



Captain Vara was amused by my fear and inexperience. "Careful, boy," he wickedly teased, "These gusts can suck up a lightweight sailor like you and hurl him into the sea!" Then, he laughed cruelly, as I clung to the railing, my stomach churning like the ocean around me.

At last, the sky cleared and the waves calmed. Captain Vara started the engine and turned toward home. But, after several hiccups, the engine died and refused to start again.

Captain Vara was not laughing now.

Without the power of the engine, our boat was no more than a helpless cork bobbing in the water. The shore, too distant for anyone to detect our distress, seemed lost to me.

As Pedro struggled to repair the engine, he both cursed and pleaded to Neptune, the god of the deep sea, whose name was proudly displayed on the helm of our small boat.

"Don't just stand there!" growled Captain Vara as he hung a pair of binoculars around my neck. "Search the ocean for a rescue ship!"

Exhilarated by the huge responsibility thrust upon me, I forgot about my seasickness and put the binoculars to my eyes. I stared out across the water, wide-eyed.

## The Shark

At first, I couldn't believe what I saw: behind the walls of water, a mast was dancing. Once the swell calmed, I saw that it was a raft.

In the middle of the raft, gripping the mast, was a young girl about my age. Her red dress was soaking wet and in her hand she held a doll dressed all in white. I waved my arms, but she did not see me. Her attention was focused on the water in front of her. What was she looking at? I followed her gaze down to the water's surface and saw what she was seeing.

It was a shark's fin.





# Living in the Water

Fish survive differently in the water than marine mammals. Each has adapted to this element in its own way.

## Breathing

Fish breathe using their gills, which extract oxygen from the water. Marine mammals, on the other hand, cannot breathe in the water. They must resurface to breathe air with their lungs.

## Moving around

Much of the weight of animals in the ocean is supported by the water. Thus, the skeletons of marine animals do not need to support their body's weight like land animals do. It is for this reason that the skeleton is less developed in most marine animals. Also, rather than limbs, they have fins to propel their bodies through the water.

## Finding their way around

Toothed whales and dolphins can find obstacles and prey by emitting sound waves that bounce back to them when they hit an object: this is called echolocation. Echolocation is very similar to the sonar\* used in submarines.

### \*Sonar

A detection and underwater communication device that uses sound waves.

## Electric detection

Sharks can sense the tiny electric charges in their prey.

## An original way to feed itself

Certain marine animals, and also many invertebrates\*, feed themselves by filtering the water. As they filter the water, they catch tiny animals, as well as plant and animal debris.

### \*Invertebrates

These animals do not have a spinal column.

