

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

by

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Based on the novel by Jules Verne

FADE UP ON:

A NAUTILUS SHELL. Explore its spiraling pattern.

DAKKAR (V.O.)

There is a design in the Universe.

A refined voice. Passionate. Hindi accent masked by years of European education.

DAKKAR (V.O.)

It is a perfect mathematical design that appears everywhere in nature.

The Nautilus shell morphs into a SUNFLOWER...a RAM'S HORN...a WHIRLPOOL. The pattern never changes.

DAKKAR (V.O.)

Even when this design cannot be seen with the naked eye, its underlying mathematical formula is still there --

Mathematical equations and formulaic lines annotate the spiral pattern. The equations become geometric shapes which become the PARTHENON, the PYRAMIDS, notes of a MUSICAL SCORE.

DAKKAR (V.O.)

-- not only in nature, but in man-made wonders. It would seem that this design has been planted in our very souls. Perhaps even in the fabric of the cosmos.

The equations resume their spiralline form and now become a SWIRLING SPIRAL of STAR CLUSTERS and PLANETS. Our galaxy.

DAKKAR (V.O.)

So you see, my son --

The galaxy fades away and becomes once again --

A NAUTILUS SHELL

Held in the hands of SAGAR, a 7-year old Indian boy standing on a beautiful BEACH. His father, PRINCE DAKKAR -- handsome, 38, barefoot -- sits cross-legged in front of him, a LEATHER JOURNAL in his lap with a ORNATE "D" on the cover.

DAKKAR

-- you not only found a Nautilus shell, you found the Will of God.

His son stares at the shell. Looks bewildered. Overwhelmed.

DAKKAR

Too much to think about on such a beautiful morning?

Sagar nods. *Way too much.* Dakkar ruffles his son's hair.

DAKKAR

Then today let a shell be just a shell.

Sagar runs back to the ocean where we see a ROYAL YACHT anchored just off the shore. Dakkar watches him for a beat. Smiles. Then closes his eyes and inhales the crisp clean air.

SITA (O.S.)

I wish we could stay here forever.

Dakkar opens his eyes. Looks up. Sees his wife SITA standing behind him. Backlit by the sun. Beautiful. She gently wraps a royal TURBAN around his head.

DAKKAR

If only I were a fish and not a prince.

Dakkar rises, kisses her. They watch Sagar play in the surf.

DAKKAR

How blessed I am to have two such beautiful jewels in my life.

EXT. BUNDLEKIND, INDIA - DAY

Streets lined with people, waving as Prince Dakkar's caparisoned ELEPHANT and parade of ATTENDANTS pass by.

SUPER: **BUNDLEKIND, INDIA 1857**

Dakkar, Sita, and Sagar ride in the carriage atop the elephant. An inordinate amount of BRITISH SOLDIERS are in the streets. Not unnoticed by Dakkar.

EXT. DAKKAR'S ROYAL PALACE - ESTABLISHING

As grand as the TAJ MAHAL.

COUSIN (O.S.)

Lead us, my Prince. Lead us and your people will follow.

INT. DAKKAR'S PALACE LIBRARY - SAME

An enormous room filled with books, sculptures, works of art. And a wall-size FISH AQUARIUM.

Dakkar tinkers with a strange APPARATUS while listening to his ADVISORS -- his UNCLE and COUSIN among them.

DAKKAR

Lead you where? We are no match for the British Army.

COUSIN

The American colonists were no match for them either. But they stood and fought. Now they are free.

UNCLE

India is far better off with the British than without them. They have brought wealth and progress --

COUSIN

What good is wealth if we are not free?

DAKKAR

This is not the time, cousin.

COUSIN

It is the time! If you weren't so distracted by your books and your science experiments, you would see--

An ELECTRIC ARC shoots from Dakkar's apparatus to a PROPELLER-LIKE OBJECT suspended in the aquarium. The propeller SPINS and FISH scatter.

DAKKAR

Books and science -- *knowledge* -- is the path to freedom.

COUSIN

With all due respect, cousin, I'll put my faith in a rifle.

He storms out of the room. Dakkar looks at his Uncle and advisors. They are still awestruck by the electric show.

