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Soldier's Girl

By Ron Nyswaner

Thousands of feet beneath the seven seas
lies the history of the world buried
in the wreckage of lost ships.
It is a realm of precious artifacts
and priceless treasures.
A world of ancient mysteries long
beyond our grasp.
Until today.
Now the sunken marvels
of the ocean deep are up for grabs,
from ancient Roman ships to
Spanish galleons
to luxury liners like the Titanic.
I dream about gold and
emeralds every night.
And you gotta believe it's there
and you gotta want it bad.
Some people are out to plunder the past.
While others archeologists
and scientists
like the man who first found
the Titanic, are out to preserve it.
They are all armed with million-dollar
high-tech tools,
and the will to spend years
on the arduous search.
Just running out on a boat
with a metal detector
and hoping to jump over the side and
pull up a beached basket of gold coins
that's stuff of fantasy and Hollywood.
that really doesn't happen very often.
It is a world where controversy reigns
where there are confusing laws
and no rules.
Does anyone have a right
to excavate shipwrecks?
Should the past be protected?
Or should it be picked clean for profit?
So it's a very big difference
between doing something to
fill in a missing chapter
in human history
and doing it for personal greed.

Explorers and archeologists.
Entrepreneurs and salvagers.
Some will risk everything
reputation, fortune, even their lives
to possess the treasures of the deep.
The Mediterranean Sea.
On its shores grew the great
civilizations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.
And from its banks,
ancient peoples sailed beyond the
safety of land in small wooden ships.
For hundreds of years,
Roman ships controlled these waters,
creating a vast empire.
But the moods of the sea are harsh
and unpredictable,
and a Roman vessel 100 feet long
had no defenses against storm
and wave and wind.
Over the centuries,
countless ships were lost
and countless sailors killed.
Now the man who discovered the Titanic
Dr. Robert Ballard,
is again hunting for shipwrecks,
ancient shipwrecks in the Mediterranean.
For hundreds of years,
scientists have looked
in the ocean for our history.
And for most of that time
they've only been able to
look a very short distance
of one or 200 feet,
which represents an insignificant
amount of the ocean.
And what we're trying to accomplish is
something that's never been done before
and this is to try to excavate a ship
of antiquity
that is thousands of feet
beneath the sea.
To bring up ancient vessels
buried a half-mile down.
It's never been done before

and Ballard only has five short weeks
to do it.
You know, it's ironic that we have
sent robots to Mars
and we've mapped the far side of Venus
in fact, that we know more about
the moon's surface than the ocean.
To make the impossible happen
Ballard will need a floating
laboratory as mission central.
The Carolyn Chouest, a U.S. Navy vessel,
will journey 80 miles west of Sicily
into international waters,
where no one has a claim on lost vessels.
Ballard believes the Mediterranean
is strewn with ancient wrecks
and he has long dreamed of finding one
We're sitting right now in ruins
that are on the island of Sicily.
To get to Rome you have to cross
the Tyrrhenian Sea;
to get to Carthage you have to cross
the Straits of Sicily.
To travel from civilization to
civilization here in the Mediterranean
you must cross the Mediterranean,
and many of those ships didn't make it
Many of those ships went to the bottom
and many of them went into the deep sea.
Between ancient Carthage and Rome,
it's 12,000 feet deep.
And no one has ever gone to the bottom
of the Tyrrhenian Sea
to look for those ships that sank
most surely sank there until now.
It was a decade ago when Ballard
and a team of archeologists
first surveyed an
unexplored Mediterranean region
called Skerki Bank.
In 1988, he made a startling discovery
nearly 3,000 feet down,
the remains of an ancient Roman ship
lying untouched for almost 20 centuries

