



Diving into Darkness: A True Story of Death and Survival

By Phillip Finch

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On New Year's Day, 2005, David Shaw traveled halfway around the world on a journey that took him to a steep crater in the Kalahari Desert of South Africa, a site known as Bushman's Hole. His destination was nearly 900 feet below the surface.

On January 8th he descended into the water. About fifteen feet below the surface was a fissure in the bottom of the basin, barely wide enough to admit him. He slipped through the opening and disappeared from sight, leaving behind the world of light and life.

Then, a second diver descended through the same crack in the stone. This was Don Shirley, Shaw's friend, and one of the few people in the world qualified to follow where Shaw was about to go. In the community of extreme scuba diving, Don Shirley was a master among masters.

Twenty-five minutes later, one of the men was dead. The other was in mortal peril, and would spend the next 10 hours struggling to survive, existing literally from breath to breath.

What happened that day is the stuff of nightmarish drama, but *Diving into Darkness* is also a compelling human story of friendship, heroism, ambition, and of coming to terms with loss and tragedy.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this gripping account, Finch (*F2F*) narrates a disastrous attempt to recover a body nearly 900 feet underwater in a South African crater named Bushman's Hole. David Shaw, an Australian pilot for Cathay Pacific, became obsessed with diving in his early 40s and quickly became a world-class deep diver. In South Africa, Shaw trained with renowned diving instructor Don Shirley, and the two men grew close. Shirley was a proponent of diving rebreathers, sophisticated pieces of equipment that allow divers to reach greater depths while using less equipment. In 2004, Shaw dove to the bottom of Bushman's Hole, where he discovered the corpse of a diver that had lain there for a decade. Together, Shaw and Shirley decided to try to raise the body. Finch seamlessly weaves together the various strands of his story, from the character biographies to the dangers and arcane technologies of deep diving. An experienced cave diver himself, Finch brings the reader into a strange and hermetic underworld that few have ever experienced firsthand. In deep diving, he demonstrates, even the smallest breakdown in judgment or equipment will bring catastrophe. Although the outcome is never in doubt, Finch manages to build suspense to fevered intensity. (*Oct.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

In January 2005, extreme diver David Shaw entered Bushman's Hole, a watery crater in the Kalahari Desert. Easing himself through a narrow fissure, he aimed himself at the bottom of the crater, roughly 900 feet below him. Soon after, his diving partner, Don Shirley, followed Shaw down. In less than an hour, one of the men was dead, and the other faced a harrowing 10-hour decompression, during which he scrambled for every breath. This is a dramatic and emotional story, vividly told by journalist and diver Finch (who really makes us feel what it must have been like, spending 10 hours wondering if he would run out of air before he made it to safety). The author explores not just the episode he's writing about, but also the sport of diving: its factions, its superstars, its history. A solid addition to the sport-diving genre. --David Pitt

Review

"[A] gripping account . . . Finch brings the reader into a strange and hermetic underworld that few have ever experienced firsthand. . . . Although the outcome is never in doubt, Finch manages to build suspense to fevered intensity." ?*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"A nail-biter with natural appeal." ?*Kirkus Reviews*

"An incredible story about transcending the limits of human endurance." ?*The Observer* (UK)

"Phillip Finch's wonderfully crafted account . . . combines the pace of a thriller with a finely tuned sensitivity toward the emotions of all those involved." ?*The Independent* (UK)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lane James:

The book *Diving into Darkness: A True Story of Death and Survival* gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable far more increase. Book can to be your best friend when you getting pressure or having big problem along with your subject. If you can make studying a book *Diving into Darkness: A True Story of Death and Survival* to get your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your current capable, increase your knowledge about several or all subjects. You may know everything if you like available and read a guide *Diving into Darkness: A True Story of Death and Survival*. Kinds of book are several. It means that, science book or encyclopedia or others. So , how do you think about this guide?

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Nila Cobb:

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