

## **Ship: Wrecked**

**A choose-your-own-adventure story**



*By Ceilidh Wolfe and Madison Hill*

Your family decided to take a vacation to the Neahkahnie mountains, citing the gorgeous hiking trails and the view from the Oswald West State Park. After enjoying what the park had to offer, you and your family decided to snorkel at the mouth of the Nehalem river. It's cold, it's windy but the water is inviting once you're submerged. The river is teeming with darting coho and sprouts of foliage, but as you explore the waters further away from the river, there is emptiness beneath the surface. Do you swim out further?

1. I swim out further. (Turn to page 3)
2. I swim back. (Turn to page 4)



Photo credit: Larry Geddis. Oswald West State Park

The vast emptiness of the sea isn't intimidating at all! You continue to swim with your snorkel. It's actually quite peaceful. You notice trout swimming in groups, long plants stretching towards the sunlight, and a large rock formation in the middle of it all. The rock formation looks really weird, almost exactly boat-shaped. Crazy. Naturally, you drift towards it. It's starting to look *really* boat-shaped. You vaguely remember learning in class about the trading of some wax that the Clatsop people had found nearby, and that it was related to a ship.

1. That's a little far out - I swim back. (Turn to page 4)
2. I've come this far - I swim out. (Turn to page 5)



You swim back to the mouth of the river, and join your family. After noticing some neat tidepools on the beach, you forget all about the open sea.

The End.



Your family will be fine without you for a little while, and you're not feeling even a bit tired! Eager to move towards the boat-like shape, you kick further out to sea. As you swim closer, the blurred edges of the strange rock formation begin to resolve; jagged pieces of wood jut out into crashing waves, a spray of salt and loam swipes your face as you inch closer to what was *definitely* once a boat. A wrecked ship towers above you, lying in large pieces against the wet gray of the rocks it crashed against long ago.

1. Do you enter the wreckage and explore? (Turn to page 6)
2. There could be sharks in there, you're out. Back to shore. (Turn to page 7)



Photo Credit: *Shipwreck* 1845 Knud Andreassen Baade

You haul yourself up out of the water onto the closest mass of swollen, broken wood. Careful to avoid any of the waterlogged planks that groan and sag beneath your hands, you shift your weight slowly until you are crouched on the slope of what must have been part of the deck once. Much of the ship remains submerged, a dark, wide shape far below the churning waters. As you move your hand forward towards the highest perch on this shipwreck, you feel a world of textures - besides the slick algae, you feel sharp, grainy bits, some smooth and giving. You look down to see a myriad of pieces of...something, many somethings, wedged between the cracks of the planks. You scoop some carefully into your hand.

1. Good thing your swimsuit has pockets! You load them up. (Turn to page 7)
2. Memories are enough. You'll watch the waves for a while and get back before your family notices you're gone.(Turn to page 7)



Back on the shore, you stretch after your long swim. You begin the trek back to your campsite, but something peeking out of the wet sands catches your eye. You bend down and free it from the sands, and pick up a chunk of what seems to be stone or ceramic. You move the small, rough item around in your hand, exploring its beautifully colored edges, the worn smoothness of either flat side. It seems to be the twin of the smaller fragments wedged between the broken planks of your wreck. What did this little sherd<sup>1</sup> used to be? Who shaped it, what was it used for, and where has it been? How did it come to rest, broken and lovely, upon the shore?

1. You're going to get to the bottom of this. This fragment is a mystery, and you have to find someone to help you solve it. (Turn to page 12)
2. I'll bring home this piece. Every vacation needs some small keepsake. (Turn to page 10)
3. Memories are enough. You'll leave it there. (Turn to page 8)



Photo credit: Maritime Archaeological Society. Porcelain sherd.