INT. DAKKAR'S PALACE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dakkar and Sita sleep peacefully. We hear a COMMOTION outside. Horses. Voices. Dakkar awakens as a SERVANT enters.

SERVANT

My Prince. You are needed.

EXT. BUNDLEKIND - NIGHT

A FULL MOON shines in the black sky. We will soon wish it had spared us from what we are about to see.

A dozen bound-and-gagged INDIANS are positioned and secured in front of CANNONS, the BARRELS pressing into their backs. Among them: Dakkar's Cousin and Uncle.

A crowd of people SHOUT at the BRITISH SOLDIERS who keep them at bay with guns and swords.

Dakkar rides up on his powerful STEED. Quickly leaps off and runs toward GENERAL ANSON, the British General in charge.

DAKKAR

Almighty, God! Enough! Enough! Release them! Release them now!

GENERAL ANSON

These men are rebels. They have been stockpiling weapons and ammunition. The old man was trying to protect them.

Dakkar sees his Uncle's scared, pleading eyes.

DAKKAR

Then I will punish them as I see fit. Release them.

GENERAL ANSON

I don't take orders from any Hin-doo.

DAKKAR

I am Prince Dakkar!

GENERAL ANSON

You are no one!

General Anson motions to his soldiers. They restrain Dakkar.

GENERAL ANSON

FIRE!!!

CLOSE ON DAKKAR

An expression full of horror and outrage as we hear the CANNONS BLAST. And the SCREAMS and CRIES of witnesses.

DAKKAR

Monsters!!!!

Dakkar snaps, breaks free from the soldiers, grabs one of their rifles and FIRES at General Anson. Hits him in the chest. He falls. Dead?

A beat of silent confusion.

And then a revolution is born. Indians rush the Soldiers. Dakkar leads the charge.

Amidst the sound of GUNFIRE and DEATH, SMOKE rises in the air, forms a natural swirling pattern...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

Gray waves, gray sky. No land in sight.

SUPER TITLE: THE NORTH ATLANTIC - TEN YEARS LATER

A SHADOWY BLACK MASS appears just below the surface, moving at a rapid pace. It breaks through the surface and a SPOUT OF WATER shoots up from its slick hide.

VOICE (O.S.)

Thar she blows!

The black mass is a monstrosously large WHALE.

A LONGBOAT appears, bouncing on waves, moving as fast as the four OARSMEN can row. Another longboat appears. Then another. And another. Six in all.

IN THE LEAD BOAT

A man stands at the bow. Steely-eyed and emotionless. Holding a HARPOON. His name: NED LAND. But that fact is known only to us. Everyone else knows him as "Jim Cooper."

OARSMAN

Stick this fish so we can all go home,
Jim. Six months is a long time to be
looking at all your whiskery faces.

OARSMAN #2

Just like lookin' at your wife's face.

OARSMAN

That's why I'm going home to your wife.

The Oarsmen and the BOATHEAD (manning the rudder) laugh. But not Ned. He's all focus.

BOATHEAD

What say you, Jim? What are you looking forward to?

NED

Land.

(beat)

And a nice thick steak.

Ned watches the surface of the water, reading signs that most people would never notice. He cocks his arm, firing position.

Then hesitates. For a very long beat.

NED

She's turning around.

OARSMAN

What!?

NED

Stop rowing. She's turning around.

OARSMAN

Whales don't turn around when you chase--

The WHALE breaches, sails over the boat! The resulting WAVE nearly capsizes them. An Oarsman flies into the sea.

BOATHEAD

Man overboard!

Ned and the other Oarsmen pull their mate back in just as --

-- an EERIE, SHRILL, INHUMAN SOUND fills the air. A DOZEN WHALES break through the surface a hundred yards ahead, swimming straight for the longboats.

OARSMAN

What the Devil--

NED

Something's spooking them.

OARSMAN #4

It's the monster! The one we've been hearin' about. I told you it was real!

No one's sure they believe *that*. Still --

NED

Turn this boat around. Now!

The Boathead pulls hard on the rudder. The longboats make for the WHALING SHIP ("ALBATROSS") in the distance. But the WHALE STAMPEDE gets closer...closer...closer...

