

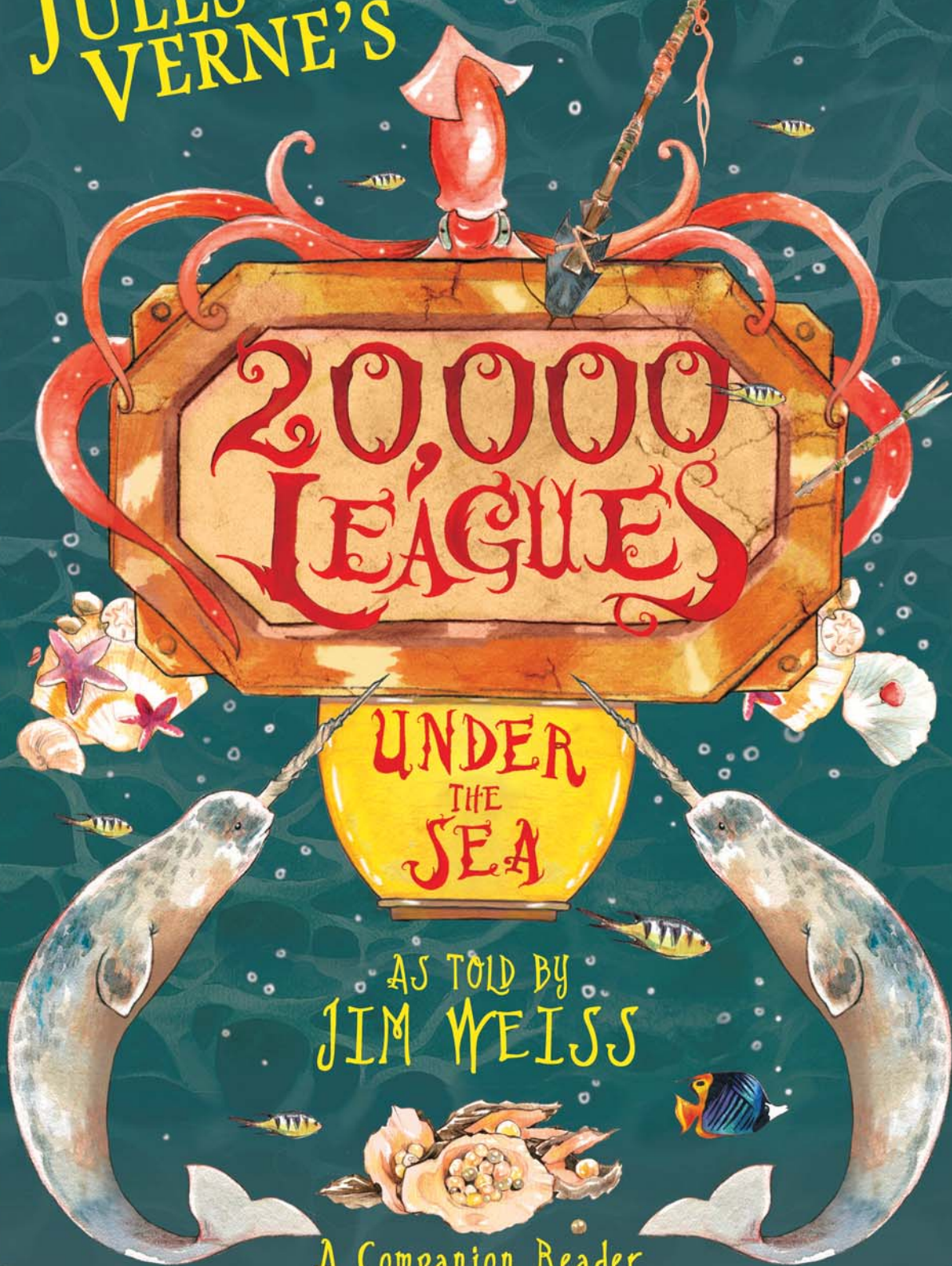
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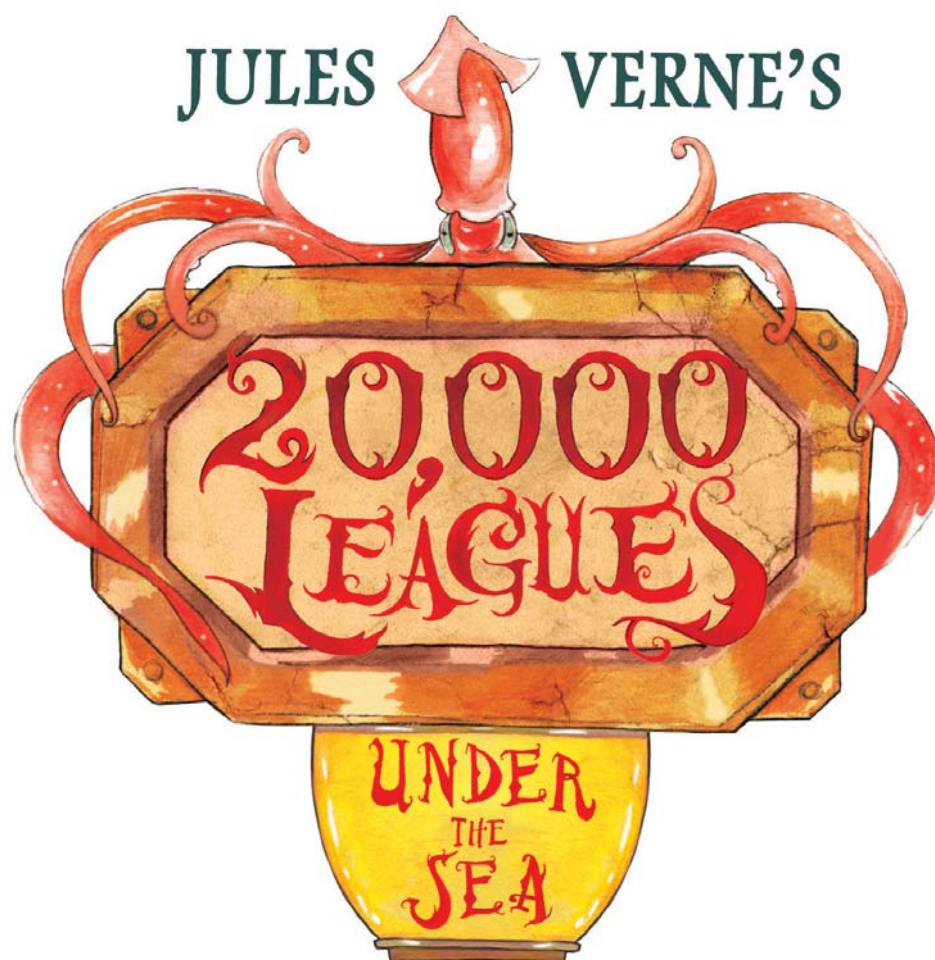
20000
LEAGUES