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<sup>1</sup> Sherd: Shorthand for "potsherd". "A fragment of a pottery vessel found on sites and in refuse deposits where pottery-making people have lived" (Merriam Webster's)

As you walk back to your family, you grin to yourself. The sound of swirling waters from the dilapidated deck fills your ears, and the memory of your secret discovery lies in your heart. Tomorrow, you'll tell someone about the incredible wreck you found - an entire ship, lost for centuries, and you're the one who found it! Tomorrow, you'll tell the world, and share a piece of history - generations of people after you will know this ship's story, and they'll have you, in part, to thank. For tonight, the secret of the lost shipwreck is yours, and yours alone.

1. Turn to page 9.



Photo Credit: oregonlottery.org, Oswald West state park



The next day, you hear about an incredible discovery made on the very same beach you were on! After hundreds of years of searching, archaeologists have discovered the ship that once carried the thousands of artifacts washing up onto the shores nearby.

This project, you learn, has been referred to as the Beeswax Wreck, so named for the many pieces of beeswax washing ashore - the wreck was thought to be a ship described in the local Clatsop tribe's oral histories, one which provided the tribe members with plenty of beeswax for trading. Oral histories of survivors washing ashore have been passed down for generations in descendant communities<sup>2</sup>, some of whom are descended from the survivors of this very shipwreck. Professionals suspect, at first glance, that it may have been a Spanish Manila galleon - perhaps the Santa Cristo De Burgos, a ship that went missing in the 1600s! You remember learning in class about Alexander Henry, a fur trader from Astoria who wrote of many things the Clatsop tribe had found from this wreck - candles and expensive porcelain imported from China, massive amounts of beeswax he recognized as the same beeswax used for church candles in the Americas.

You look at the pictures of grinning, excited archaeologists and their finds, and smile to yourself - how incredible to have been so, so close to a piece of history, and not even know it!

The End.

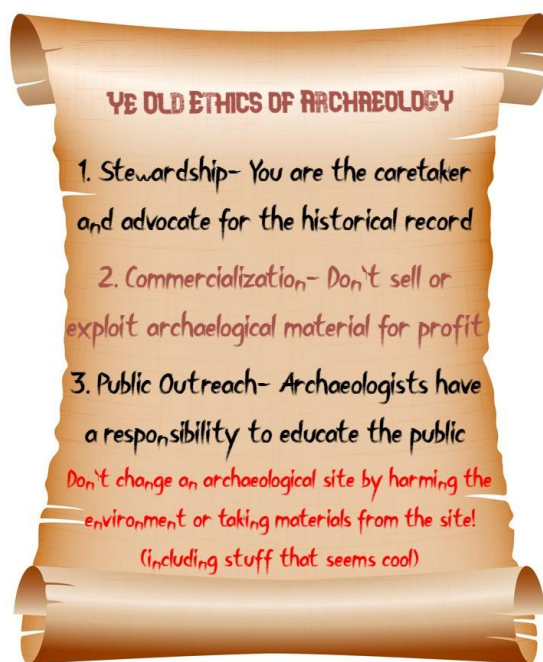


Picture credit: Maritime Archaeology Society, Beeswax Project team

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<sup>2</sup> Descendant communities: refers to the living members of Indigenous communities.

Arriving home, damp and exhausted from your excursion, you walk into your bedroom. You discard your gear unceremoniously on the floor, and pause before collapsing onto your bed, remembering the treasures tucked away in your pocket. You remove one, holding it up to the last bits of evening light shining through your window to examine the swirling deep blues and rich cream colors. You place it on your windowsill to admire, alongside some lumps of beeswax. You fall asleep gazing at your treasure. That night, you dream of exploring the shore once more. You move effortlessly along the coast, and as you walk, a shape appears against the horizon - some large, seaworthy vessel; a Spanish galleon perhaps? It grows closer and you wade into the water to meet it. A ladder hangs down amongst the waves, and you climb so swiftly that your feet never seem to touch the ropes. In your dream, the ship is whole again - you glide over gleaming wooden planks, past tall earthenware jugs, and elaborately painted ceramic pots, and from the corner of your eye, you spot the soft glow of candlelight from behind a door. You move towards the glow, into a small cabin - the source of the light is a beeswax taper sitting on a table, dripping gently onto an open scroll. You lean over the scroll and read:



You spend long moments in your dream gazing at the scroll. What could this mean? The glow of the candle intensifies, growing larger and larger - as it fills your vision, you awaken to a burst of sunlight, streaming in through the window. The sunlight silhouettes your new treasures.