BOATHEAD

Faster! I ain't in a swimmin' mood today!

The whales catch up to the longboats, plow right through them, SPLINTERING them into a hundred pieces. Bodies are flung into the sea like chum.

ON NED'S BOAT

Losing ground to a WHALE coming up fast behind. Ned works his way to the back, readies his harpoon...

...just as ANOTHER WHALE surfaces beneath the Longboat! Ned and the crew spill into the sea.

In the churning water, everyone tries to keep from being pulled under while grabbing onto the remains of their boat.

ON NED

Watching as the fleeing whales disappear into the horizon.

Then he sees an EERIE GLOWING SHADOW moving beneath the surface. Leaving a long wake. Heading right for them.

The Oarsmen swim for their lives.

Ned remains. Calm. Watches as the SHADOW passes beneath him. Close enough so he can see its enormous size. Deep enough so he can't tell what the hell it is...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE WIDE-OPEN MOUTH OF A WHALE

A painted, wooden sign hanging in front of --

EXT. "BELLY O' THE WHALE" TAVERN - NANTUCKET - NIGHT

A 37-STAR AMERICAN FLAG waves in front. A man with a PEG LEG walks out, steps on a newspaper. The headline: *"Luxury Liner Waylander Lost at Sea. Is the Monster to Blame?"*

INT. "BELLY O' THE WHALE" - SAME

A rowdy mix of WHALERS, FISHERMEN, and a few tarty, seaman-loving WOMEN. The Albatross crew holds court at the bar.

OARSMAN #1

It was the size of a ship --

OARSMAN #2

Two ships!

OARSMAN #3

But we didn't run. We stayed to face the beast! Stuck it with a dozen darts --

BOATHEAD

Stuck nothing! You swam away so fast I thought you'd grown some fins!

OARSMAN #4

The Devil himself made this monster. You can be sure of it.

BARMAID

(annoyed with them)

The only monsters around here are the kind you find in trousers.

The whalers and fishermen burst out laughing.

BOATHEAD

Seen a lot of those...trouser monsters have ya?

BARMAID

I'm talking about the likes of you butchers! Killing's no way to make a living.

She grabs a plate with a STEAK on it, carries it across the tavern to --

-- a corner table by the FIREPLACE. Where Ned Land sits alone, sipping an ale. She slams the plate down on his table.

BARMAID

Sorry about the wait.

NED

You have no idea.

Ned tucks a napkin into his collar. Meticulously lifts his utensils like a high priest handling divine instruments.

He is just about to cut the steak when --

Several U.S. MILITARY SOLDIERS enter.

MILITARY OFFICER

We're looking for the crew of the *Albatross*, the whaler that just got in.

Ned sighs. Damn rotten timing.

OARSMAN #4

It's about the monster, ain't it!? We saw it alright!

MILITARY OFFICER

If you could all just step outside for a moment, this won't take long.

As the *Albatross* crew BITCHES and MOANS, making their way to the front door, a SOLDIER scouts the bar. Passes Ned's table but...he's not there and his plate is empty.

EXT. "BELLY O' THE WHALE" - BACK ALLEY - SAME

Foggy. Creaky. Ned lurks in the shadows, holding his harpoon, his STEAK impaled on the end. He turns a corner onto --

THE WHARF

-- and encounters THREE HUNGRY, SLOBBERING, MANGY DOGS. Eyeing his steak. He turns to walk the other way and finds: THREE SOLDIERS. Holding rifles.

SOLDIER

Drop the weapon and come with us.

NED

I don't think you want me to do that.

SOLDIER #2

And why is that?

NED

Because I'm a desperate man, fellas. I've been at sea for six long months and during that time I had only three things on my mind: land, the love of a woman, and a thick steak. But this tiny speck of dirt they call an island ain't enough land to spit on, and I've come to my senses about the love of a woman. So if you don't mind, I'd like to eat my steak before it gets cold.

Ned takes a step forward. The Soldiers lift their rifles.

NED

Alright. Fine. You've made your point.

He holds out the harpoon. The Soldiers lower their guard. As one of them reaches for Ned's harpoon --

NED

Now I'll make mine.

