

The Dive

By Finley Adamson

Lucas stared into the dark water. He couldn't tell where the bottom was. Looking around, he saw, well, nothing. He stood in a white motor boat. There wasn't a bit of land around him, as far as he could see. The blue stretched to the horizon in all directions. The boy had been so excited about the chance to go scuba diving alone now that he was thirteen, but he was hesitant to get into those waters. They felt cold, in a gloomy sort of way. "It's nothing," he muttered to himself. Yet as he pulled on his neon flippers, he had the feeling that it would be, for better or for worse, an experience he would never forget.

Now fully ready, the rubber clad boy waddled to the edge of the gently rocking boat. He looked right at the water, stuck his hands out in front of him, and slid gracefully into the depths. He was cutting down through the sea. He paused and looked upward at the sun, blurred by the water. The swimmer waited a moment longer before angling his body downward.

Waving his flippers, Lucas descended. The two beams of light in front of him illuminated the dark nothingness ahead. There were some massive corals below according to his sonar's 3D imaging. The shapes had risen to at least 5 times his own height, five feet one inch. As Lucas slowly made his way deeper, he started to feel more of the pressure. Of course his scuba suit relieved some of it, but he couldn't help thinking about how these menacing waters could easily crush him.

After what seemed like half an hour, Lucas noticed objects rising from the shadows below. The diver immediately knew that these would be the largest coral towers he had ever seen. But as he got closer, the excitement which had first gripped him suddenly died. These objects weren't the multicolored titans he was looking for. They were mines, and Lucas was sinking right toward one.

He twisted around, but his movement just seemed to speed up his descent. It seemed almost inevitable. The water closed in on him. He was alone. He was about to die. He was going to — no. The word pushed everything away. *I will not hit this bomb.* This time he remained calm. The approaching object was suddenly much more defined. It was an ugly ball of iron, eaten away by rust and time. It was

covered in spines and suspended on a thick chain. Other mines were visible now, too. They stretched into the distance, a forest of them, ready to explode at the slightest touch. Lucas pushed against his momentum, fighting upward, towards the light, his boat, and his future.

He pushed his whole body, every ounce of his strength poured into one word: up. He forced himself to surge toward the sky. Bubbles whirled around him. The sea slowly began to lighten until he burst into the open air. He clawed his way over to the boat, its sleek white body bobbing in the waves. The diver heaved his dripping figure into the hull of his vehicle. He tore off his mask and collapsed, finally able to breathe fresh air. The sun felt so good on his face as he stared towards heaven. The gentle ocean breeze which he had grown so fond of washed over him, rejuvenated him.

He absorbed the saltiness, feeling as free as the wind itself. The pressure difference made his tired body seem to float. The experience had flattened him, emotionally and almost physically. He sat up, as if the 5-minute break would return all the energy he had expended in his escape. He shivered. What had those *things* been doing down there anyway? As he turned the boat around, though, he was certain of at least one thing. The sea had shown him its dark side, and Lucas now carried the terrifying truth of that dive and its water's secrets.