



Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea · Episode 29 / 46 · B1–B2 · 00

The Grecian Archipelago

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OVERVIEW

Summary

The Grecian Archipelago — chapter 29 of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, told in clear English for language learners.

Transcript

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Chapter Twenty-Nine — The Grecian Archipelago

At dawn on February 12th the Nautilus rose to the surface. I hurried to the platform. Three miles to the south I could see the low Egyptian coast. In a few minutes, during the night, we had crossed from one sea to another. About seven o'clock Ned and Conseil joined me.

"Well, Sir Naturalist," said Ned, "and the Mediterranean?"

"We are floating on it, friend Ned. Look, that is the Egyptian coast, and there is the long harbour wall of Port Said."

Ned looked hard. "You are right, sir, and your Captain is a clever man. Now let us talk of our own little plan, quietly, so no one hears."

We sat near the lantern, away from the spray. "We are in Europe," said Ned. "Before Captain Nemo drags us off to the Polar Seas again, I want to leave the Nautilus."

I did not want to hold my friends back, but I did not want to leave. Thanks to the Captain, I was learning more about the ocean every day. Would I ever have such a chance again? No, never.

But Ned's logic was strong. "You speak of the future," he said. "I speak of now. We are here, and we must use our chance." I could not beat him.

"You are right," I said at last. "We must not trust Captain Nemo's good will. We should take the first good chance to leave. But our first try must work. If it fails, he will never forgive us."

"A good chance will come on a dark night, near a European coast," said Ned. "I know how the small boat works. We will get inside, draw the bolts, and rise to the surface."

"Watch for it, then. But one mistake will ruin us." Yet in my heart I thought the chance would never come, for the Captain would be on his guard near Europe.

After that, facts seemed to prove me right. In these busy seas the Nautilus stayed hidden, often deep under the water or far from the coast. On February 14th we were heading toward Crete, where the people had risen up against the harsh rule of the Turks, though I had no news of them now.

That night I was alone with the Captain in the saloon. He seemed silent and full of thought. Against his habit, he ordered both panels opened and watched the water closely. Suddenly a man appeared in the water, a diver, with a leather purse at his belt. He was alive, swimming strongly.

"A shipwrecked man!" I cried. "He must be saved!"

The Captain did not answer. The man came close, pressed his face to the window, and looked at us. To my amazement, Captain Nemo made a sign to him. The diver signed back, then rose to the surface and was gone.

"Do not worry," said the Captain. "That is Nicholas of Cape Matapan, called Le Pesca. He is a bold diver, well known in all these islands. Water is his true home." I was amazed that Nemo knew him.

Then Nemo went to a strong box near the panel. It was full of gold bars. Where did all this gold come from? I said nothing, only watched. He packed the bars into an iron chest, about 4,000 pounds of gold, then locked it and wrote an address on the lid in Greek letters.

Then he pressed a button. Four men pushed the heavy chest out of the saloon, up the iron stairs. Captain Nemo turned to me. "You were saying, sir?"

"I was saying nothing, Captain."

"Then I wish you good night." And he left.

I went to my room, troubled. What was the link between the diver and the chest of gold? Soon I felt the Nautilus rising. I heard the small boat lowered onto the waves. Two hours later it came back, and we dived again. So the gold had been delivered. But to what place, and to whom? I could not tell.

The next day I told Ned and Conseil. "But where does he take his gold?" asked Ned. There was no answer.

Later that day I felt so hot that I had to take off my coat. That was strange, for we were deep under the water, where the air outside could not heat us. Yet it grew hotter and hotter.

"Is there a fire on board?" I asked myself. Just then Captain Nemo came in, looked at the thermometer, and said, "Forty-two degrees. It will not get hotter unless we wish it. I cannot cool the water, but I can move away from the stove that heats it. We are floating in a current of boiling water. Look."

The panels opened. The whole sea was white, and steam curled off it. I touched the glass and pulled my hand back at once, it was so hot.

"Where are we?"

"Near the island of Santorin," said the Captain. "I wanted to show you a volcano under the sea." He told me how new islands there rise from the water and sink again, even in our own time.

Soon the sea turned red, and a strong smell of sulphur filled the saloon. The bright light went dim behind scarlet flames. I was choking. "We cannot stay in this boiling water," I said.

"It would not be wise," said the Captain calmly. He gave an order. The Nautilus turned and left that furnace, and a quarter of an hour later we were breathing fresh air on the surface. I thought: if Ned had chosen this sea for our escape, we would never have come out alive.

The next day, February 16th, we passed Cape Matapan and left the Grecian Archipelago.

Audio, timed transcript, and companions online:

<https://alexlearns.com/english/twenty-thousand-leagues/chapter-29/>

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