**3b Page 36 READING TEXT**

Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Return to *Titanic*

On 15 April 1912, the largest passenger steamship ever built, appropriately named *Titanic*, sank in the North Atlantic Ocean after hitting an iceberg. *Titanic* had left Southampton, England, five days earlier and was on her maiden voyage.

In 1985, *National Geographic* Explorer-in-Residence Dr Robert Ballard located the wreck of *Titanic*. He went back to *Titanic* nineteen years later to see how it had changed.

**1** It was the height of the Cold War and in fact I was on a secret mission when we found *Titanic*. The US Navy had agreed to finance the development of our underwater video technology. In return, we had agreed to use the technology to find two US nuclear submarines which had disappeared in the 1960s.

**2** Not at first, because many ships had sunk in that area. When we realised it was *Titanic*, we jumped for joy. Then we realised we were celebrating something where people had died. We actually stopped our work and held a memorial service at that point.

**3** I saw champagne bottles, intact, with the corks still in. The box holding the bottles had disappeared long ago. Suddenly, my eye was drawn to a woman’s shoe. Nearby I saw a pair of smaller shoes that had perhaps belonged to a child. I felt that the people who had died here in 1912 were speaking to me again. But I knew that a private salvage company had legally removed thousands of objects from the site. A Russian submarine had taken Hollywood filmmaker James Cameron to the wreck. A New York couple had even got married on *Titanic*’s bow. It was exactly what I didn’t want to happen. I’d asked people to treat *Titanic*’s remains with dignity. Instead, they’d turned her into a freak show. The story of *Titanic* is not about the ship, it’s about the people.

See the whole story on the *National Geographic* Channel.

*Titanic*: The Final Secret

bow (n) /baU/ the front of a ship or boat

freak show (n) /friːk ʃəʊ/ something unusual which people watch for entertainment (often used negatively)

salvage (n) /ˈsalvɪdʒ/ money or compensation when people recover or rescue shipwrecks

Life