Quick as anything we've seen, Ned uses his harpoon like a Chinese fighting staff and disarms two of the soldiers.

He deflects the third soldier's rifle just as it fires...then fights "staff" to "staff" (harpoon to gun) with him.

The other two rejoin the duel and Ned fights three-on-one...ever mindful of the steak at the tip of his harpoon...

...and the mangy dogs leaping all over the place trying to get their chomps on it.

Ned disarms two soldiers, sends the third into the water... and the steak flying onto the dock. The dogs run after it.

Ned hurls his harpoon. The blade severs a rope holding a GLASS LANTERN. It crashes to the dock. A SMALL BLAZE ignites near the steak, keeps the dogs at bay.

The two remaining soldiers come at Ned armed with BOAT OARS. They swipe at him relentlessly.

Ned backs into a corner, grabs a FISHING NET, hurls it at the soldiers. They become entangled, stumble blindly. Ned then loosens a chain holding an ANCHOR...

It swings free, knocks them into the water.

NED

That drink's on me.

Ned yanks his harpoon out of the lantern pole. Impales his steak -- now being consumed by FLAMES -- and dips it into a barrel of water. When he pulls it out it is CHARRED, SMOKING.

He starts to take a bite when -- a GUNSHOT. He turns to see the rest of the Soldiers lined up like a firing squad.

MILITARY OFFICER

Drop it. Now!

Ned deflates, drops his harpoon. As soon as it hits the dock, the MANGY DOGS rip the steak away and disappear into the fog.

Ned looks so very annoyed. Should've gone for the love of a woman after all.

INT. MILITARY STOCKADE - WEEKS LATER - DAY

Ned alone in his tiny cell. Contemplates eating the plate of DISGUSTING GRUEL in front of him while watching the ARMY GUARD behind the desk eat a steak.

NED

Think you could eat that somewhere else?

The Guard takes a nice leisurely bite to taunt him as TWO NAVY PETTY OFFICERS enter. One of them hands the guard an OFFICIAL PIECE OF PAPER.

The Guard, mouth full, examines it then taps a WANTED POSTER hanging above his desk. "WANTED FOR DESERTION FROM THE U.S. ARMY -- NED LAND -- \$50 REWARD." There's a sketch of Ned. Then the Guard points his fork at the real Ned in the cell.

NED

That doesn't even look like me! And even if it were, I'd be worth a helluva lot more than fifty dollars.

NAVY OFFICER

I wouldn't give five cents for a coward like you.

NED

For the last time, my name is not Ned Land. It's James F. Cooper!

VOICE (O.S.)

James F. Cooper wrote the stories we read when we were kids.

Standing in the doorway: highly decorated NAVAL COMMANDER DAVID FARRAGUT. He tosses a BOOK to Ned. James Fenimore Cooper's Last of the Mohicans.

FARRAGUT

Personally, I think you look more like the Dickens.

NED

Dave!? Dave Farragut!? You ol' sonofa--

FARRAGUT

Commander Farragut. And you're in a world of trouble, Ned.

NED

The world I know best, old friend.

FARRAGUT

Maybe not much longer. There's a dozen bullets and a firing squad just itchin' to introduce you to a new one.

INT. MILITARY CARRIAGE - MOVING, AND VERY BUMPY - LATER

The 19th Century equivalent of a government limo. Farragut and Ned are inside facing each other.

NED

Just like old times, only it was usually me getting you out of a fix. But I appreciate it just the same. So if you'll just drop me off, I'll disappear all quiet like.

FARRAGUT

I'm not helping you escape, Ned. That's not what this is about.

NED

Then I'll help myself.

He reaches for the door handle. Locked.

FARRAGUT

You're a deserter. The United States government does not take that lightly.

NED

I didn't desert. I retired. Unofficially.

FARRAGUT

And unhonorably. I've never known you to run from a fight.

NED

Who said anything about running?

FARRAGUT

Then why were you on a Canadian whaler?

NED

Trying to earn enough money for a patch of land so I could disappear and mind my own business.

FARRAGUT

That didn't work out so well.

NED

Such is my luck.

FARRAGUT

What would you say if I told you I could get you released from prison with a full pardon?