The find confirmed,
for the first time ever,
that an ancient trade route
had flourished across the open sea,
from Carthage in North Africa to Rome.
Now Ballard has returned to Skerki Bank,
where he'll attempt to excavate
the ancient Roman ship.
Working in close collaboration
with archeologists,
Ballard hopes to uncover something
nobody has ever seen before.
My greatest dream is that these ships
are buried and well preserved,
and that their cargo is preserved and,
and who knows, maybe there's people
that are preserved.
I'm not sure I want to find people,
but it would be fascinating.
We won't know until we dig them.
Could there really be the remains
of ancient seafarers
at the bottom of the Mediterranean?
It is an extraordinary idea,
and to find out Ballard will use
an extraordinary machine.
The NR-1.
The big gun of deep-diving submarines.
It is capable of going
all the way down to 3,000 feet
and staying there for a month.
Built during the clashes of the Cold war,
the NR-1 was a crucial weapon in
the U.S. Navy's arsenal for 30 years,
designed to search the ocean depths
for downed planes and lost missiles.
It's the best in the world, outfitted
with lights, sensors, cameras,
and a mechanical arm for digging,
all of it powered by a nuclear reactor
which won't need to be
refueled for 20 years.
Even now, its sonar equipment
is still classified,

so sophisticated NR-1 can find a soda
can sitting on the seafloor a mile away
The NR-1 is a marvel,
but it's a cramped one.
The 11-man crew shares one bolted-down
kitchen table
just big enough for two people at a time.
For this mission,
Ballard has added something brand new
to the sub's digging arm
a powerful suction pump
that will dredge the ocean bottom.
Ballard believes the seafloor
is sandy and soft,
ready to reveal whatever
secrets lie hidden underneath.
What is actually down there?
Will Ballard find the timbers
of an ancient Roman trading ship,
and the bones of the men
who sailed it 2,000 years ago?
Sunken treasure.
It has drawn people into the seas
since the first cargo ship apart
on the first shallow reefs.
Relics, gold, gems, pieces of eight
it is the stuff that countless dreams
and schemes are made of.
Obsessed with the promise of riches,
undersea treasure hunters today
scour the world's oceans,
crowding serious archeologists.
The king of the undersea dreamers
and schemers
is a stubborn rebel name Mel Fisher.
In his quest for treasure,
Fisher let nothing stand in his way,
and came to be known as a swashbuckler
a very successful swashbuckler.
In 1997, family and friends joined
with fisher
to mark the spot where
he struck gold nearly 25 years earlier
The reason we picked today

was rather appropriate.
It's Mel Fisher's 75th birthday.
Here, here.
Long live the king. Long live the king
But the plaque and let me
unveil it here take it off.
You notice we have a picture
of the Atocha, and it reads:
In sincere appreciation to Mel
and Deo Fisher
in their extraordinary efforts
in accomplishing
mankind's most elusive goal.
They've followed their dream.
In the 1960s,
Mel fisher is a man with a mad dream.
Often short of money and deep in dept,
he hunts the shallow waters off coast
for treasure.
He is determined to find
the shipwreck called the Atocha,
a Spanish galleon that had sunk
in 1622 in a hurricane,
reportedly carrying king's ransom
in sliver and gold.
Year after year, with the help
of his wife and children,
Fisher combs the Florida sea.
Until 1975, when his son, Dirk,
finds the first real evidence
of the ship nine bronze cannons.
Just a week later,
while returning to the site
of his triumph,
Dirk Fisher's boat capsizes
in the dark of night.
Dirk, his wife,
and another diver die tragically.
Fisher is devastated.
But he vows to continue
and to honor his son's memory.
The Atocha seems so close.
But she continues to elude Fisher,
to tease him for over a decade.

