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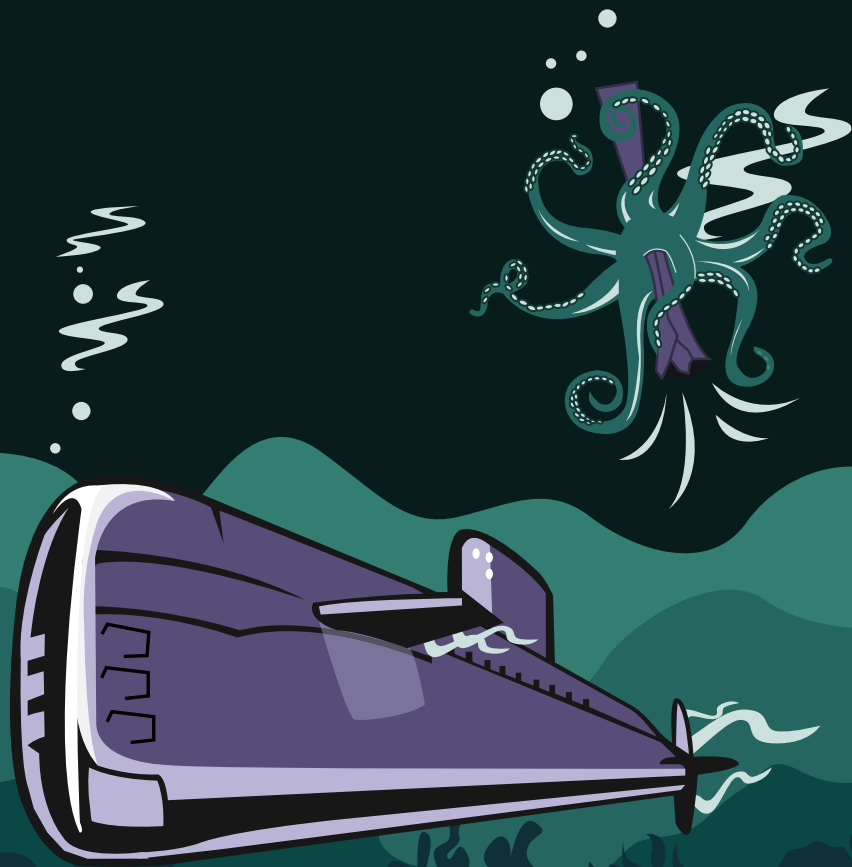
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Dramatic Publishing

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA



By Ann Sonnevile and Clint Sheffer
From the novel by Jules Verne

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20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

Drama. By Ann Sonnevile and Clint Sheffer. From the novel by Jules Verne.

Cast: Minimum of 12, no maximum. Doubling and extras possible.

We join the prolific naturalist Professor Aronnax, his devoted assistant Conseil and the grifty harpooner Ned Land for an epic journey aboard the Nautilus, the world's first submarine vessel. Forcefully led by the dangerous and enigmatic Captain Nemo on an unprecedented tour of the seven seas, our three heroes are confronted by harrowing challenges, incredible adventure, and a host of most unusual creatures. They must also wrestle with the dark forces that lurk in the depths of men's souls if they are ever to return home alive. In this daring new adaptation of Jules Verne's classic 19th-century saga, an emphasis on action strips this adventure down to its essence, bringing spectacle and ensemble to the fore. While this work is primarily an adaptation of a classic piece of literature, it also contains a hint of satire, which stems from our love of '80s and '90s genre films, action-comedies in particular. References to *Predator*, *Die Hard*, *The Last Boy Scout*, *Hudson Hawk*, *The Whole Nine Yards*, *Jaws* and *Blade Runner* are peppered throughout the script to help lend a contemporary flavor.

No set requirements. Approximate running time: 75 minutes. Code: TV1.



Back cover photo: Strawdog Theatre, Chicago, featuring (l-r) Kelsey Shipley, Scott Cupper, Walls Trimble, Lee Russell, Mike Steele and Brad Brubaker. Photo: Tom McGrath. Cover design: Cristian Pacheco.

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(20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA)

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20,000 Leagues Under the Sea was premiered by Strawdog Theatre Company at Huguenot Hall on March 7, 2015, and ran through April 7, 2015.

Cast:

Nemo	Kathrynne Wolff
Conseil	Walls Trimble
Arronax	Mike Steele
Ned Land.....	Lee Russell
Captain Farragut, Ensemble.....	Scott Cupper
Ensemble.....	Skyler Schrempp
Ensemble.....	Brad Brubaker
Ensemble.....	Kelsey Shipley
Ensemble.....	Alexis Randolph
Ensemble.....	Emilie Modaff
Ensemble.....	Erin O'Brien
Ensemble.....	Austin D. Oie

Production Staff:

Director	Mike Mroch
Assistant Director.....	Spencer Diedrick
Stage Manager	Kristin Craig
Production Manager.....	Rebecca Grossman
Set Design	Mike Mroch
Light Design.....	John Kelly
Costume Design.....	Cassandra Bass
Props Design	Jamie Karas
Sound Design.....	Heath Hays
Composer	Przemyslaw Bosak
Lyrics.....	Brad Brubaker
Violence Design.....	R&D Choreography
Artistic Director of Strawdog.....	Hank Boland
Artistic Director of Huguenot Hall	Anderson Lawfer

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

CHARACTERS

Captain Nemo

Conseil

Arronax

Ned Land

Captain Farragut

Ensemble: Comprised of at least seven actors playing multiple roles, including SAILORS, PATRONS, a DRUNKARD, CREW, the FIRST MATE and a GUARD.