NED

I'd say things that sound too good to be true usually make you dead or want you to marry 'em.

FARRAGUT

All you have to do is join me on a hunting expedition.

NED

A hunting expedition.
(suspicious)
What's the catch?

The carriage comes to a stop.

FARRAGUT

The catch, old friend --

A NAVY SOLDIER opens the carriage door. Farragut steps out, followed by Ned. They are now standing --

INT. NAVAL SHIPYARD HANGAR - DAY

-- before an awesome frigate warship: the *ABRAHAM LINCOLN*. SPARKS fly as Naval mechanics, engineers, and workers weld and fit the hull with IRON PLATING.

FARRAGUT

-- is something very, very big.

INT. FARRAGUT'S OFFICE - LATER

A "pressbox" overlooking the ship's retrofit.

NED

All this to find some phantom monster?

FARRAGUT

Phantom? You saw the thing. And it's a damn bit of luck you did. If not, I doubt I could've done anything to save your neck.

NED

I don't know what I saw.

FARRAGUT

Your shipmates saw it plain as day.

NED

They've been known to see Mermaids too,
depending on how much they had to drink.

FARRAGUT

Then what was it?

Ned watches as a LARGE CANNON is hoisted onto the ship below.

NED

Something that probably ought to be left
alone.

FARRAGUT

That's no longer an option.

Farragut walks over to the large WORLD MAP, the oceans
covered with PINS.

FARRAGUT

Thirty-six sightings in the past year.
Half of them in the past two months. It's
been seen in every ocean. Witnessed by
fishermen, merchant marines, whalers --

He pulls out one of the pins.

FARRAGUT

That's you.

(continuing)

And whatever it is, it's getting more
aggressive. On March 5th it tore the
rudder of the *Harper Goff*. Two weeks
later the British warship *Tonnant* went up
like a powder keg. Survivors said it was
attacked from below. Then four weeks ago,
the *Waylander*, a passenger ship with two
hundred American souls on board,
disappeared without a trace.

NED

Those are rough seas. It doesn't take a
monster to make a ship disappear.

FARRAGUT

She disappeared in the same waters where
you saw the thing. And only a day later.

He pours a couple of BRANDIES. Hands Ned a glass.

FARRAGUT

The people are demanding an answer, Ned.
I've been ordered to find that answer.
And to kill it if I can.

Ned stares into his drink.

NED
And if I say no?

FARRAGUT
Then your fate is out of my hands. Most likely you'll be court-martialed and executed.

Not a tough decision. Ned downs his brandy. Smooth.

NED
Does this mean I have to call you "Commander"?

FARRAGUT
(smiling; relieved)
Only in front of the crew.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR (BROOKLYN PIER) - ONE WEEK LATER

The iron-clad, 72-gunned ABRAHAM LINCOLN is docked at the pier. NAVY DOCK WORKERS load the cargo hold with crates.

ON THE DOCKS

Reporters, well-wishers. Many read NEWSPAPERS. One headline: "NAVY HERO FARRAGUT VOWS TO CAPTURE BEAST DEAD OR ALIVE."

Another: "WORLD RENOWNED MARINE EXPERT TO JOIN MONSTER HUNT." Accompanied by a photo of *"the distinguished Prof. Aronnax."*

JULIE, an attractive girl in her early twenties, lowers her newspaper, watches as a CARRIAGE pulls up. Dozens of REPORTERS and SPECTATORS descend upon it.

REPORTERS (O.S.)
Professor Aronnax! Professor Aronnax!

The carriage door opens. PROFESSOR PIERRE ARONNAX steps out. He's nebbishly handsome, in his early thirties. Wire-rimmed glasses. A little uptight, very meticulous.

Dozens of FLASHES ignite from WOODEN BOX CAMERAS. Aronnax is taken aback by the attention, by the sudden *celebrity*.

REPORTER
Professor Aronnax! Do you really think you're going to find the monster?

ARONNAX

Monster may be a bit of hyperbole. But, yes, I believe we will find the creature and classify it accordingly.

JULIE (O.S.)

Professor Aronnax!?