Then in 1985, in 60 feet of water,
he finds her, the Atocha,
the mother lode of all treasure ships.
It's worth 400 million dollars so far.
And today,
Mel Fisher is counting the riches
still out there on the ocean floor.
So right over here about
a quarter of a mile
is all the kings taxes for five years,
all the church collection money from
all the Catholic churches
in this hemisphere for five years,
all the wealthy merchants,
there was 28 of them on board
all their lifesavings for 10
or 15 years in business over here.
They were gonna go home and retire.
They didn't make it.
So there's probably another four
and a half billion right over there.
Today, aging and ailing,
Mel Fisher is still bringing up treasure.
These days, it is emeralds.
His passion for treasure
has been passed on
to his youngest son, Kane Fisher.
Is there more come from their cursor
and they want our men for this
When we found that... ah... we found that
court martial referee
in our linds send the leve
I got one...
Here me go. that ahold a half carat
that about 3000.a carat 6000
You got to be real persistent
and not give up, no matter what.
And you got to believe it's there.
And you got to want it bad.
If you want it bad enough, you'll get it.
You just got to keep looking
and don't stop no matter what.
I dream about gold
and emeralds every night.

And you'll never know what's
five feet away from where you left off.
That's what keeps it exciting.
The Atocha puzzle still isn't solved.
I don't know
when we're gonna figure it out.
And you just keep going and going.
It seems like you
never get done working a shipwreck.
We've been working those wrecks
for 34 years now
and still finding stuff.
It's exciting.
That's what keeps you going.
Today, Mel Fisher is big business,
and almost respectable.
But a swashbuckler makes enemies,
big enemies.
Charging that Fisher has
seriously damaged the seafloor
with his salvaging techniques,
the federal government has dragged him
through the courts.
And Fisher's had to pay hundreds
of thousands in fines.
But Fisher knows how to change
with the times.
Conservator Sid Jones,
who worked extensively
with Fisher on the Atocha,
acknowledges the need to protect history.
In the past treasure hunting,
back in the '60s or the '50s
when it was really getting started,
there wasn't much
thought given to recording data
or preserving the artifacts.
Of course, there was a large emphasis
on finding something of value,
but we've learned in time
that every artifact that comes
from these ships has value.
Once you understand the complete picture,
the items not only have a monetary value,

but they have a historical value as well,
which didn't always exist in
the early phases of treasure hunting.
After finding and
carefully cataloging his treasures,
Fisher sells most of it off
piece by piece.
Fisher believes that two billion more
is just waiting to be recovered.
Deep in the Mediterranean,
the NR-1 is still hunting for
archeological marvels with no luck.
After three weeks of trying,
the sub and its robot arm
have been unable
to make a dent in the ocean floor,
which unexpectedly turns out to be
sticky and thick like clay.
Ballard's master plan
is just not working.
Do the wooden hulls of the Roman
vessels still exist just beyond reach?
Or has time stolen them away.
Ballard wonders if he'll ever find them.
The deep sea is always surprising me.
I every time I think I understand it,
it throws me another curve ball.
But that's okay. That's part of it.
I think it wouldn't be fun
if it if I knew it that well,
and it wasn't full of surprises.
Ballard decides to change
the way they use the NR-1.
He sends the sub out to do
what it does best,
to act as a high-tech bloodhound,
to roam over Skerki Bank
and to explore as much as possible
with its exceptional sonar senses.
Sir, request permission to rig ship
for deep submerges.
Rig ship for deep submerges.
Rig ship for deep submerges, aye sir.
Rig ship for deep submerges.

Will the NR-1 discover the unknown,
the unexpected?
Ballard will just have to wait and see
By working to develop
new underwater technology,
Ballard has revolutionized deep
sea archeology.
At the same time,
he has inadvertently helped to blow
the world of treasure hunters wide open
Now anyone with \$150,000
to spare can buy an ROV,
a remotely operated search vehicle,
right off the shelf and set off for gold.
Still there are only a handful
of successful deep-sea salvagers.
Seahawk Deep Ocean Technology,
out of Tampa, Florida, is one of them.
Seahawk hit the jackpot in 1989
discovering a 17th century Spanish
galleon, heavy with gold and jewels,
off the Florida coast
in 1,500 feet of water.
Seahawk is looking for treasure again,
this time in the seas off the coast
of Georgia.
Michael Reardon,
Seahawk's current expedition leader,
sees himself as a treasure hunter
with a difference.
That's one of our goals,
is to choose shipwrecks
that are archeologically important
as well as having a commercial cargo.
So we're playing a fine line
between the archeological community
and the out-and-out smash-and-grab
treasure hunters, which we're not.
Reardon is after
a 19th-century paddle wheel steamer,
which they've code named
The Golden Eagle,
to keep her identity hidden
from other salvagers.

