



Beach Safety



It had been a long hot journey in the car and Ted and Sarah were really excited to get to the beach at last.

Grabbing Billy Buoy and Terry Tyre they raced down to the water's edge and were just about to run into the water when Billy Buoy stopped them.

"Whoa there !" he said, "haven't you forgotten something?"

Ted reached in his pocket and made sure he still had his ice cream money and Sarah felt her head to make sure her sun hat was still in place. "No" they both said at once - but Billy didn't look so sure.

"Don't you know the beach can be a dangerous place?" said Billy.

Ted and Sarah looked at him as if he was a very silly Billy indeed but being very polite the children asked him what he meant.

Billy asked them if they could see any flags. "Yes lots" said Sarah, looking round at all the sandcastles with their brightly coloured flags on top.

"No not those," said Billy, "I'm talking about special flags which tell you things about the beach. They tell you where it's safest to go in the water and where not to go."

Billy reached inside his pocket and produced a handful of coloured flags. He held up a black and white flag. "A black and white flag like this means that it's not safe to swim because people are surfing," he said. "You might get hit by a surfboard and that can be very painful".

Billy held out another flag.

“A red flag like this one means that it is dangerous to go in the water - perhaps there are deep holes in the beach under the water where you might fall down or the water moves very quickly and you could get dragged out to sea”.

Finally he started to pull out a longer thinner flag. It took a bit of time because he had a few toffees in his pocket as well and he didn't want to lose them. The flag was a bright orange colour (it also had a few sticky marks on it where the toffees had melted in the heat).

“An orange flag like this one,” he began, “means that you have to be especially careful because it is a windy day and the wind can make the sea move very quickly”.

Sarah looked up and down the beach and noticed red and yellow flags waving in the breeze. “So what do they mean?” she asked.

“That means that it is the safest for you to go swimming because there are lifeguards watching to make sure no one gets into trouble” answered Billy. “But you must be careful to swim in the part of the sea between the flags,” he added.

“Hurrah!” shouted Ted, and was just about to run into the waves when he heard a whooshing above his head and then a thud as Steven Seagull landed beside them.

“Ahoy there me hearties!” said Steven (Steven thought that it made him sound like a pirate when he said things like that - he used to wear a patch over one eye as well but after he had bumped into a lamp-post and bent his beak he gave up the patch) “What are you up to today?”



“I’m teaching my young friends here all about keeping safe at the beach,” replied Billy. “Oh yes” said Steven, “very important - have you told them about the tides?”

“What’s a tide?” asked Ted.

“Well” said Steven, with a most important and serious look on his face (which is not easy when you have a bent beak). “Have you ever made a sandcastle?”

“Oh yes,” said Ted. “I made a really big sandcastle last year with towers and a moat and decorated it with lots of shells but later the water came and washed it away and I was ever so sad. When I built it, it wasn’t anywhere near the water,” he added.

“Ah,” said Steven, “that would be the tides.”

“Water at the beach doesn’t stay still like the water in a swimming pool. It moves in and out. When the sea covers lots and lots of the beach it is called a high tide. When there is lots of beach and you have to walk further to the water’s edge it is called a low tide”.

“You must always keep looking at the sea when you are playing - especially if you are exploring rock pools. This is because the water sometimes moves very fast and you can be so busy having fun you don’t notice the water beginning to cover the rocks.

Sometimes when people don’t notice, the lifeboat crew have to come out in their boat and rescue them. It can be very scary when that happens”.

“And that’s not all,” began Steven, but just as he was about to tell them something else, he noticed that someone along the beach had dropped a tasty bit of fish and with a whoosh of his wings he flew off, (Steven was very fond of fish).



Billy and Steven had given Ted and Sarah lots to think about and so they paddled and built sandcastles and played happily on the beach until later that afternoon when Mum took them up to the promenade to buy ice-creams.

Sarah chose a pink and white strawberry flavoured cone and Ted asked for one with a chocolate flake in it.

Passing by the garden of a small white-looking cottage, they stopped by a scruffy looking collie dog wearing a brightly coloured scarf around his neck.

“Hello there youngsters,” he said cheerfully, licking his lips at the sight of the ice cream. “Are you on your holidays?”

“Yes,” said Sarah and Ted. “We’ve been swimming and building sandcastles”.

“It’s a wonderful place for sandcastles,” said Wally the collie (for that was his name).

“I love to go on the beach and dig,” he went on, “but dogs aren’t allowed on the beach at this time of year,” he said with a rather sad expression on his face. (Licking his lips again and keeping one eye on the ice-creams).

Sarah felt sorry for Wally and asked Mum if she could give him some of her ice-cream.

Mum thought he looked like a very friendly dog so Sarah broke a piece off the bottom of her cone dipped in the melting ice cream and offered it to Wally.

“Well if you insist,” said Wally, “ta very much,” and slurped it back into his mouth. (I have a feeling Wally often talked to children with ice creams - dogs can be very sneaky - especially collies).

There was a bench in front of the cottage and Mum was a bit tired so they sat down to finish their ice creams.

“Do you live here Wally?” asked Ted.

“Yes,” said Wally, “I live with Fred the coastguard - we look out for people on the beach. It’s a very important job because people can get into all sorts of trouble if they are not careful”.

“We’ve been learning all about that this morning,” said Ted, “about the flags that show you where it’s safest to swim and how the tides can sweep you out to sea.”

Wally had seen a lot of people get swept out to sea from the room in the top of the coast guard cottage.

