

THE KINGDOM OF THE DEEP

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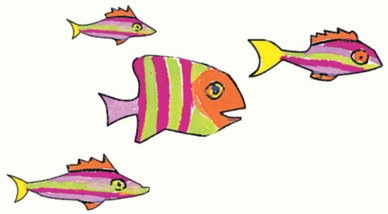
THE KINGDOM OF THE DEEP



FRANK HINKS

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Chapter Two

The boys scrambled to their feet and looked about them. They were in a narrow valley of pure white sand between coral reefs. The surface of the water high above rippled in the blazing sun.

"This is strange." "We are beneath the waves." "Yet we can talk and breathe."

"Odd." "Very odd." "Very odd indeed."

It was a world of great beauty: pink coral studded with sea fans, anemones and sponges, dense shoals of fish of every colour (red, orange, blue, violet, green and yellow) shimmering in the muted light. Yet the water seemed to weigh down on the boys. They felt oppressed: with a shudder of fear, they realised that they were in a world where they should not be.

As the boys stood still and looked about them, suddenly the sand beneath their feet began to move and quake. They were standing on huge stingrays which emerged from the sand and began to pick up speed with the boys standing on their backs.

"Way to go!" shouted the boys in excitement as they zoomed through the waters. Then the stingrays flicked their wings: the boys went flying to the ocean bed.



At that moment a huge octopus emerged from her lair. She winked at the boys, beckoned with her arms, and called out in a deep husky voice, "Hello my dears. Come and have a cuddle."

"No thanks," the boys replied politely, as they scrambled to their feet and began to run.

The octopus was fat and overweight, but hurried after them. Waving her arms in the water she belched and sighed, "Come back! Come back! I only want a cuddle!" She had nearly got them when three huge water turtles came swimming past.

"Hold onto our shells!" cried the turtles as the octopus stretched out her arms to grasp the boys.