UNDER
THE
SEA

AS TOLD BY
JIM WEISS

A Companion Reader
With a Dramatization By Chris Bauer





AS TOLD BY
JIM WEISS

— A Companion Reader —

With Dramatizations by Chris Bauer



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Cover design and Illustrations by Christiana Sandoval Woodard

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Publisher's Cataloging-In-Publication Data
(Prepared by The Donohue Group, Inc.)

Names: Weiss, Jim. | Bauer, Chris, 1991- screenwriter. | Weiss, Jim. 20,000 leagues under the sea. | Verne, Jules, 1828-1905. Vingt mille lieues sous les mers. English.

Title: Jules Verne's 20,000 leagues under the sea : a companion reader / as told by Jim Weiss ; with dramatizations by Chris Bauer.

Other Titles: 20,000 leagues under the sea

Description: [Charles City, Virginia] : Well-Trained Mind Press, [2016] | Interest age level: 7 and up. | A word-for-word transcript of the original audiobook produced: Charlottesville, VA : Greathall Productions, 2006. | Summary: A retelling of the classic novel, 20,000 leagues under the sea. The story is followed by a dramatization that children can perform on their own or together.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016912925 | ISBN 978-1-933339-98-6

Subjects: LCSH: Nemo, Captain (Fictitious character)--Juvenile fiction. | Submarines (Ships)--Juvenile fiction. | Underwater exploration--Juvenile fiction. | CYAC: Nemo, Captain (Fictitious character)--Fiction. | Submarines (Ships)--Fiction. | Underwater exploration--Fiction. | LCGFT: Science fiction. | Action and adventure fiction. | Children's plays.

