fred. He could now maybe become a captain too one day. Then he could sail and take Skubba diving in the sea himself.

During the trip back to port, it started to get dark and all the boats started to switch their lights on. Their boat also had its lights turned on. Fred noticed the lights on the right side of the boat (which the captain called the starboard side) were all green, and those on the left side, which is called the port side on a boat, were all red. Isn't that weird?

"Why are there different coloured lights?" he asked the captain.

"Ah, you discovered that one too. I wondered how long it would take you to come up with that question," the captain smiled standing behind the wheel. "With the lights – navigation lights we sailors call them – we know which direction a boat is moving."

Fred thought for a moment. Starboard is green, and port is red. Yes, he understood it now.

"Are those colours used anywhere else?" Fred asked.

"Yes, green and red are very common in navigation. Just look at the buoys," the captain explained while he pointed to the chart.

Fred took the binoculars and scanned the horizon for buoys. He saw them in all kinds of shapes and colours. On the starboard side, he saw many green buoys with a top. On the port side, most were red and those ones had no tops.

"To sail to port, we have to sail between the green and red buoys, with the green ones on

our starboard side," the captain said, pointing to the chart. Fred thought it was very clever.

Boats passed alongside them. It was a very nice and peaceful trip. Skubba and Fred loved it.

After a while, Fred noticed that the buoys also had lights on them. It did not surprise him now that there were green and red buoys. What struck him was a great light that occasionally flashed. The light came from a high tower.

"That's a lighthouse," replied the captain to Fred's question of where the light came from.

"A long time ago, they used to light a big fire in the top of a tower, but now there are big lights inside of them instead," said the captain with a big smile.

"Why do they do that? Is that so you can see better?" Fred asked curiously.

"No, a lighthouse points you in the correct and safe direction to get to the port," the captain said as he picked up a chart.

The chart showed all the water ways and routes, and he explained how the flashing light pointed to which lighthouse it was you saw. He also showed them how you could safely enter the harbour by focusing on the light of the correct lighthouse.

Being a captain was not an easy job! You had to know so many things.

The captain gently docked the boat and they finished up by putting everything away neatly. After saying goodbye, everyone left to make their way home.

Our two friends talked excitedly in the back of the car. Then, suddenly all went very, very quiet. What could they have been dreaming of? About their trip out at sea?