Now they've narrowed the search
to a mere 200 square miles.
It's very difficult locating shipwrecks.
Un, with all the sophisticated
equipment we have today,
it's still quite a chore.
Keep in mind right now
we're 433 feet above the seafloor,
trying to put a small vehicle
on a shipwreck.
There is no road sign over there.
It has taken Rearden and his colleagues
years of hard work
to reach this point.
Now, using some of the same high tech
tools to Ballard.
They are hoping to claim their fortune
500 feet down.
Yeah. The vehicle is on the bottom.
Roger that, I copy.
The vehicle is on the bottom.
According to Seahawk,
the Golden Eagle, in 1865,
found herself caught in a hurricane
with nowhere to hide.
They fought the storm for two days
all hands and passengers bailing
and bucketing water out.
And finally,
the seas and the weather calmed down,
and it went under.
She went to the bottom,
carrying a bellyful of
gold coins \$400,000 at the time,
now valued at 20 million.
Six years of work coming down to a dive
with a remote vehicle and, hopefully,
when we get in on the site,
it'll be the right wreck.
We have a very good sonar images
of the wreck,
and dimensions are almost exact
the same with target vessel
a code name Gold Eagle.

...get the target at the right.
As the ROV descends into
the glittery murk of the deep sea,
project manager Brett Hobson discerns
the ghostly outlines of the past.
That's the beautiful part
of these old wrecks.
They're little time capsules
and nobody's seen it.
And we're just sleuthing
through trying looking for clues.
And it you definitely feel like
a detective.
So far, everything we have seen
is a, telling us it could be the one.
Looking straight down, now, right?
Yes.
We've got the way over there
near the site, OK?
It's very quiet here
and the scenes is very dark.
The light, the first one illuminated
when we went down.
It's a very weird feeling.
As the ROV makes a closer pass,
they see things that don't match.
Round.
Really round.
Well, we've got some very
flat-sided bulwarks here.
See the big cutout going down to
the keel, and the on the right?
I don't know what else it could be.
It looks just like what
I had hoped we would not find.
No paddle wheels I know of
has a propeller like that.
I think we're in trouble.
It's very disappointing at this moment
to be sitting here
with a target that we have pinned high
hopes on and now have proved that it,
it's not the right vessel.
But can't think of the right words

to describe how I'm feeling right now.
It's not good.
It takes time and luck to find
a pot of gold in a vast, deep ocean.
And Reardon has run out of both.
Reardon abandons the ship to the sea.
There's no profit to be made
from the wreck
and unlike Ballard, treasure,
not history, is what drives him.
In the Mediterranean,
the search for history does not let up
With only a few weeks left,
Ballard and the NR-1 continue
to hunt Skerki for new wrecks.
Ballard also deploys Jason,
a remotely-operated search vehicle,
designed and built by engineers from
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.
Archeologists have already spent
many hours carefully surveying
and mapping artifacts on the seafloor.
Now it's time for Jason to retrieve them.
Guided by the team,
the robot vehicle plunges 3,000 feet
to locate fragile relics.
Most are roman amphoras.
They're 2,000-year-old
terra-cotta containers,
the cargo holders of the ancient world,
filled with olive oil, dried fish,
or wine.
Safely cradling its fragile haul,
an elevator of metal and mesh
slowly traverses the half mile
separating the centuries.
For the first time in 2,000 years,
human hands will hold
the ancient artifacts.
Next stop for these delicate pieces
of the past is the ship's laboratory,
where they'll be examined
by archeologist John Oleson,
expedition archeological director