1. Maybe that scroll had something to it - heck, you could be a steward! Decide to contact someone about the artifacts<sup>3</sup>. (Turn to page 12)
2. What a weird dream. You move your treasures off the windowsill, into a box of other treasures. That'll help you sleep better. (Turn to page 16)

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<sup>3</sup> Artifact: an object made by a human being, typically an item of cultural or historical interest.

This time, you awaken in the dead of night: you dreamed of a strange thirst, quaffing barrel upon barrel of water and feeling nothing on your parched throat. You reach for the cup of water near your bed, gulping noisily...and your mouth remains dry. The water gurgles down your throat but none seems to seep into your cottony tongue; no moisture relieving the scratchy, burning sensation all down your throat. You drink and drink, but the discomfort remains. You fill your glass from the sink once more, then give up and desperately shove your face beneath the gushing tap, lapping up the cool water, feeling it bathe your tongue - but still the feeling remains. Unsatisfied, you walk back to your room. Before you dive under your covers once more, an arc of moonlight catches your eye, and you stare at the dull, washed-out gray of the sherd on your windowsill.

1. Decide to contact a local archaeologist in the morning. (Turn to page 12)
2. Bad dreams happen - it's just a piece of stone. Finders keepers. (Turn to page 16)



You tell your family all about the ship you had rediscovered, and about your finds. Once their initial shock wore off, your grown-ups were happy that you brought it to their attention. They put you in contact with Oregon state archaeologist, John Pouley at (503-480-9164). He thanks you for letting someone know and tells you more about the importance of this sherd<sup>4</sup> and beeswax<sup>5</sup>. It's a really good thing you spoke up about it! The archaeological record is crucial to our understanding of the past. You feel warm inside, knowing you did the right thing.

John even tells you all about the Maritime Archaeological Society - a team of archaeologists who specialize in shipwrecks, and may even have a collection of artifacts just like yours to show you! He offers to put you and your grown-ups in touch with them, so you can be a part of unmasking a mystery that could be 400 years old.

1. Turn to page 13



Picture credit: Maritime Archaeological Society. Chinese porcelain, stamped beeswax

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<sup>4</sup> This particular sherd is curved, and likely is Chinese porcelain that was transported on the ship. It was once a pot with decorative designs along the outside.

<sup>5</sup> This wax was traded between the Clatsop people and colonizers in Astoria. This beeswax was intended for church candles in the Americas, but served many different purposes to those who traded it.

After your experience with John Pouley, you feel the warm glow of belonging within yourself. You've presented an artifact - a genuine, real, piece of history - to people who can help tell a story hundreds of years old, using your little ceramic sherd to piece together events from far before you were born. Maybe this is a start of something new for you - this little fragment of stone or ceramic has brought you into a whole new world - one you can be a part of! You are a part of the archaeological record - a true steward<sup>6</sup> of the history of your community, and a part of something bigger than yourself.

The story doesn't end here. This is only the beginning.



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<sup>6</sup> Steward: A steward is someone who takes responsibility for helping and protecting the community they are a part of.

This feeling is not worth it. You knew, deep inside, this did not belong to you. You explain everything to your grown-ups in a rambling mess, and they comfort you before finding the contact information for your state archaeologist. You contact Oregon state archaeologist John Pouley, who spends time explaining why keeping items in their original context is so important. Not only does it give more information, but these items belong to the families of those who owned it. He is happy that you spoke up about it and returned the item. He assures you that people find things like this often, and most of them don't realize how much good they can do by donating their finds! The feeling of guilt dissipates from the pit of your stomach. Things will be okay, you learned something new.

