



Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea · Episode 32 / 46 · B1–B2 · 00

The Lost City of Atlantis

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OVERVIEW

Summary

The Lost City of Atlantis — chapter 32 of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, told in clear English for language learners.

Transcript

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Chapter Thirty-Two — The Lost City of Atlantis

On the morning of February 19th, Ned Land came into my room, looking very disappointed. Our escape had failed the night before, because Captain Nemo had stopped the ship at just the wrong moment. "He had business at his bank," I said. "His bank?" asked Ned. "Yes — the ocean, where his riches are safer than in any chest." I told Ned all that had happened, but he only wished he could have walked the old battlefield of Vigo himself. "It is only one lost throw," he said. "Next time we must win."

The Nautilus was now heading south-southwest, away from Europe. At noon we rose to the surface, but there was only endless sea. A storm was coming. Later I saw on the chart that we were 150 leagues from the nearest coast. There was no way to escape now, and Ned was furious. For myself, I felt strangely calm.

That night, about eleven o'clock, Captain Nemo visited me. "I offer you a strange trip," he said. "You have seen the sea only by day. Would you like to see it at night?" "Gladly," I answered. "The way will be hard," he warned. "We must walk far and climb a mountain." That only made me more curious.

We put on our diving suits. No electric lamps were made ready. When I pointed this out, the Captain said only, "They will be useless." Neither Ned nor Conseil came with us. We stepped onto the floor of the Atlantic at a depth of 150 fathoms. It was near midnight, and the water was very dark. But far off shone a strange red light, about two miles away. I could not tell what it was, but it lit our path.

As we walked, I heard a patter above my head. It was heavy rain hitting the surface of the sea. The idea of getting wet under the water made me laugh. In the thick suit, I felt nothing but a heavier kind of air. The ground grew rocky. Tiny sea creatures glowed faintly. My feet often slipped on the seaweed, and without my iron-tipped stick I would have fallen.

The red light grew brighter, and it puzzled me greatly. Was it made by nature, or by the hand of man? Were we going to meet friends of Captain Nemo, other people who lived hidden beneath the sea? Such wild ideas filled my mind. The light came from behind a mountain about 800 feet high.

Captain Nemo climbed on without stopping. He knew this dark road well. To me he looked like a spirit of the sea. We passed through a forest of dead trees, turned to stone by the water. Sea creatures fled as we climbed. Giant crabs and lobsters watched from holes, their eyes shining. Their claws clicked in the dark, and my blood ran cold.

At last we reached a flat place, and I saw ruins — the work of men, not of nature. Great heaps of stone showed the shapes of castles and temples, covered with seaweed. What land was this, swallowed by the sea? The Captain pointed higher, and we climbed to the very top.

From there I saw that the mountain was a volcano. A crater poured out rivers of glowing lava, which lit the whole plain like a huge torch. And below me lay a ruined town — fallen temples, broken columns, empty streets. It was like a drowned Pompeii.

"Where am I?" I longed to ask. Captain Nemo picked up a piece of chalk-stone, went to a black rock, and wrote one word:

ATLANTIS

My mind filled with light. Atlantis! The lost land of Plato's old tale, which many wise men had said was never real. Yet here it lay before my eyes. I was walking on ground where the first people on Earth had once walked, thousands of ages ago.

We stayed for an hour. Captain Nemo stood still, deep in thought, as if speaking with the people of the past. The moon threw a pale gleam through the water onto the buried land. Then the Captain rose, took one last look, and led me down. We reached the Nautilus as the first light of morning touched the sea.

Audio, timed transcript, and companions online:

<https://alexlearns.com/english/twenty-thousand-leagues/chapter-32/>

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