

An Extract from Manfish



When Jacques finished school he joined the French Navy. His ship sailed all around the world, and everywhere he went he filmed what he saw.

In China he filmed men catching fish with their bare hands. They held their breath underwater for many minutes. Jacques wondered what that would be like.

One day at a beach, a friend gave Jacques a pair of goggles with rubber frames and glass to look through. Jacques wore them into the ocean. Beneath the water he was surrounded by silvery green forests of sea plants and fish he had never seen before. Everything was silent and shimmering. It was a whole new world.

When he came up he saw cars, people, buildings and telephone poles. Once again he went below into the magical underwater world. At that moment Jacques knew his life was changed forever. His eyes had been opened to the wonders of the sea.

Jacques and his friends Philippe and Didi began to dive together. They experimented to see how long they could stay underwater and how deep they could go.

Jacques created a waterproof case for his camera, to film the amazing kingdom he and his friends were exploring beneath the surface. They made rubber suits to keep themselves warm and flippers to help them kick better.

But Jacques wanted to stay down longer than one breath at a time. He realised he needed to take more air with him, enough to explore the mysterious depths and vast expanses of the ocean – to swim through the sea as free as a fish.

He wanted to become a manfish. And he began to work on just how to do it.

1. How did the men that Jacques saw in China catch their fish?

2. What were the names of Jacques' two friends who went diving with him?

3. When Jacques came up out of the sea after diving he saw various things. Tick the ones in this list that he saw:

Cars _____ People _____ Lorries _____

Buildings _____ Telephone poles _____ An aeroplane _____

4. Find and copy the phrase that describes the sea plants Jacques saw when he was diving.

5. "His eyes had been opened to the wonders of the sea." What does this expression mean? Tick one answer:

- (a) Jacques opened his eyes underwater and got salt in them _____
- (b) Jacques knew he needed to get a better pair of goggles before his next dive _____
- (c) Being able to see underwater had made Jacques realise for the first time how amazing the ocean was _____
- (d) Philippe and Didi made Jacques open his eyes in the sea _____

6. Write a short caption to go with this picture from the story.



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