1. Turn to page 13



Picture Credit: Oregon State Parks, youtube. Oregon state archaeologist John Pouley

The dreams you've been having lately have felt too real - you feel jumpy and nervous, not to mention exhausted from a lack of good sleep. You decide to relieve some of the tension with a soothing, hot bubble bath. You even consider lighting some nice candles for ambiance, a little aromatherapy perhaps - but remembering the sensation of hot wax dripping onto your skin nips that idea in the bud. Just the hot water and fragrant bubbles will be enough. The sound of water thundering from the tub's spout comforts you, and you feel the tension begin to ease out of your shoulders. Steam fills the room, and as you pour bubblebath into the water, a thick froth of gleaming white forms on the surface.

You slip into the tub and feel instant relaxation in the hot water. The bubbles lap at your cheeks, soft and salty. Salty? Your eyes snap open. All you see is the swirling white around you, rising waters obscuring the lip of the tub from your vision. You hear water pouring out and away, and the rushing becomes a crash as the water swells. You try to leave the tub, but you can no longer find the edge - only water, only foam, thick and briny. You hear, as though from far away, the creaking of beams - an echoing, hard snap, louder than anything you've experienced before. The water sloshes over your head, no longer soothing and warm, but brackish and icy, biting into your skin. You begin to drift downward into the darkness, the numbing cold reminding you of the sinking feeling in your stomach. You close your eyes. You hope to wake up.

1. Play again?



You go about your day, following the same schedule as most other days. As you sit in class, your mind drifts to the scuffed box beneath your bed, and the objects hidden within it. You drift in and out of memories of your dreams, the voices of your teachers and peers fading around you. What was that ship you dreamed of? Was that *your* shipwreck, gleaming and beautiful, sitting heavy in the water under its burden of beautifully painted pots, heaps of stamped beeswax, glossy beams of teakwood, and so many more treasures for trade? Who were those things meant to go to, and who has them now? You wonder idly if the artifacts you found could help piece together this mystery. Perhaps the things you scooped into your pockets are the key to unlocking a long-forgotten piece of the past.

1. Maybe you should tell someone about your find. (Turn to page 12)
2. No. These are your treasures now. This is your secret and yours alone. (Turn to page 17)





Later, you sit on your bed, staring hard at the objects that are now being kept in a box below. You have plucked the small pieces of wax from the place where they sat partially melted into the windowsill; as you drop them into the box beside your sherd, the soft clatter of the pellets soothes you. You shove the box beneath your bed, satisfied that tonight you will sleep. Before you feel your head hit the pillow, you're out once again.

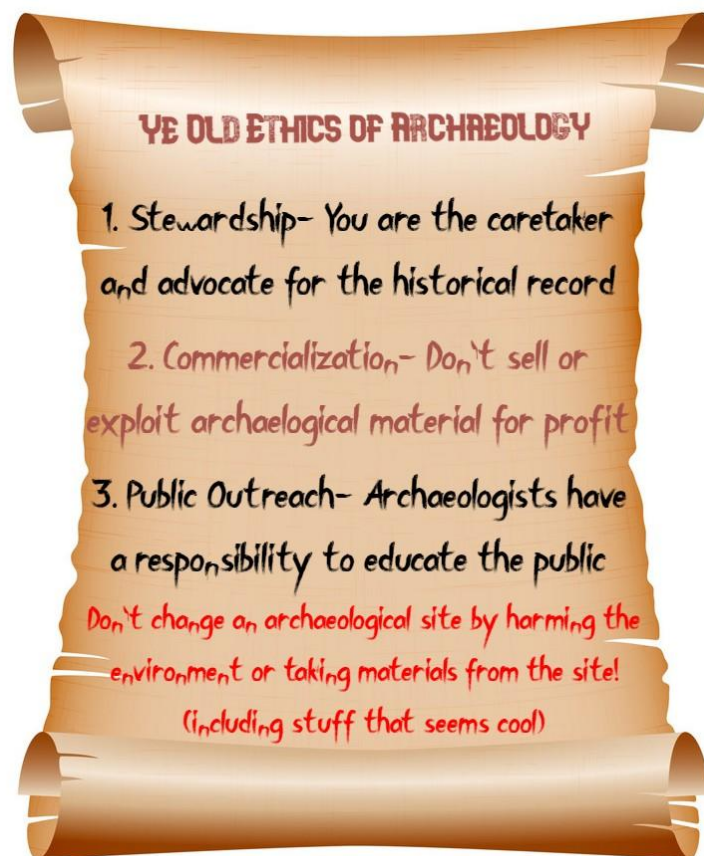
In this dream, you wander along the shore once more. Just as it did several nights ago, the shadow of a galleon floats closer to you, but this time you shy away. You know what lies in there. As you wander, a gentle rain falls. It feels warm against your skin. As the rain begins to fall harder, you notice a strange feeling on your arms - something clinging. You lift your arm and see a delicate yellow shine coating your skin in splotches - the rain pours and splatters against you, too hot, clinging instead of slipping to the ground. Gobs of burning wax slosh and harden at your feet, pelting and burning your skin wherever it lands. You begin to run and the wax hardens underfoot, sticking your feet to the ground and leaving you at the mercy of the burning, dripping wax. Panicked, you awaken again. A sheen of sweat coats your feverish skin - but you are awake. You notice some forgotten pellets of wax scattered on the ground.

