

NAXOS
AudioBooks

CLASSIC
FICTION

Jules Verne
**20,000 Leagues
Under the Sea**

Read by **John Carlisle**



NA201412D

1	A floating reef	3:21
2	I form my opinion	3:57
3	Full steam ahead	2:48
4	The narwhal	6:15
5	In the sea	4:42
6	Rescued	3:37
7	Captain Nemo	13:07
8	A submarine forest	11:16
9	On land	7:39
10	Mysterious confinement	11:19
11	A burial	4:07
12	The Arabian Tunnel	6:21
13	We make plans	7:27
14	An opportunity	7:12
15	Vigo Bay	4:39
16	A vanished continent	5:49
17	The iceberg	7:23
18	The South Pole	4:19
19	Trapped	5:58
20	No air	5:27
21	The giant octopus	7:28
22	Attack	11:52
23	Escape	11:03

Total time: 2:37:32

Jules Verne

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

Jules Verne's fascination with the sea began in the great French seaport of Nantes, where he was born in 1828. Such was his passion for ships that in 1839, when he was only eleven, he ran away from home to be a sailor. His adventure did not last long however, and after returning home in disgrace, he promised his distraught mother: 'After this I will travel only in the imagination.' But it would be many years before he could give free rein to his imaginative powers.

In 1848 he was sent to Paris to complete his studies as a lawyer. Radical socialist thinking was sweeping through Revolutionary France and Verne was drawn to the radical writers, scientists and musicians of the time. He turned his back on his studies and became the secretary to the Théâtre Lyrique. During this time he wrote several plays and short stories, but he had little talent as a dramatist. In 1856, Verne married a young widow, Honorine Morel. She already had two children and in order to support his new family, Verne took a job on the Paris Bourse.

However, Verne did not give up on his

literary ambitions. He continued to write, and his friendship with the radical Pierre-Jean Hetzel was to prove crucial. Hetzel started a magazine for young people and Verne became one of its most popular contributors. Now Verne was able to combine his lifelong fascination for geography, science and technology with his talent for entertaining and accessible writing and his first successful novel, *Five Weeks in a Balloon* was published in 1863. Next came *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, an extraordinary exploration of the earth's core, followed by *From the Earth to the Moon*. *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* was published in two parts in 1869 and 1870.

At this time, underwater exploration was in its infancy. A diving apparatus had been introduced in 1865, but compressed air was not used until 1875. Thus he used primitive new technology and took it into near realms of sophistication while still remaining well within the limits of possibility; this understanding of technology imbues his writing with the vital ingredient of all fine science fiction: plausibility. Verne was also

the master of adventure and suspense but his political ideas were never far from the surface. Through Captain Nemo, he was also able to explore his abiding interest in the freedom of the individual: Nemo could only really be free under the sea, beyond the control of oppressive nation states.

Verne's abiding popularity lies therefore in his extraordinarily prescient view of the future, his huge talent as a storyteller and in his fascination for the natural world and the men who are destined to explore its mysteries.

Notes by Heather Godwin

The music on this recording taken from the NAXOS catalogue

FRANCK PRÉLUDE/CHORAL

8.550155

Royal Flanders Philharmonic/Günter Neuhold

Cover picture: 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea – Attack from a Giant Squid, Henry Austin.
Courtesy Mary Evans Picture Library.

Jules Verne

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

Read by **John Carlisle**

The year is 1866. The maritime world is gripped by fear after reported sightings of a huge and terrible sea monster. Monsieur Aronnax, a distinguished Professor of Natural History, pronounces the creature to be a giant narwhal and is invited to join an official expedition to track down the beast. But Professor Aronnax is proved wrong; the beast is not of the natural world, but is a huge submarine. When he is pulled out of the sea by the enigmatic Captain Nemo, and imprisoned on the Nautilus, he experiences at first hand the marvels and perils of submarine life.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea is possibly the first and finest work of science fiction: plausible, terrifying and utterly gripping.



John Carlisle is a familiar figure on the British stage. He has been a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company for over a decade where, as an Associate Artist, he has taken a variety of key roles in classical drama from Shakespeare to Chekhov, as well as in twentieth-century works. He has also been seen regularly on television in work including *Lovejoy* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

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Total time
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