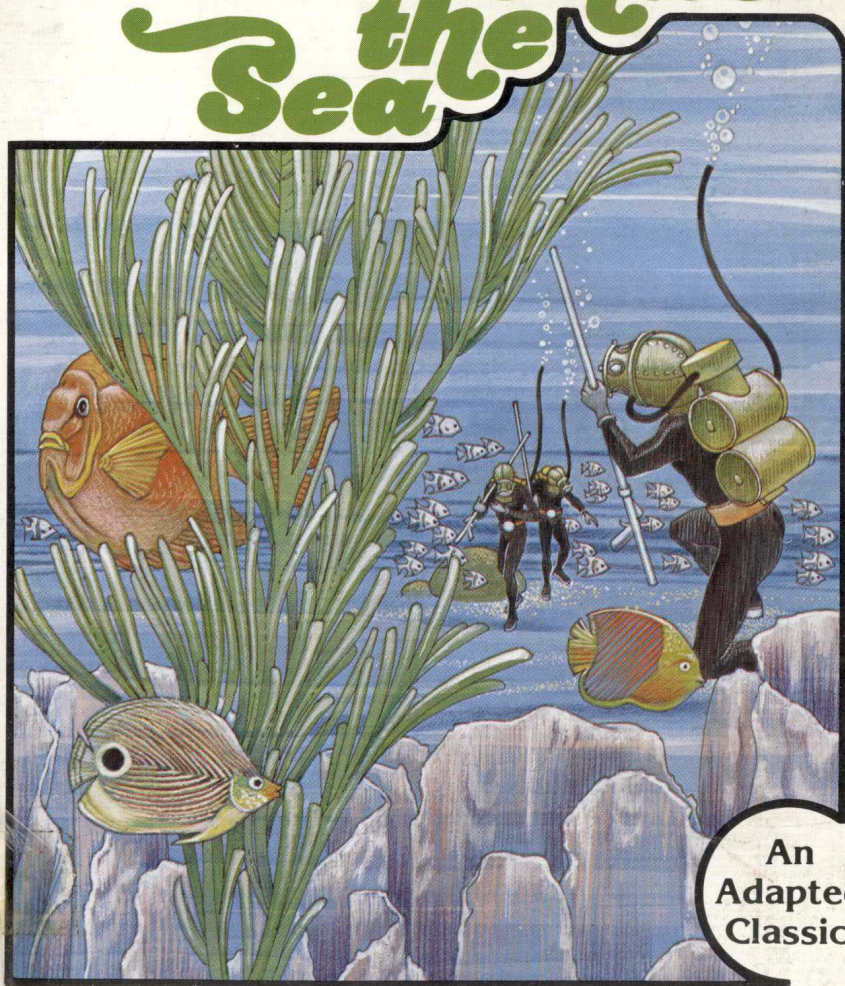


Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

JULES VERNE



An
Adapted
Classic

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**Twenty
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Sea**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jules Verne was born in France in 1828. He was one of the first writers of what is now called science fiction. He was always writing of the future. Verne wrote about submarines, television, helicopters, movies, airplanes, and spaceships before they were really invented.

He was not a scientist, a sailor, nor a submarine builder. All he knew about science and the sea was what he read or imagined. As a boy, he ran away to sea. But the ship's captain sent for Jules' father, who took him home. Jules promised that he would do all of his traveling by reading and writing in the future.

Some of Jules Verne's other books include: *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *From the Earth to the Moon*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and *The Mysterious Island*.

Jules Verne died in France in 1905.

PREFACE

Before submarines were invented, they were imagined. It took hundreds of years for the impossible to come true. But people finally made a ship that could move under water. It took years to solve the problems of supplying air, keeping water out, rising and sinking, and seeing where to go. But Jules Verne imagined ways to solve all of these problems in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. This is the story of the amazing submarine, *The Nautilus*, launched by Captain Nemo over 100 years ago.

Many of the things in this book are common today. But when the book was written, they were only visions of the future. In the following pages you will meet the captain, crew, and passengers of *The Nautilus*. You will share their long and exciting adventure under the sea. You will read about monsters, sunken treasure, and wonders of the deep. And you will see that many of the captain's inventions are being used today. Many of his inventions, however, are still only imagined.