Anna Marguerite McCann,
and conservator Dennis Piechota.
Oleson is delighted to
find the simple clay pots.
Well, to find
several cooking pots together,
adjacent to one another,
just as they would have been left
on a kitchen bench,
is extraordinary
at this depth 2,600 feet.
Treasure hunters would find little
of value here.
Yet to archeologist Jon Adams,
a shipwreck is a slice of time
unexpectedly preserved.
So when a ship sinks it is,
it's a cross section of society
structure, contents,
personal possessions,
contextual relationships, etcetera
lost at a single moment in time.
Nobody decides what to take away,
what to leave behind when a ship sinks
It all ends up on the seabed
at the same time.
And ships have been described,
rightly so in a way, as time capsules.
As they continue to explore,
Ballard and the archeologists
are excited to see things
they've never seen before.
Skerki is turning
into more than they ever expected.
Could you zoom in on that?
Keep zooming.
Isn't that beautiful.
They've identified the remains of a ship,
but it's definitely not Roman origin.
Nobody knows, at first, where it's from
It's particularly interesting,
because it seems to be
a relatively small ship,
and we don't see cargo,

just ballast stones,
which help steady a ship
when it's not carrying cargo,
or if it's a pleasure craft,
such as a small personal yacht,
or possibly a type of warship.
Look at the reflection on those glasses.
Keep driving straight. Don't stop.
It's glasses.
I'm just amazed that there's glasses.
Glass. Lamps that brightened
the darkness centuries before.
And despite thousands of pounds
of sea pressure,
they have survived unbroken.
Obviously one of our big concerns is
that these artifacts are very,
very fragile.
Jason weighs 3,000 pounds in air
and he's got a tremendous amount
of momentum.
And we want to pick them up
without breaking any of them.
We've never picked up glass before.
Once the objects reach the surface,
they help reveal the nature
of the mysterious vessel.
It comes from the 16th century
or 17th century,
1,500 years later than the Roman ships
when Arab traders sailed these waters.
Look at this.
Could someone hold that open?
Look at that.
Isn't that amazing?
They are not gold or studded
with emeralds.
Yet for Ballard, a delicate
glass object is the real treasure.
They are evidence that Skerki Bank
may have been a crossroads
for many countries and civilizations.
What has surprised me the most is
that we thought this was one event,

that this was a fleet of ships,
a group of ships
that sank together, and it's not at all.
We have ships spanning over
one thousand five hundred years
of history,
if not more.
I am just amazed.
I thought that there would be
a ship here and then,
way far away, another ship.
And yet, in this particular area,
20 square miles four miles by five
miles we have found, now, six ships.
This area is it's sort
of like a graveyard.
Ballard is no stranger
to undersea graveyards.
He is the man
who discovered one of the most famous
burial grounds in history.
The Titanic.
The largest,
most luxurious ocean liner ever built.
Called a "Floating Palace,"
the Titanic sails April 10, 1912
on her maiden voyage.
She is believed to be unsinkable
until her tragic rendezvous
in the North Atlantic.
Sideswiping an iceberg,
the great ship sinks
in less than three hours:
1,523 people, two-thirds
of all those aboard,
die in the icy waters.
For decades explorers are obsessed
with finding the final resting place
of the great liner.
But no one is more intent on the hunt
than Robert Ballard,
who spends 13 years looking.
Finally, in 1985,
Ballard and French explorer

Jean-Louis Michel
discover the remains of
the ruined giant over 12,000 feet down
Ballard always treated the grand wreck
as a site to be explored.
But he did it with respect.
To him it was a shrine for the dead
to remain untouched, intact.
Ballard and the crew even held
a memorial service
for those who died in the tragedy.
When I found the Titanic,
certainly I became emotionally
attached to it.
And Jean-Louis Michel,
who was co-discover
of the Titanic with me,
was equally moved.
And I can remember both of us saying,
well, we'll never let this ship
be spoiled or desecrated.
Ballard discovered the Titanic, but
he never claimed the laws of the sea.
Inadvertently,
he was opening a Pandora's box.
Once the location of the Titanic
became public knowledge,
it was a target for salvagers.
1994. Ballard's worst fears come true.
A new expedition,
led by Connecticut businessman
George Tulloch,
probes the rotting remains
of the Titanic.
Tulloch spends tens of millions
of dollars to send down robot vehicles
and bring up jewelry, eyeglasses,
furnishings anything within reach
from the devastated liner.
Once Tulloch retrieved the objects,
he legally claimed the Titanic
for his own.
Ballard never thought
this day would come.

