



Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea · Episode 45 / 46 · B1–B2 · 00

The Last Words of Captain Nemo

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OVERVIEW

Summary

The Last Words of Captain Nemo — chapter 45 of Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, told in clear English for language learners.

Transcript

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Chapter Forty-Five — The Last Words of Captain Nemo

Darkness filled the Nautilus. It raced away from that dreadful place, deep under the water. Where was Nemo taking us now? I felt a cold horror for him. Whatever these men had done to him, he had no right to punish them like this. He had made me a witness to his revenge.

At eleven the lights came back. The instruments showed we were flying north, very fast. We passed the mouth of the English Channel and rushed on toward the far north. That night we crossed two hundred leagues. I could not sleep. The dreadful scene played again and again before my eyes.

The days blurred together. The clocks had stopped, and I lost all sense of time. For perhaps fifteen or twenty days the Nautilus flew on through cold northern fog. I saw nothing of Nemo, nor of his crew. Ned lost his strength and his hope. Conseil watched over him, afraid he might harm himself.

One morning Ned woke me. "We are going to escape," he whispered. "Tonight. No one is watching the ship now. Land is only twenty miles east."

"What country is it?" I asked.

"I do not know. But we will take shelter there." The sea was rough and the wind strong, yet Ned was not afraid. He had secretly saved food and water. "If they catch me, I will fight," he said. "We will die together, friend Ned," I answered.

That last day felt endless. I ate a little, though I had no hunger, to keep my strength. At half-past six Ned came again. "At ten the moon will be down. Come to the boat. We will wait for you."

I dressed in strong sea clothes and gathered my notes. My heart pounded so hard I feared it would give me away. I listened at Nemo's door and heard his steps. He had not gone to bed.

Then, softly, I heard the organ. It was a sad, aching song, like a soul crying to be set free. And that gave me a fright — if Nemo was playing the organ, he was in the great saloon. And I had to cross that room to escape.

Ten o'clock came. I opened my door with great care. I crept down the dark stairs, stopping at each step to calm my heart. I reached the saloon and opened the door gently. Inside all was black. The organ played faintly. Nemo was there, lost in his music. He did not see me.

I crawled across the carpet, making no sound. It took five long minutes to reach the far door. I was about to open it when Nemo gave a deep sigh. I froze. He was rising. He came toward me through the dark, his arms crossed, gliding like a ghost. His chest shook with sobs. I heard him say his last words to my ears: "Almighty God! Enough! Enough!"

I rushed through the library, up the stairs, and into the boat where my friends waited.

"Let us go!" I cried.

Ned began to loosen the last bolts that held our boat to the ship. Suddenly we heard shouting on board. Had they

found us? Ned pressed a knife into my hand. But it was not us they feared. One dreadful word passed from man to man:

"The maelstrom! The maelstrom!"

We were off the coast of Norway. The maelstrom is a giant whirlpool, so strong that no ship ever escapes it. It pulls down not only ships but whales and bears. And into it, the Nautilus was now being drawn.

The ship spun in a great circle that grew smaller and smaller. Our little boat, still fixed to its side, whirled with it. My head swam. The roar of the water was deafening.

"Hold on!" cried Ned. "If we stay with the Nautilus we may still be saved!"

But then came a crash. The bolts broke. Our boat was flung from the ship like a stone from a sling into the roaring whirlpool. My head struck iron, and I lost all knowledge of the world.

Audio, timed transcript, and companions online:

<https://alexlearns.com/english/twenty-thousand-leagues/chapter-45/>

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