ADAPTER'S NOTE

In preparing this edition of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, Jules Verne's main purpose has been kept in mind. Since the book was originally published, however, language has changed. We have modified or omitted some passages and some vocabulary. We have, however, kept as much of the original as possible.

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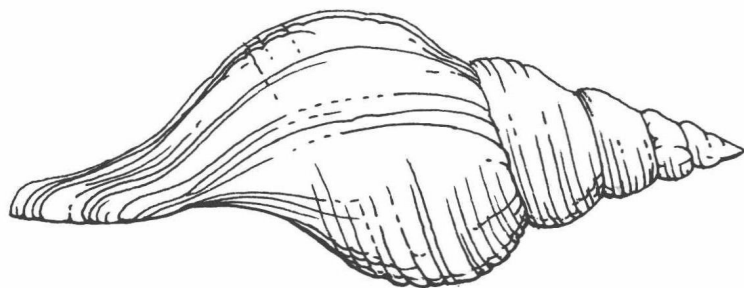
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Part 1



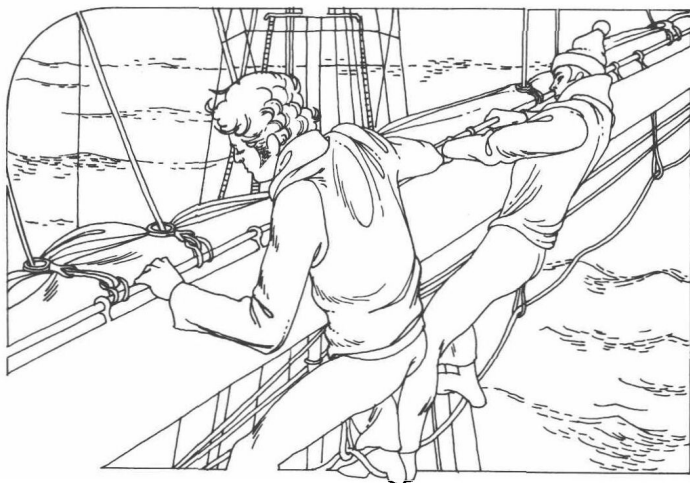
1

Is It a Monster?

"What do you think we're looking for, anyway?" asked the first sailor. "A whale?"

"Of course!" answered the other. "What else?"

Several of us were aloft in the masts and rigging of our ship. All of us were gazing steadily at the vast Atlantic. The sailors were talking.



I listened to them, looking from one to another as they talked. Sitting on a crosstree, I watched the sea too, holding on to the mast.

"I think it's a whale we're after," spoke up a bearded sailor. "Or maybe a sea monster."

For several months there had been a great mystery. People talked of little else. Many ships at sea had

seen a huge object larger than a whale. It could move much faster than a whale, and sometimes it seemed to glow. No one knew what it was.

No one made us sit in the crosstrees; it was an uncomfortable perch. But we wanted to sit there for we were excited. We watched the bright sea eagerly, as the ship rocked gently.

"Well, whatever it is, I'd like to see it!" spoke up the cabin boy. He was barely fifteen years old. "I've looked long and hard. Sometimes I think my head will fall off."

"Wouldn't I like to see it harpooned!" said the bearded man. "What a sight that would be!"

"And chasing him down—wouldn't that be fun?" said another sailor.

"As for me, I'd like to see it hoisted aboard," said another. "I'd like to help kill it. That would suit me!"

All the men were excited.

"Well, I'd be satisfied just to see it," said the cabin boy again, never taking his eyes off the sea. "Then I'd win Captain Farragut's prize. Just think! Two thousand dollars goes to the first person who sees it! Even if he's a cabin boy, he gets the money."

For some time the men were silent. Each was busy with his own thoughts. Each one was thinking of how he would spend the \$2,000.

"Some people say it's not an animal at all," spoke up one sailor. "They say it's a floating island, or an uncharted rock. Some think it is a sunken wreck."

"Then it must have a machine in its stomach—that's all I can say," the Portuguese sailor answered him. "It changes positions so fast, and it spouts water 150 feet into the air."

"Yes, it spouts water!" shouted another. "If that isn't a whale, then what is it?"

Then up spoke Ned Land. Ned was the harpooner of our ship, the *Abraham Lincoln*.

"Are you men crazy?" he said. "How can you believe such nonsense? You are all seafaring men. You know there are no such monsters in the sea!"

