

"I wish I could go on a journey under the sea.  
I want to see all the creatures." Jon, 9



# TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

Clouds of multi-coloured fish rose from our feet like surprised birds from long grass. Every so often I caught a glimpse of the gleaming eyes of enormous crabs crouching in their lairs, and gigantic claws threatening to bar my path.

When Professor Aronnax and his two companions find themselves aboard the *Nautilus* they are amazed by the huge and powerful submarine and its mysterious owner, Captain Nemo.



The three friends travel vast distances beneath the oceans, exploring an undersea realm full of excitement, discoveries and danger.

Captain Nemo seems to have some secret purpose. Why has he shut himself off from the world, and what are his plans for the *Nautilus*?

The captain has told them that they can never leave his vessel. Will the Professor and his companions find a way to escape from their underwater prison?

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TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA Jules Verne

JULES VERNE

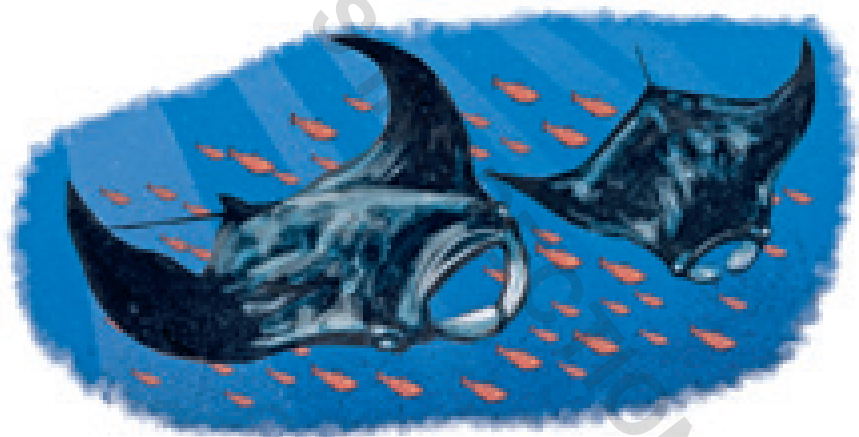


Retold by Tony Evans  
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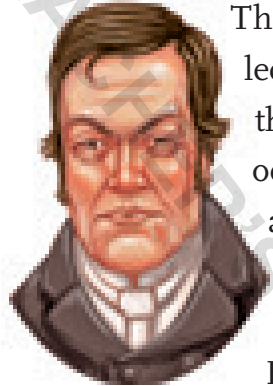
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# THE CHARACTERS

## Professor Pierre Aronnax

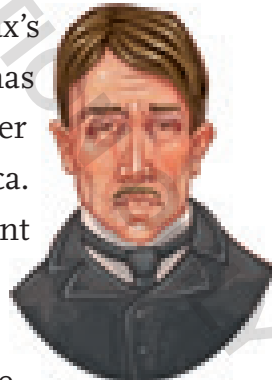


The professor is a scientist and lecturer who has travelled all over the world to study life in the oceans. After writing a newspaper article about a dangerous sea creature, he is invited to join an expedition to catch the monster.

How will he react when he discovers the real truth behind the frightening events at sea?

## Conseil

Conseil is Professor Aronnax's faithful servant and has accompanied his employer everywhere from China to Africa. He is a strong, calm and intelligent young man. Will he be able to help the professor to survive the great challenges that they face during their amazing adventure?



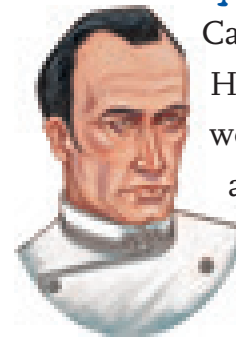
## Ned Land

Ned Land is a crew member on board the *Abraham Lincoln*, the American warship sent to search for the mysterious creature which is threatening shipping.

He is tall, brave and strong, and is a harpooner – a whale-hunter – by profession. Can Ned find the creature for which they are all searching?