Julie works her way to Aronnax. She's wearing as sexy a dress as you're likely to find in 1867. Aronnax is smitten.

JULIE

I'm a great admirer of your work.

She holds out a copy of Aronnax's THICK TOME, *The Mysteries of the Great Oceanic Depths*.

ARONNAX

You've...read my book?

JULIE

I want to join you on your expedition. I'm a very hard worker and a good proofreader. Ask me to spell anything!

ARONNAX

I'm terribly flattered. But it is not my expedition. I am an invited guest of the United States government.

A bald, round Peter Lorre-esque head pokes out of the carriage, glares jealously at Julie. He is Aronnax's CONSEIL.

CONSEIL

And the professor already has an assistant.

ARONNAX

Yes. Indeed I do.

(leans into Julie)

But nowhere near as charming.

DOCK WORKER

Any luggage, Sir?

Aronnax motions to a flatbed wagon following the carriage. On it: THREE LARGE WARDROBE-SIZED TRUNKS.

ARONNAX

Conseil, if you wouldn't mind, go with this gentleman and see to it that our luggage is handled properly. I'll meet you on board.

Conseil steps out. Aronnax turns back to Julie --

ARONNAX
Perhaps when I return --

-- but she has disappeared into the crowd.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - DECK - SAME

Ned relaxes on a cable spool, sharpening his harpoon, watching the crowd down below. Farragut joins him.

NED
You sure know how to throw yourself a going away party, Commander. Hope we don't disappoint them all.

FARRAGUT
Then make sure your aim is as sharp as that point.

Farragut pats him on the shoulder, steps onto the helm.

INT. DOCK WAREHOUSE - SAME

Conseil stands beside Aronnax's trunks as a NAVAL INSPECTOR examines them. Inside the first one: dozens of books.

CONSEIL
The professor always travels with his library.

Inspector closes the case, slaps an "INSPECTED" sticker on the outside. Opens the second one: several bottles of WINE.

CONSEIL
And his spirits.

"INSPECTED." The third trunk is labeled: "WARNING: FRAGILE."

CONSEIL
And his pets.

Inspector cautiously opens the last trunk, revealing: dozens of SPECIMEN JARS containing creepy preserved sea creatures.

Inspector examines one up close and--CHEAP SCARE!--a tentacle smashes against the glass. He slams the trunk. "INSPECTED."

Inspector walks away. And Julie appears.

JULIE
Likes to travel light, does he?

CONSEIL
What do you want?

WHACK! She clobbers him in the head with Aronnax's hefty book. Conseil's eyes cross, he falls to the ground. Out cold.

JULIE
Your job.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - SUNSET

The *Abraham Lincoln* is far out to sea. BLACK SMOKE belches out of it's two FUNNELS.

INT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - GALLEY - SAME

Ned, Farragut, and other crew members look bored as Aronnax lectures. He seems nervous, absent-minded. SKETCHES of BIZARRE MYTHICAL CREATURES hang on the wall behind him.

ARONNAX
...and after examining these different hypotheses and making a careful study of the drawings made by eye witnesses, we must admit...
(shuffling papers)
I'm terribly sorry, I'm a bit disorganized without my assistant, who seems to have missed the boat or...here it is. Yes.
(reading)
"...we must admit, all other suppositions having been refuted, the existence of a marine animal of enormous power, the likes of which has never been seen before."

His revelation is greeted with blank looks and snickers.

NED
That's your theory? Something that "has never been seen before"?

ARONNAX
Perhaps you'd care to offer one.

NED
I prefer facts, professor. So how 'bout I just keep my mouth shut and let you put all the wind in our sails.

More snickers. Tough crowd.

ARONNAX

I am not foolish enough to pretend that I know every one of Nature's creatures. We have barely scratched the surface of our seas. In fact, I have in my very possession several specimens -- creatures that washed ashore or got tangled in fishing nets -- that had never before been seen by human eye.

He unlocks the standing trunk.

ARONNAX

I'll wager that no one here has ever seen creatures such as these--

He swings the door open. Every jaw drops...

...as Julie stumbles out, holding an empty bottle of wine and clearly drunk as a skunk. Her speech is slurred.

