

THE AQUARIUM

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To find out more about life underwater, the dive instructors organised a day trip for the young students to visit the local aquarium. Although they weren't going to dive that day, everyone was looking forward to the excursion. Nella had told them it would be just as if they were all diving together. They would all see the same fish while a Marine Biologist would explain some interesting facts to them.

After they were all gathered in front of the entrance, they entered the first hall with lots of different species of fish. It was suddenly very quiet. They all looked through a large window where fish swam back and forth behind the glass. Their guide told them that all the fish in this aquarium were found in the local lakes and pits where they dived. This is where they started to recognise a few of the species.

“There, a pike!”

“And there, an eel!” And it carried on like this for quite a while.

When they had quietened down again, the Marine Biologist explained the statistics of each species. He pointed out the differences and similarities between them. They found it very interesting and they would now be able to correctly identify fish on their next dives and correctly name them in their logbooks.

They then crossed over to the hall of the North Sea where they saw crabs, shrimps and sepias. Each species received a lot of attention. It was exciting, especially after Nella had told them that they would soon get to go out on the boat to dive and encounter each of these on their next trip.

They were told that fish in their region displayed very little colour, but this was not the case for the species they saw in the



next room. When the guide opened the doors, they saw all kinds of different colours. He called everyone to him and pointed a few things out. When he asked what they were, they answered with flowers and anemones...

“These are corals,” he told them. “Corals are very small animals that

catch food with their tiny arms and together they build immense structures called reefs.” He showed them a map of coral reefs that had grown for many kilometres. He told them that these little animals are important to everything that lives in the oceans, as well as for humans. They are a source of food, they provide protection for coasts and offer space for recreation. However, we must take better care of these animals. His story made a deep impression on them. But where was Skubba? Fred had lost him. Was he still in the other room?

The group moved on to see an aquarium with larger fish in it. They suddenly saw two pairs of fins appear below the surface of the water. A lady from the aquarium said that divers helped with maintenance and that two of them would give a demonstration. And then Fred recognised his friend. “Skubba!” he yelled.

“He cannot hear you,” said the kind lady.

“Right, yes,” Fred replied. He knew that, but he was happy that he had found his friend.

After they had watched Skubba's dive in the aquarium, they walked on through to the remaining hall. Moments later, Skubba returned to the group excited to tell them what it had been like in the big aquarium.

When they reached the exit, they were all disappointed at how fast the visit had been, but it tired them out. On the way home, our friends fell asleep in the back seat of the car, with their heads full of dreams from their day's adventures.