I don't think in my wildest imagination
did I think they would go out
and salvage it.
I mean, I was convinced they wouldn't.
And it just caught me by surprise.
I was really shocked.
And there was nothing
I could do about it,
because, since I didn't claim it,
I mean, it didn't even cross my mind
to claim it!
Eighty-five years ago this month,
the luxury ship, the Titanic, sank
on its maiden voyage across
the North Atlantic.
Tomorrow, mid-Southerners
and people from across the world
will be able to see the treasures
that that disaster left behind.
Like Ballard, George Tulloch expresses
deep reverence for the Titanic's dead.
But he argues that people will
better understand the tragedy
if they can see the artifacts firsthand.
I think Titanic is by itself
capable of saying it is,
it is incomparable in terms of tragic
suffering for that moment in time.
And I think the objects from that moment
deserve to stay with us.
Tulloch says his company
will never sell the artifacts,
never sell off the possessions
of the dead.
But his company will profit handsomely
from the traveling exhibition.
I think the blessing we have is that
the court says that it's ours
the company that I'm the president of.
And we don't feel that it's ours.
We feel that we're the guardian of it.
Tulloch's historian, Charles Haas,
does not want to deny ordinary people
an opportunity to experience the past.

One only has to look at the museums
of the world to see
that part of the archeology process
is recovering artifacts
from the ocean floor.
There are ample demonstrations
of Mediterranean vessels
of all kinds of shapes having
their contents brought up
and placed in museums
for people to enjoy.
I think it's certainly preferable
to have the Titanic's artifacts
guaranteed to be placed
before the public and teach them,
than to allow them to sit on the
ocean floor where they'll be ravaged
by time and the elements down there,
and accessible, really,
by only a very few people.
But to archeologist Jon Adams,
there is no scientific reason for
Tulloch's excavation of the Titanic.
We know a lot about the Titanic.
We know the names of the people on board.
We know its itinerary.
So the question the potential
archeological researcher would ask is,
if you actually go and investigate
that wreck archeologically,
in other words, pull up pieces
of the material remains,
what is he going to tell you
that you don't know already?
Now, this is further muddied by the
fact that there are still people alive
whose relatives died on the ship.
Is there any difference between
exhibiting a teacup from the Titanic
and bringing up an ancient drinking
glass from the Mediterranean floor?
Tulloch doesn't think so.
One of the people that would criticize
is in the Mediterranean

is sucking up the clay containers
from Roman and Greek shipping vessels.
There's something about Titanic
that makes people a bit crazy,
if they feel that it's theirs.
For Ballard,
there is an enormous difference
between an archeological expedition
and salvage for profit.
Every object that's recovered
is recovered
because an archeologist, an expert,
says, I want that.
Sometimes they would say see
that broken jar?
Pick it up.
Well, how about the unbroken one?
No, actually the broken jar
has more scientific value.
Bring it up.
So we'd bring it up.
And so it's a very big difference
between doing something to fill in
a missing chapter in human history
and doing it for personal greed.
Nearly a decade after discovering
the Titanic,
Ballard dove on another grand wreck,
the British luxury liner Lusitania.
High-tech treasure hunters had stripped
as much of the broken vessel possible
looking to sell off the remains.
The salvagers even brought up
three of the boat's propellers.
One propeller made it to
a maritime museum.
The second was believed to be
melted down
and recast as a very expensive
set of golf clubs.
And the last one met
an even gloomier fate.
I can remember going out and
trying to find the propeller