Classification: LCC PZ7.W4475 Ju 2016 | DDC [Fic]--dc23

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Preface

This illustrated Companion Reader is an exact transcript of Jim Weiss's award-winning storytelling performance, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

For decades, Jim Weiss has entertained his many listeners with gripping plots, vivid characters, and beautiful words. But his performances are much more than mere entertainment. Jim's stories build language skills by filling young minds with wonderful vocabulary, complex sentence structure, and rich images.

Now, our Companion Readers bring these language-learning benefits to a new level.

Language, both written and oral, is most easily and thoroughly learned when *heard*, *read*, and *spoken*.

Listen to the Jim Weiss performance on CD or MP3. (See welltrainedmind.com for a full listing and instantly downloadable digital versions!)

Read along with the performance. The first half of this book is a word-for-word transcript of Jim Weiss's performance. Students can improve their reading fluency, vocabulary, and their understanding of punctuation, sentence structure, and grammar by following along as Jim performs these words. Even students who are not reading at the level represented in this book can be moved forward in reading competency by reading along as Jim speaks the words.

Note: To help you follow along with the audio performance, we've placed Track Numbers into the text wherever a new track begins on the CD or MP3 recording. They look like this:



Say the words. The final element in language learning is to *speak* great words and sentences out loud. Each one of these performances has been turned into a short, accessible dramatic version that can be performed by two or more actors. The plays can be memorized or read from the scripts; either way, students will begin to gain confidence in their own language use and in their ability to speak in front of others.

Each Companion Reader play has a slightly different emphasis. *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* has been transformed into a radio play. This allows young performers to concentrate on speaking the words clearly and well (without the distraction of physical movement or stage direction), and also gives them a chance to experiment with creating and using a range of sound effects.





Preface



Jules Verne, author of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, was born in the French harbor city of Nantes in 1828. His father was an attorney who raised Jules, the eldest of five children, to follow him into the law. But the boy's surroundings, so near the sea and the Loire River, would prove to be too strong an influence, and he grew up dreaming of adventure in faraway places.

In 1847, his father sent Jules to Paris to study the law, but Jules spent more time studying the theater. There he met, and was befriended by, France's two greatest authors of the time: Alexandre Dumas, author of *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*; and Victor Hugo, author of *Les Misérables* and *Notre Dame de Paris* (better known as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*).

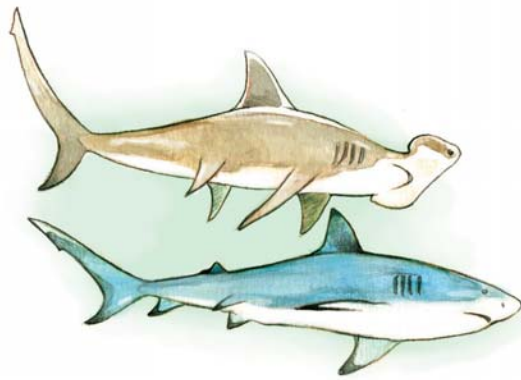
These two great men apparently encouraged Verne in his dream of becoming a playwright and novelist, and Victor Hugo's publisher took on Verne for his publishing house after reading a manuscript of Verne's first book, *Five Weeks in a Balloon*. This was fortunate, since Jules's father had learned of the production of his son's first play, and, furious that Jules was not pursuing the law, had cut off all financial support to his son!

Eventually, Jules Verne produced successful plays, short stories, and a remarkable 51 novels, including *Around the World in 80 Days*, *From the Earth to the Moon*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, and my own boyhood favorite, *The Mysterious Island*.

Verne's most widely read novels, including all those I just named, are adventures which incorporate accurately researched science; and he is widely considered to be an influential leader, some would say the father, of science fiction. Most people believe, therefore, that he was a wholehearted supporter of scientific progress—but he also expressed his fear of how science could be dangerously misused, and his anger against war and political tyranny.

Jules Verne's writing made him enormously wealthy, and to this day he's considered the most widely translated author in all the world. He died in 1905, at the age of 77.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea is Jules Verne's most famous novel.



The Sea Monster



*20,000 Leagues
Under the Sea*

Captain Baker, skipper of a British steamship, stood in the wheelhouse with his pilot McPhee.

“There it is!” said McPhee, pointing. “What on earth! Is it a sandbank, Captain?”