1. This is too much - maybe something wants me to put this stuff back. (Turn to page 14)
2. You've had worse nightmares. Everything will be fine. (Turn to page 18.)



Moving slowly, tired from two nights of disturbed sleep, you go about your day. Things seem to pass by in a haze - more than usual, you find it hard to concentrate on your teacher's words. You barely notice when others speak to you. Your head pounds - the low ache of dehydration follows you. Your skin still seems to tingle and itch with the memory of that strange stinging rain of wax. Why are you having these dreams? Why can't your brain just dream about better things? Throughout the day, there is a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach. Your feet drag from exhaustion, and you dwell on thoughts of the treasures in your box at home. You think about that scroll in your dreams...what did it say about keeping what you find?

1. Maybe you'll feel better if you talk to someone about it. (Turn to page 14.)
2. At least you have cool stuff to make you feel better. You daydream about when you can take out your hoard once more and hold your trophies in your hands again. (Turn to page 15.)



### Afterword:

Thank you so much for coming on this adventure with us! We hope that exploring our story has been a fun way to learn about the options you have if YOU ever discover an artifact. Archaeologists do their best to be stewards of the historical record, which means communicating with descendant communities about archaeological sites, and striving to be respectful and collaborative. Every one of us is a steward of the archaeological record, and that includes you, reader!

Ship:Wrecked is based on the Beeswax Wreck Project; the ship from the Beeswax wreck has yet to be found, but artifacts have been washing ashore for hundreds of years. Pieces of beeswax, and thousands of sherds made of stone and ceramic have been collected, and many historical documents have been studied over the years in an attempt to piece together this mystery. There are oral histories from Clatsop descendant communities whose ancestors were survivors of the wreck. You can learn more about archaeology and the ongoing work on the Beeswax wreck here:

### Resources and Fun Things To Check Out!

- **Learn more about the Maritime Archaeological Society's work on the Beeswax Wreck Project:** <http://maritimearchaeological.org/beeswax-wreck/>
- **Learn more about the Santo Cristo De Burgos galleon:** <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/manila-galleon-wreck-on-the-oregon-coast/#.YoLCcOjMLIU>
- **SAA Code of Ethics:** <https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>
- **Check out the rest of the Archaeology Roadshow, full of cool activities, talks, videos, and more!** <https://archaeologyroadshow.org/>
- **Contact Oregon's State Archaeologist John Pouley:** <https://www.zoominfo.com/p/John-Pouley/1665776556>
- **Contact other Oregon archaeologists:** <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Pages/Staff-Directory.aspx>
- **Find more local archaeology events and exhibits here!** <https://www.oregonarchaeological.org/local-archaeology-events-2/>

Meet The Authors of Ship:Wrecked



Ceilidh Wolfe, PSU Anthropology student. Contact me at [ceilidh@pdx.edu](mailto:ceilidh@pdx.edu) with any feedback!



Madison Hill, PSU Anthropology student