## Captain Nemo



Captain Nemo is a brilliant inventor. His discoveries could astonish the world, but instead he hides himself away, determined to seek revenge upon humanity. Will Professor Aronnax and his friend ever discover the secret that lies behind Captain Nemo's hatred?

## Captain Farragut

Captain Farragut is the commander of the *Abraham Lincoln*. He is an American naval officer, and is very skilled at his job. Will he succeed in his dangerous mission?



## TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

As I stood on the bridge of the *Abraham Lincoln* I could see Captain Farragut supervising the departure of the large and powerful steamship from its moorings alongside the Brooklyn pier. The East River was lined with cheering crowds who had come from all over New York to send us on our way.

Soon the United States navy frigate had left New York harbour and was heading out into the dark waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Captain Farragut came up to me and shook my hand.

‘Welcome aboard, Professor Aronnax,’ he said. ‘It was good of you to agree to join our expedition at such short notice. The American government believes that your assistance will be most valuable. Tell me – what do you think is the truth behind the mysterious sightings that we have been sent to investigate?’

I thought back to the dramatic events that had led up to the departure of the *Abraham Lincoln*. During the last twelve months there had been many reports of a gigantic sea-creature, far larger and faster than a whale, roaming the world's oceans. Several liners had been badly damaged in collisions with the beast, and it was thought to be responsible for the loss of a number of ships that had disappeared without trace. Then just a day ago it was learned that a steamer from San Francisco had seen the mysterious object very clearly in the northern Pacific, travelling away from it at tremendous speed – it was over two hundred feet long, its fish-like body almost totally submerged, and it shot a jet of water a hundred and fifty feet into the air.

I answered the captain. 'I've studied the creatures of the great oceans all my life, and I have never seen anything which could explain the existence of such a monster. However, in my opinion it is likely to be a giant narwhal, of

a type not yet discovered. Its monstrous tusk could easily have caused the damage that has been reported.'

Captain Farragut frowned. 'You may be right, Professor. However, some of the ships have had great holes pierced in their iron clad keels. Could any animal do that? Let us hope that we can find the answer, before this dangerous thing – whatever it is – strikes again. Meanwhile, I've asked Ned Land – one of my most skilful crew members – to help you in any way that he can.'

That evening, following my usual habit, I made an entry in my note book. *3rd July 1867. Our voyage has begun. Where will it lead us?*



My faithful servant Conseil had of course joined me on the *Abraham Lincoln*. For the past ten years, Conseil had followed me everywhere, including China and Africa, as I pursued my scientific studies for the Museum

great achievement of imagination and scientific prediction. *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* was published in 1870, and although submarines had been built by that date they were nothing like Captain Nemo's *Nautilus*.

The most advanced submarine that Jules Verne could have known about was the *Ictineo II*, launched in 1864 and designed by the Spanish engineer Narcís Monturiol. It was forty-six feet long and made of wood covered with a thin layer of copper. To travel beneath the sea it used a steam engine powered by a chemical reaction rather than a coal fire, but Monturiol ran out of money before his invention could be properly developed. It was not until the 1880s that electric batteries were invented which were powerful enough to propel a submarine underwater, and these early craft could only stay submerged for a few hours at a time.

It was the late 1950s – almost eighty years after Verne was writing – before a submarine as powerful as Captain Nemo's vessel took to the seas. On 3rd August 1958 an American

nuclear-powered submarine reached the North Pole, although it did not surface. It was called *Nautilus* in recognition of Jules Verne's imaginary craft, and Verne's *Nautilus* resembled the modern version in many respects. Then in March 1959 another American submarine, *Skate*, surfaced at the North Pole – breaking through a layer of ice to do so.

It is not just the cleverness of Jules Verne's scientific predictions which has made *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* a bestseller ever since it was first published. In addition there are the exciting undersea adventures of Professor Aronnax and his companions, and the vivid descriptions of the sea creatures they encounter. However, it is the mysterious Captain Nemo who lies at the centre of the story – one of the most intriguing characters in fiction. There is some evidence that Jules Verne may have had a real historical figure in mind when he described the captain, and attempts have been made to identify the person on whom Nemo might have been based. 'Nemo' means 'nobody' in Latin,