of the Lusitania and
finding it in this junkyard,
just sitting there amongst
all this other junk.
And I can remember when we were diving
on the Lusitania to have
that empty shaft
something was missing
its propeller was missing.
And if the propeller was in a museum,
if it was serving some purpose,
I could understand that,
but to find it in a junkyard,
waiting to be sold for scrap,
you have to wonder, why did you do this?
What was going through your brain?
And it had to have been just a lark.
And that's really sad.
Ballard's Mediterranean expedition
is down to a precious handful of days.
And now the NR-1 finally pays off.
The sub uncovers two new sites,
including the oldest they've found,
containing a Roman wreck
from the first century B.C.
The evidence is now inescapable.
Skerki Bank has been
a major intersection
throughout Mediterranean history.
Ballard is anxious to find more.
But the seas suddenly turn dark
and angry.
Well, we just found the best ancient
ship we've ever discovered
and we can't get to it.
We got to get in the water.
We can't get in the water.
They're telling us that we've got a
storm that's coming
that's going to be sea state five.
This is our second major storm
on this trip.
We lost 32 hours to the last storm.
How many hours are we going

to lose to this one?
You know, I want to get down.
I can't get to it.
But there is one way
to get beneath the waves.
Ballard decides to send down
the NR-1 during the storm.
Once under the surface,
the sub will be free of the weather,
free to continue exploring.
On board is archeologist Jon Adams,
eater to see the new find close-up.
Unlike most deep-diving subs,
the NR-1 actually has three windows
on its underside.
For Adams, they are portals
to the tragedies of the past.
When you're diving,
you can't get half-a-mile down,
like we are now.
And it's easy to lose sight
of the people.
I suppose their the last moments
for them on board this vessel,
before it sank,
must have been the climax of a crisis
that might have actually been going on
for several hours,
as the well organized machine
that the ship is gradually breaks down
and down it goes.
So it's quite an awe-inspiring sight.
In this graveyard of lost vessels,
the NR-1 explores the very last site.
The new ship is
another Roman trading vessel dating
from the first century A.D.
And a cargo rarely seen by scientists.
An orderly pile of large cut stones
and two pillars,
carefully wrought pieces,
like giant toy blocs,
still waiting after 2,000 years,
for hands to assemble them.

Perhaps they were the pre-fabricated pieces of an ancient building, carved out of an Egyptian quarry, destined for Roman shores. It will take months, even years, before the archeologists know the answers, if they ever do. As always, Ballard is concerned about protecting the sites for posterity. When we discovered the Titanic, we did not file a claim of ownership. And I was later told that had we done that, had we recovered one little object, we could have claimed it, and in so doing, helped protect it. By bringing up the Skerki artifacts, Ballard establishes his right to claim the sites in court, if ever it becomes necessary. Oh, this is very heavy very heavy. For now, Ballaard will place the artifacts recovered at Skerki Bank in the Sea Research Foundation, where they will be preserved according to the highest archeological standards. Last one. Together Ballard and the scientists have proven that the new world of deep sea archeology can work wonders. I feel very good. I feel that this, you know, really is an historic expedition. This is the first major deep sea archeological expedition, an incredible team of people from incredibly diverse backgrounds, working together for the first time to try to do something that had never been done before. I think we have shown that the deep

sea is a repository of human history
on a scale we've just never
comprehended before.
But are the archeological glories
of the deep sea at risk
from salvagers and treasure hunters?
Yes, Ballard believes,
until they learn to respect the past.
I have no fundamental problem
with treasure hunters,
if they don't destroy history
in the process.
I don't think it's our right
to destroy history.
It's our right to find it
and document it,
but not our right to destroy it.
As long as there are marvels in the seas,
people will pursue them.
Some will be treasure hunters,
dreaming of gold and gems.
And some will be scientists,
dreaming of the astonishing discovery
that next awaits them.