

Surfing superstar!

On the morning of 31 October 2003, Bethany Hamilton and some friends decided to go surfing. The sky was clear, the sun was shining and it was a perfect day for enjoying the big waves near the island of Kauai, Hawaii.

The 13-years-old surfing star was lying sideways on her surfboard about 300 metres from the shore with her left arm in the clear, blue water. Her friends were floating nearby looking out to sea. They were all waiting for the next big wave.

Suddenly a five-metre tiger shark appeared just below the surface and attacked her. It bit her left arm and shook her violently backwards and forwards. Bethany saw the water around her turn red . She held on to her board and the shark swam away-but it took her arm with it . It also took piece of her board. Luckily for Bethany, the shark attacked only once . It all happened so fast that she didn't even scream.

In her mind, Bethany repeated:'Get to the beach. Get to the beach.' She She started to paddle to wards it with one arm . Her friends didn't know about the shark attack -they thought at first that she was joking.

Then they saw the blood and quickly came to help. It took fifteen minutes to reach the shore . They called the emergency services and Bethany eventually got to hospital.

Bethany's parents are both keen surfers. As a baby, Bethany liked to splash in the shallow water. She started surfing at the age of five. By thirteen, she was planning to become a professional surfer. Then the shark attack happened.



The really incredible thing about Bethany is that only ten weeks later she was surfing again in a competition. Less than a year after the accident she won first place in a surfing competition in Hawaii. Before the accident, a lot of professional surfers thought that Bethany was going to be the women's world champion one day. After the accident, they haven't changed their minds.



