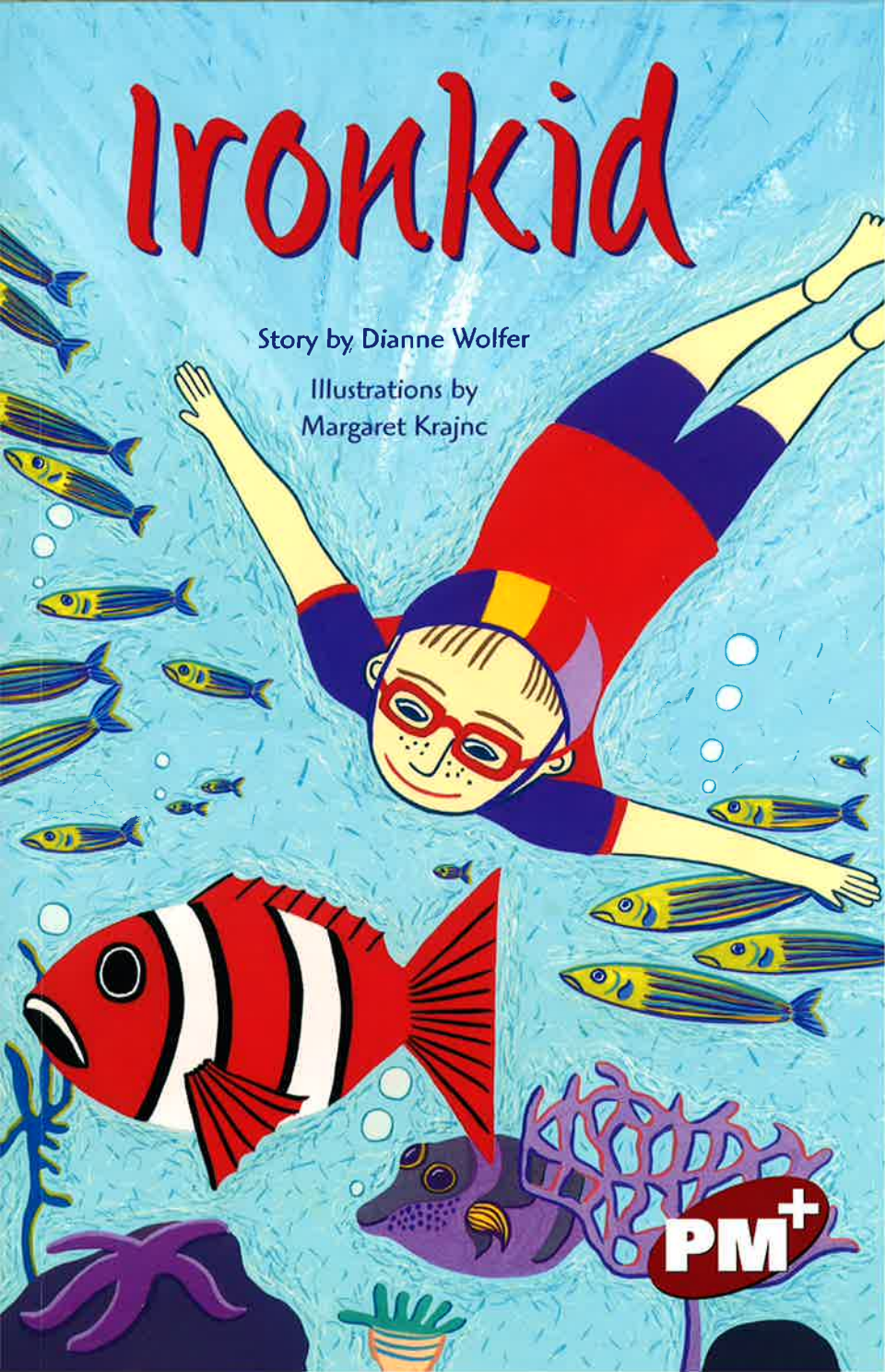
Ironkid

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Chapter One

Surf Club



I love lazing about in the ocean, watching fish and other creatures float by. But once a week during the summer, something else happens.

I'm a surf club 'Nipper' and every Sunday morning we learn things. How to spot rips or strong currents in the sea. What to do if you get into trouble. Basic first-aid and other things like that.

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My dad was surf club champion when he was young and now he's president. Dad sometimes lets me help on patrol. Being a lifesaver is fun.

The only thing I don't like about surf club is the races. Our coach is patient and most of the kids are good sports. I know that racing makes us push ourselves to become faster, but I prefer taking it easy at the beach.



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I love swimming slowly over rocks looking for sea urchins. I think I'd like to be a marine biologist when I leave school. I already know the names of heaps of different anemones and jellyfish.

Other days I think I might be an artist, because I really like painting and drawing. But I quite like writing too. Maybe I'll be a writer!

Dad calls me 'the scientist' or sometimes 'the painter.' They're cool nicknames, but I also have another nickname. One that I really hate; it's 'Zac, the dreamer.'



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People are forever calling me that. Especially my teachers! What they don't realise is that I'm not dreaming, I'm thinking! Thinking about the beach and discovering new sea creatures. Thinking about painting, writing – all sorts of things!

When people say, "Zac's dreaming again," I'm actually planning!

I tried to explain this to my teacher once, but she just raised her eyebrows.

"You certainly have a good imagination, Zac."

"It's true," I protested.

"Maybe, but you still have to finish your maths during recess."



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Chapter Two

The Challenge



The summer is nearly over when it's time for the surf club Ironkid competition. The race is like an Ironman or Ironwoman contest, only for kids.

You begin with a run on the beach, then a long swim, a board race and finally, if your legs will carry you, another short run on the beach. It's a killer!