“No, there’s no sandbank here for twenty miles. See if we can get closer.”

But as he spoke, two enormous jets of water shot skyward, and the distant low object they were contemplating sank beneath the waves.

“Could that have been a whale, sir?”

“Impossible! There were two spouts, not one, and besides, from here it looked to be three hundred fifty

feet long. Why, that's three times the size of the biggest blue whale. Whatever that thing was, we had best alert other ships."

The next sighting came only three days later. Witnesses mentioned the object was moving at remarkable speed, and that as evening had come on, an iridescent glow had arisen from the object shortly before it sank from sight.

At last, on April 13th, 1867, the passengers and crew of the liner *Scotia*, crossing the Atlantic to England from Canada, were suddenly thrown to their feet as if the vessel had struck a rock. Upon inspection, the captain discovered a large, perfectly triangular hole in the ship's hull beneath the waterline. Only the multiple compartment construction of the hull kept the *Scotia* from sinking, and allowed her to safely reach Liverpool two days later.

But what kind of monster could penetrate a steel hull one and three-eighths inches thick?

And what had happened to the monster afterwards?

Or was it not a living thing at all, but some huge, subsurface vessel?

This latter thesis became less likely when every government with a coastline declared it knew nothing

of such a vessel. But what private individual could have been wealthy enough, and brilliant enough, to create such a ship and keep its existence secret?

The mystery was picked up in newspapers, and became a topic for conversation on the street. Commerce across the world's oceans seemed threatened, and the scientific community soon weighed in with numerous theories.



The Professor and the Sea Hunter



One of the world's great experts on the sea and its creatures, the renowned French scientist Professor Pierre Aronnax, happened to be visiting New York, and reporters sought him out.

He told them, "It is possible that we are seeing for the first time evidence of a gigantic narwhal. These creatures have huge, unicorn-like horns protruding from their foreheads, and can kill even much larger whales. We know of narwhals sixty feet in length. If we theorize the existence of a beast five or six times that size, with the additional power this implies, such a creature might damage even a huge ship. Remember, our ignorance of what lies beneath the waves is greater than our knowledge."



The interview was widely reprinted, and a few days later Professor Aronnax received an invitation from the commander of the *Abraham Lincoln*, a heavily armed U.S. Navy ship whose mission was to track down the monster. Two days later, the professor boarded the *Lincoln*. With him was Conseil, his young assistant, whose calm ways allowed him to serve a professor whose quest for discovery sometimes overwhelmed his common sense. And soon after the *Abraham Lincoln* began its quest, the professor and Conseil encountered the captain's other special guest: the famous Canadian harpooner, Ned Land. He had no equal in quickness of thought and motion, or in courage.

One day Professor Aronnax told the mariner, "It appears, Ned, you are the only man on board who does not believe in this giant narwhal."

"I've battled many a sea beast, Professor, but none that could damage a steel hull. Wood, maybe, but steel? I'll wait till I see it with my own eyes."

But although the *Abraham Lincoln* searched for months, the object of their efforts had disappeared.

Disappointed, Professor Aronnax told Conseil, "If such a creature even exists, it could be anywhere in the

sea! The American sailors are calling this a wild goose chase.”

But just then, the voice of the harpooner Ned Land rang out: “There it is! Off the starboard bow!”

Everyone ran to look as he pointed to a place where the sea glowed as if the moon were beneath her waves. Then, gradually, the monster they had been seeking rose from the water. The light around it revealed a huge elongated oval shape, in the center of which the light was almost blindingly bright. But this began fading as the beast cleared the waves. The *Abraham Lincoln* turned in pursuit, but the massive animal submerged once more, reappearing minutes later on the other side of the *Lincoln* as if the ship were standing still instead of moving at great speed.

The professor said “I would estimate its length at two hundred fifty feet. Not as large as reported, Ned.”

“No. But big enough.” He turned to the ship’s commander. “If you’ll call for full speed, Captain, I’ll position myself in the bow with my harpoon.” But all day the beast stayed out of range of the harpoon, and even the ship’s guns, until they lost it in the gathering darkness.

chamber, the rubberized hatch of which was sealed after them. Slowly, water was introduced through another hatch on the outer wall, and the four men stepped out of the *Nautilus* and into the sea.

