



2008 Theme: Journeys & Quests

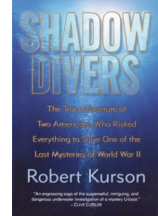
Adult Selection:

Shadow Divers by Robert Kurson

Robert Kurson grew up in the Chicago suburbs. He earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin, then a law degree from Harvard Law School. He practiced real estate law, but quit to pursue a writing career. To make ends meet, he worked full time as a drapery and window blinds installer, then as a Wal-Mart options trader at the Chicago Board Options Exchange. He was hired by the *Chicago Sun-Times* as a data entry clerk, a position which led to a full-time features writing job. In 2000, *Esquire* published "My Favorite Teacher," Kurson's first magazine story, which became a finalist for a National Magazine Award. He moved from the *Sun-Times* to *Chicago* magazine, then to *Esquire*, where he is a contributing editor. His stories have appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and other publications. He lives in the Chicago suburbs. Kurson's latest book is ***Crashing Through***. His website can be found at www.robertkurson.com



In the fall of 1991 in the frigid Atlantic waters sixty miles off the coast of New Jersey, weekend scuba divers, John Chatterton and Richie Kohler, made a startling discovery: a sunken World War II German U-boat that, according to all the official records, simply shouldn't have been at that location. Over the next six years, an elite team of divers embarked on a quest to solve the mystery. Some would not live to see its end. Chatterton and Kohler, at first bitter rivals, were drawn into a deep bond of friendship. As the men's marriages frayed under the pressure of a shared obsession, their dives grew more daring, and each realized that he was hunting for more than the identities of a lost U-boat and its nameless crew.



Discussion Questions (questions in bold also appear in the printed Reading Guide):

- 1. Would you define deep wreck diving as an adventure, a quest, or a fatal obsession?**
2. What does Bill Nagle represent? How does his approach toward diving make a mark on other divers?
3. What causes John Chatterton and Richie Kohler's initial feud and dislike for each other?
4. What do you think of Chatterton? How do his Vietnam experiences affect his philosophies toward life and diving?
5. How does Kohler's German background and interest in WWII help him with this quest?
- 6. In what ways do Chatterton's and Kohler's backgrounds and earlier lives prepare them for their quest to identify the U-Who? What attributes enable them to persevere?**
- 7. How do they solve the dilemma of searching for historical artifacts without disturbing the dead?**
8. What role does research play in identifying the U-Who? What research methods are used and which are most productive?
9. How does the history of Helmut Neuerburg, Commander of the U-boat, and the other crew members affect your perspective of the German sailors who served in WWII?
- 10. The divers discovered to their dismay that historical facts found during their search were not always correct. How has your view of history changed by reading this story?**

Activity Ideas:

Serve sub sandwiches and goldfish crackers at your book discussion.

Visit the U-505 exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago to get a real feel for life on a German submarine in WWII.

Take scuba lessons at a local dive/scuba shop.

John Chatterton
www.johnchatterton.com

Richie Kohler
www.richiekohler.com

Books to Bridge the Region
www.books2bridge.org

11. What do you think of the crazy plan Chatterton devised to get into the motor room?
12. **Divers continue to debate the ethics of removing artifacts from shipwrecks. When is it proper to take artifacts from wrecks? Does your answer change if there are human remains onboard?**
13. **One of the divers gave up diving for two years in an effort to keep his family together. Must a person surrender his true passion in order to live a happy and fulfilled life?**
14. Why does one diver feel he must notify the crewmen's families? How did the relatives react?
15. Of all the possible scenarios raised for how the wrecked sub met its violent end, what do you think of the divers' final conclusion?

Related Materials:

Books related to Deep Water Diving:

- Chowhury, Bernie. *The Last Dive: A Father and Son's Fatal Descent into the Ocean's Depths*
- Kohl, Chris. *Shipwreck Tales of the Great Lakes*
- Matsen, Brad. *Titanic's Last Secret: The Further Adventures of Shadow Divers John Chatterton and Richie Kohler*
- McMurray, Kevin. *Deep Descent: Adventure and Death Diving the Andrea Doria*
- PBS NOVA series - *Hitler's Lost Sub* (DVD)

Books about other Journeys & Quests:

- Cervantes, Miguel de. *Don Quixote de la Mancha*
- Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*
- Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia*
- Junger, Sebastian. *The Perfect Storm*
- Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*

Websites:

U-505 exhibit at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry
www.msichicago.org/whats-here/exhibits/u-505/

PBS NOVA site about the U-869
www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostsub/

Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum
www.shipwreckmuseum.com