"Then you don't think it's an animal?" asked the cabin boy. He was disappointed, I thought.

"Why, the biggest whale ever caught was only 50 or 60 yards long," answered Ned. "But this thing is 300 feet long! And you've never seen such a thing as a sea monster!"

I could see that Ned Land was no ordinary sailor. He was a Canadian of about forty. He was more than six feet tall, and a powerful fellow. He was smart and bold. Everyone listened to Ned Land: they wanted to hear what he thought about this mystery of the sea.

Ned Land was the king of harpooners of the whole world. Captain Farragut did well to get him for our voyage.

"Now don't you be too sure, Ned Land," said one of the sailors. "We don't know what is in the sea. No one has ever seen all the strange creatures that live down there in the dark waters. There are monsters, no doubt, bigger than any that have ever been seen."

Ned Land was silent. He didn't believe this, it was plain.

"Do you know what I think?" said the cabin boy. "I think it's a narwhal,¹ a sea animal ten times bigger than any whale. A sea-unicorn—that's what I think it is."

¹ Narwhal—an arctic whale about 24 feet long including the tusk, which resembles a unicorn's.

The others nodded. Except for Ned Land, everyone agreed with him.

"Ned, you are a whaler," spoke another sailor. "You know that there are huge whales in the sea."

"Of course there are. I know that," answered Ned. "For thirty years, man and boy, I've followed the sea. I've chased many a whale in my time. I've killed a lot of them. But I never saw one that could damage an iron ship."

"But Ned, a narwhal could!" said the cabin boy. "I've heard of whaling ships that the tusk of a narwhal pierced through."

"Wooden ships, maybe," answered Ned, "though I never saw it done. But not iron ships. Whatever this thing is, it went through iron-plate nearly two inches thick. No narwhal could do that!"

"But a narwhal has a tusk seven or eight feet long," said the bearded man.

"What if it does?" answered Ned. "Suppose a narwhal were ten times stronger. Suppose it had a tusk six times longer. I still don't think it could make a hole in iron-plate. And draw back again, men! Remember that! The tusk wasn't just buried in the ship and left there. Whatever struck those ships, withdrew again!"

"Yes, but the United States government equipped this ship," said the cabin boy. I could see that he was a clever boy, for his age. "The United States government sent us out on this search. We are supposed to find the narwhal and kill it. So the United States government thinks it is a narwhal."

It was true. The United States government had fitted out our ship. We had every kind of harpoon. We had hand harpoons. We had harpoons thrown by a gun.

We even had the newest American whaling gun. It could throw a nine-pound shell ten miles.

But best of all, we had Ned Land. He had no equal in his dangerous job.

An hour or more had passed. I had not said a word, for none of the men knew me. I had listened to their talk because it interested me. I wanted to hear all of their arguments. It was plain what they thought: they all believed that the *Abraham Lincoln* was chasing a huge narwhal. Captain Farragut thought so, too. But Ned Land didn't know. He was not sure.

"Well, I'm still not sure it's an animal," said Ned Land. "I'm just not sure. You'll have to prove it to me."

I made up my mind to talk further with Ned Land. I wanted to know him. I admired people who didn't make up their minds too fast.

2

I Talked With Ned Land

Next morning I found Ned sitting at the stern, watching the sea. He was mending a rope. The sun was bright and warm on my shoulders. On the sea, waves were dancing.

We were three weeks out of New York, heading due south. Before long we would round the tip of South America. In a week we would be in the Pacific Ocean, where the mysterious creature of the sea had last been sighted.

"Well, Ned," I said to him, "do you still refuse to believe that we are looking for a huge whale?"

"I wouldn't say that, sir," he replied. "But I am not stupid, even if I am just a sailor. Why should I believe in sea monsters? You don't."

Ned had a friendly smile. I liked him at once.

Ned and I are old friends now; we have been good friends for many years. We have talked for whole days at a time. I wish I could live a hundred years, so I could write down all the good stories Ned has told me. But we liked each other right away.

"You are a scientist, sir?" he asked me.

"Yes," I answered. "That is, a science teacher. The American government sent me on this trip. It is a great opportunity for me, for I will study undersea plants and animals. By the way, Ned, just call me Pierre."

I could not think of his calling me *sir*, when I was years younger than he.