He had also seen Sarah playing with Terry Tyre down on the beach earlier and asked if their friend Steven had told them about how to play safely with their floating toys.

“No,” said Ted, “I think he was going to tell us more but someone dropped some fish and he forgot.”

“That’s seagulls for you,” said Wally. “Perhaps I’d better tell you,” he began “although my tongue is a little bit hot,” he added in a bit of a whisper.

“Would some ice cream help?” asked Ted, holding out the last piece of cone. “Very kind,” said Wally, and with a quick slurp of his tongue the ice cream disappeared!

Looking over at Sarah just to make sure that there wasn’t any more ice cream to be had, Wally began to explain the dangers of playing in the sea with floating toys.



“Even though they float in the water toys are not made to keep you safe in the sea. They go up and down and the wind can carry them around and around and out to sea away from land.”

“Why I remember only last week a young friend of mine called Susan (who was also very good at sharing her ice creams), was playing with her friend Lucy Lilo down at the shore”.

“It was a windy day and a big wave wrapped around them and pulled them both out to sea. Her mum called Fred on her mobile phone and he sent out the lifeboat to rescue Susan.”

“It only took a few minutes but by then she was nearly half a mile from the beach. Half a mile is a very long way and Susan was very very scared. Susan now knows not to play on lilos in the sea unless she is near to the shore and someone is with her to hold the lilo on a rope to make sure it can't go far.”

Just then Wally began to wag his tail excitedly and Ted and Sarah looked round to see a young man in a bright yellow tee shirt and red swimming shorts walking up the path. It was Sam the lifeguard.

Sam was a very special friend of Wally's. As he got nearer Wally began to wag his tail even more and dance round and round.

Sarah noticed that Sam was carrying a large bone in his hand.

“Here you are Wally,” said Sam, handing him the bone. “Thank you Sam,” said Wally.

“Bye, bye children,” he added as he quickly grabbed the bone and ran off with it.

No wonder Wally was excited - dogs love bones even more than they love ice cream.



“Hello children,” said Sam. “Have you been sharing your ice cream with Wally?” he asked (Sam knew all about Wally and his love of ice cream).

“Yes,” said Ted, “Wally has been telling us how we must be careful with our floating toys.”

“And how his friend Susan got swept out to sea and had to be rescued when she went swimming with Lucy Lilo,” added Sarah.

“Wally’s a very wise dog,” said Sam. “The beach is a fun place to be but you mustn’t forget that it can also be dangerous.”

“Will you help us if we get into trouble?” asked Ted. “Yes,” said Sam, “as long as the red and yellow flags are flying I will be there watching.”

“If you see anyone else in trouble come and find me or find an adult with a phone and get them to dial 999 and ask for the coastguard. Tell them where you saw the person in trouble and how long ago you saw them”.

“If you are in trouble wave your arm above your head and shout help loudly so that I know - but,” he added, “it’s best not to get into trouble in the first place.”

“Thank you Sam,” said Ted and Sarah. “We promise we will be careful.”

Just then Mum looked at her watch. It was nearly 4 o’clock and they were supposed to be meeting Dad back at the beach.

“Bye Sam” they cried, “Bye Wally, see you again soon,” and off they went to meet Dad.



As they walked back along the promenade Sarah saw Dad coming out of the fish and chip shop with their tea.

“Come on Ted” she said “Lets go and tell him about all the friends we have made today”.

“Hello children, have you had a nice day?” asked Dad, as he handed round packages of fish and chips.

“Yes,” they said. “ And we’ve learnt lots of things too.”

“First we talked to Billy Buoy who told us about the special flags at the beach”.

“An orange flag means you must be careful because the wind is blowing,” said Ted, “and a black and white flag means that you can’t swim because people are surfing,” added Sarah.

“And a red flag means don’t go in the water because its dangerous,” they said together.

Sarah went on, “then we met Steven seagull and he told us all about moving water called tides and how we must always be watching the sea because it can move up the beach very fast”.

“These chips are delicious,” said Ted (because we all know fish and chips always taste better at the seaside). “I bet Wally would like them. He is a collie dog we met and he told us all about his friends Susan and Lucy Lilo who were blown a long way out to sea by the wind and had to be rescued by the lifeboat.”

“And there was Wally’s friend Sam the lifeguard who told us that a red and yellow flag at the beach means that the lifeguard is watching,” added Sarah.

“Sam told us how, if we see someone in trouble, we must tell a lifeguard or get someone to dial 999 and speak to the coastguard,” Ted added importantly.



“And,” he continued “we must tell what we saw, how long ago we saw it, and exactly where the person was who was in trouble so that the lifeboat or lifeguard can rescue them”.

“What about if you get into trouble in the water?” someone asked. The voice came from above their heads. It was Steven Seagull. He landed on Dad’s shoulder. Of course he may have returned because he was a friendly gull and enjoyed talking to people but Steven could also spot fish and chips from a very long way away.

“I know the answer to this”, said Sarah. “If you are in trouble you must raise your arm above your head and wave and shout for help”.

“Well done children,” said Dad, handing Steven a tasty morsel of fish. “You have had a busy day. When you get back to school you could tell your teachers and friends all that you have learnt.”

“Why don’t you write a story all about it and draw pictures of the new friends you have made?” suggested Mum.

And that, children, is exactly what they did - which is why you are able to read this book.



Colour in Ted, Sarah and friends at the beach

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