SCENE 5

Nemo and Arronax, Alone at Last

(The large, well-appointed library of the Nautilus. Polished oak and brass fixtures. ARRONAX enters. He peruses the stacks, clearly fascinated by NEMO's literary collection. He spots a sheaf of sheet music and begins sifting through it. He pulls out one rather tattered and delicate piece. Music is heard from a chamber beyond the library. ARRONAX listens. This may be the very piece he was just examining. The music ceases abruptly, and there is a pause. A sob is

heard. Then another. Then a series of them. ARRONAX turns to go. As he is about to leave the library, a bookcase at the far end of the room slides open, and NEMO emerges.)

NEMO. Hello, professor. Or should I say, good evening.

ARRONAX. Ha. I've begun to lose track of that kind of time.

NEMO. Yes. You've been with us for nearly two months.

Nine thousand leagues of travel beneath the sea. I trust you and your friends are not yet stir crazy?

ARRONAX. Quite a collection you have here, captain. I was admiring in particular your—

NEMO (*referring to the sheaf ARRONAX holds in his hands*).

That is my most prized piece of music. I acquired it very near the end of my time on the surface.

ARRONAX. Hector Berlioz. "Roméo seul." Heartbreaking.

NEMO. I take great comfort in that piece. When I look upon the sheets, I can hear every note as if an entire symphony were in this very room with me. Music is as sustenance down here.

ARRONAX. I was in attendance at the Paris Conservatoire for the premiere performance of *Roméo et Juliette*.

NEMO. As was I. With my daughter. Fascinating, don't you think? That our paths should cross all those years ago and now once again, eh? I may have accidentally scuffed your boot in the crush to exit the theatre during an intermission. Or perhaps you scuffed mine.

ARRONAX. I don't ... Yes, perhaps. Remarkable.

NEMO. You are thinking that my refined tastes are at odds with my violent nature. I assure you, professor, I am not violent by choice. I harbor no thirst for blood. This life has chosen me. Do you smoke?

(NEMO produces two large cigars from nearby. They are a deep gold in color. The captain clips the tip from one and offers it to ARRONAX, who takes it and turns it over in his hands, sniffs at it curiously.)

ARRONAX. Thank you. Mmm. What sort of leaf is this?

(NEMO cuts the tip from another smoke and lights both.)

NEMO. Like our food—yet another gift harvested from the bounty of the deep. A rare seaweed, rich in stimulants and other enlivening compounds. You will find that chuff far superior to any you may have sampled in your land-dwelling past.

ARRONAX *(of the smoke)*. Strong.

NEMO. Yes.

(The smoke eddies and swirls in the space. As they talk, the images they describe loom up in the haze.)

ARRONAX. I have seen some remarkable sights thus far, captain. A pod of whales glimpsed behaving as a human family might—playing, sheltering one another, sharing food. An ancient temple clinging to the rim of a simmering volcanic crater. The poor woman on the deck of that sunken ship, her baby in her arms, she and it both caught fast in the rigging, their horrified faces frozen forever. I am often so taken aback by what I see that I don't even know how to describe it in my journal.

NEMO. Yes. And there is so much more. I've seen things that you wouldn't believe. There's a stretch of ocean off the coast of India that appears to be made of milk each year, when a particular species of silk worm washes down river and into the bay in such numbers as to render the waters opaque. Cities the

size of London miles below the waves. And I have seen man's vicious heart, time and time again. Not my power nor my riches could save those that I loved from that unquenchable viciousness. I had it in my mind that I would run away, dive as deep as I could and renounce all the pain that I knew, but the viciousness already had its hold on me. As it grew, I knew what my life's mission would be. To strike out at and destroy man's implements of war, of death. Society as you know it is only a means of destruction. I will meet it toe to toe.

(The smoke has engulfed them both.

Music is heard—a repetition. CONSEIL and the FIRST MATE emerge from the haze. The FIRST MATE is instructing CONSEIL on a bizarre string instrument that appears to be made from bone and plant matter. CONSEIL finally makes it through the movement they are practicing. The FIRST MATE is pleased. Then this scene, too, is lost in the murk.

Transition: new music. A group of dark, wraith-like moray eels slither through the smoke, as if making their way through a disturbed stretch of sea floor. Their reddish eyes glow in the gloom. One of the eels peels away from the group and ponders the audience for a moment before lunging forward with its jaws wide. The music peaks.)

SCENE 6

Holy Gilboa!

(ARRONAX is being shaken awake in his chair by NED. CONSEIL stands nearby.)

NED. Professor. Professor! Damn it, man! Wake up! Wake! Up!
ARRONAX. Wha—? Am I—? All right. All right! Blast you, Ned—stop shaking me! I'm awake.

(CONSEIL hands ARRONAX a glass of water and a strange-looking morsel of aquatic fare. NED is incredibly worked up.)

CONSEIL. It appears the *Nautilus* has run aground on a large coral reef, professor. The captain and a few of the crew are outside assessing the damage.

ARRONAX. Merciful heavens, my head ...

NED *(to CONSEIL)*. Spill it—the good part!

CONSEIL. Professor, it would also appear that we are within swimming distance of a small island. Of course, there's no way of knowing how safe it might be to—

NED. We have to take our chances!

ARRONAX. Wait, wait! Ned, let's think this through.

NED. No more thinking—no more waiting! This may be one big safari for you, professor, but I've had enough. I'm going, before that demented Neptune of a captain returns.

CONSEIL. What if we don't have another opportunity like this one, professor?

NED. No time like the present, I say.

ARRONAX. Ned, wait!

(NED does not. He turns to go and runs smack into NEMO, still half-dressed in wet diving gear. NEMO is not startled in the least.)

NEMO. Hello, professor and company! I hope you had a good day's rest. Forgive my drippings, but I've something to show you while I may. No time like the present, eh, Mr. Land?