Even at thirty feet below the surface, they could see clearly as they walked on the sandy bottom. Professor Aronnax and Conseil were astonished by the bright greens, yellows, oranges, violets, and indigo blues of the underwater plants and rocks, upon which lodged starfish and anemones in vivid shades of red, purple, and orange. Fish of all sizes and shapes swam around them, and the professor could hear a sort of pattering on the water above his head, which grew louder.

"It is rain striking the surface above us!" he thought, and instinctively, he worried, "We shall get wet!" Then, realizing he was walking through the ocean, he began to laugh so hard inside his helmet he thought Nemo must hear him.

After a time, the captain stopped and pointed to a dense gathering of tall marine plants, their branches all reaching up towards the sunlight above. This was the forest of Crespo, and it was beneath the waves.

On they went, until, abruptly, the captain turned, raised his gun to his shoulder, and fired, hitting a huge



20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

A Radio Play

Dramatized by Chris Bauer
After the original performance by Jim Weiss

You are about to perform a radio play! It is an adaption of Jim Weiss's version of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

Of course, technically it's not on the radio. But by performing this play out loud, you'll be doing the same thing that actors and producers used to do before TV. They performed shows and plays on the radio, making an entire story with just their voices and sound effects.

Cast

First, you need a "Cast." The Cast is made up of the people who are playing the different characters.



The fun thing about a radio play is that it's very easy for one person to play several parts. All you have to do is change your voice! How many roles each person plays depends how many actors you have. Usually, actors who play more than one part will play the smaller parts. For example, in this play, whoever played Captain Nemo would probably not play anybody else ... unless there are only two of you! The fun of a radio play is that you can do it with just two or three people.

When you perform the play, you will see each character's name followed by a colon, like this:

CAPTAIN NEMO:

After the colon will be some words. These are the character's lines. When you play that character, you say whatever comes after the colon. So if you saw this;

CAPTAIN NEMO: No!

And if you were playing Captain Nemo you would say “No!”

If you see more than one character’s names like this:

SAILORS 1 and 2: Yes sir!

It means both characters say the line at the same time.

One more thing. If you see something in parentheses after the name, it’s an instruction that tells you how the line should be read. For example,

NED LAND: (Angrily)

That means that whatever he says, he should say ANGRILY!

When you do this radio play, make sure that you make it your own. What does it mean to make it your own? Well, don’t just copy the voices that Jim Weiss uses. Make up your own voices. Read the words and think about all the different voices the character or characters you are playing might have. Make some interesting choices! Maybe you could make Conseil and Professor Aronnax have very heavy French accents, or make Captain Nemo’s voice very deep. The choice is up to you.

Also everyone, especially the Narrator, should read through all their lines and make sure they know how to say all the words and what they mean. There might be a few tricky ones like “rendezvous” and “conferred,” so make sure you know what the words you are saying mean!

List of Characters

Here are the characters you will need to cast:

Narrator

Captain Nemo

Professor Aronnax

Conseil

Ned Land

Reporter

McPhee

Captain Baker

Sailor 1

Sailor 2

Natives

(Note: The sailors only have one line and they speak together, so they should be played by actors who also have other parts. The same is true of the natives, who only scream; whichever people playing other characters are not in that scene should make the screaming sounds for the natives.)

Sound

Next, you need to think about sound effects. In a radio play, sounds are like scenery—they help the listeners enter into the story.

The sounds will be in parentheses by themselves. So if you see this:

(Ship horn)

then whoever is in charge of the sounds would make the sound of a ship horn.

Sound effects can be made lots of different ways. For example, you can find sound effects online, make them yourself from things around your house, or even just make sounds with your mouth! Next to the sound effects will be suggestions of how to make the sounds if you decide you want to make them yourself. Read through the play and plan out how to make each sound effect, and make sure you have any equipment needed close by.

One Last Thing

You can decide exactly how to perform the radio show.

You can do what is called a “staged reading,” which is when the actors sit in chairs and read their lines while somebody else makes the sound effects.

You can also record the play on a computer and put it online for your friends to enjoy.

The most important thing with this radio play is that you have fun! Anything you can think of that you want to change is absolutely fine. You can leave out some of the scenes if you want to shorten it. You can even rewrite some of the lines if you want.

The most important thing is that you create something that you are proud of, and that you have a good time doing it.

