

Reading 1 — A Diver's Experience

Martha put on her diving suit and lifted the heavy oxygen tank onto her back. With her goggles in hand, she stood at the deck waiting for the right moment to dive into the water. She usually dived with her friends but no one was able to accompany her that day. Being an experienced diver, she was confident about diving on her own and thought nothing of any danger that she might come across.

The boat bobbed gently on the clear blue water. Staring down, Martha could see the top of the coral. She put on her goggles and dived into the water without any hesitation. She stopped when she saw the wide variety of coral which came in an astonishingly vast array of colours. The coral looked like clusters of colourful stones. Suddenly, some huge red, blue and green coral caught Martha's attention. She went nearer and was about to take a picture of it when something drifting nearby caught her eye. It was a stingray! Martha's heart skipped a beat. She had never been this close to a stingray. She moved closer to the coral slowly as she did not want to startle the stingray. She just had to take a picture of the beautiful coral.

Martha was about to raise her camera when the stingray moved towards her so quickly that she was unable to dodge in time. Its barb went up and pierced her right thigh. In a flash, it was gone. There was a sudden numbness in her thigh before the blood oozed out. Martha began to feel the pain. It was excruciating. She dropped her camera and held on to her thigh with both hands. The water around her thigh was turning into a sea of red as she began to lose blood. With a final burst of energy, she pushed herself upwards and rose to the surface. She was exhausted by the time she reached the top that she could not muster the strength to pull herself onto the boat. Clinging onto its side, she bore the pain as it spiked and decreased over the next half hour. Knowing she could not remain in this position for long, Martha pulled herself together and using her other leg, she managed to heave herself onto the boat.

Fortunately, Martha was able to call for help. When the coastguards arrived, they found her propped against the side of the deck, breathing hard to overcome the pain that had started again. She was immediately rushed to the nearest hospital. The doctor gave Martha a few injections and painkillers. She was kept under observation for another two days before she was well enough to go home.