JULIE

It's about time. I hate drinking alone. In a box.

ARONNAX

You! What did you do with Conseil!?

JULIE

I put him to sleep with a good book.

FARRAGUT

Aronnax! Would you mind explaining what this girl is doing on my ship!?

ARONNAX

I'm terribly sorry. I met her this morning. She's an admirer of my work --

JULIE

I never even heard of you until yesterday, professor Arrrrnnx.

ARONNAX

But...you read my book.

JULIE

I tried to. A bit dry for my taste. I prefer a little more derring-do. And I like them to end with a kiss.

She leans into the professor like she might very well kiss him. Then she sways back.

ARONNAX

It's not a penny dreadful!

He recognizes the wine bottle in her hand.

ARONNAX

Is that my '57 Bordeaux!? Do you have any idea how valuable that is...was!? I was saving it for a special occasion!

Julie BURPS. Hands him the bottle.

JULIE

Congratulations.

Ned and the others are laughing now, enjoying the show. Farragut, however: not amused.

FARRAGUT

Who are you!? Why are you on my ship!?

JULIE

My name is --

She teeters in front of Ned. He catches her before she falls. She smiles up at him. A wee crush perhaps?

JULIE

-- Julie. Julie Fleischer.

Ned offers no reaction, but Aronnax looks a little jealous.

JULIE

My father...was on the *Waylander*.

Julie closes her eyes and rests her head against Ned's chest. She's out cold. The mood is suddenly very somber.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - NIGHT

Rough Seas. In the distance, not far from the *Lincoln*, as if stalking it: a GLOWING SHADOW beneath the tumultuous waves...

CUT TO:

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - DECK - NEXT MORNING

A gathering of SAILORS. Sounds of REVELRY. One SAILOR stands behind a new deck-mounted Sven Foyn HARPOON CANNON. He FIRES! A blast sends the HARPOON rocketing across the deck...

THWACK! It stabs into the mast, six inches above a PLAYING CARD target. CHEERS erupt.

BOOKIE SAILOR

And now, the man who will challenge the machine! The King of the Harpooners, the mighty slayer of serpents and lancer of ladies: Ned Land!

Ned steps forward, shirt off (and he's ripped, ladies!). He holds his harpoon over his shoulder. Focuses on the card. This is it. The big showdown. He takes aim...

A YOUNG SAILOR runs into the crowd.

YOUNG SAILOR

She's waking up! She's waking up!

Everyone forgets the contest and runs after the young sailor.

Ned is left standing alone with his stick in his hand.

He launches the harpoon. THWACK! Dead center in the card.

ON DECK - ELSEWHERE

Sailors gather around a PORTHOLE, jumping up and down, pushing each other aside to catch a glimpse inside.

INT. ARONNAX'S CABIN - SAME

The other side of the porthole. Julie stirs in the bed. Aronnax sits in a chair across from her.

JULIE

God. I feel awful. It's like the whole world is one big wave.

Aronnax stands, blocking the Sailors' view. He hears the resulting HUBBUB, turns and sees FACES pressed against the glass. Aronnax yanks the curtains shut.

ARONNAX

Perhaps that's because you're on a ship.

JULIE

Right. I remember...someone catching me. It wasn't you though. Who was he?

ARONNAX

Ned Land. He's a harpooner. And not a very well-mannered man.

JULIE

Yet somehow I ended up in your bed.

Aronnax looks defensive, embarrassed.

ARONNAX

You were ill. I have medical experience.

He hands her a GLASS OF WATER. She takes a long drink.

JULIE

Sorry about your jars of fish.

ARONNAX

Rare bio-aquatic specimens.

JULIE

And your wine.

ARONNAX

Yes, well, at least someone enjoyed it.

JULIE

And your assistant.

ARONNAX

Can you spell "nuisance," Miss Fleischer?

Julie suddenly gets very serious. Loses all charm.

JULIE

I want answers, professor, just like you.

(beat)

Only I don't believe in monsters.

A COMMOTION outside. People running. Barking orders.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - DECK - LATER

Farragut is at the HELM bellowing commands. Sailors scramble to lower the SAILS. Others scurry up into the CROW'S NESTS.

NED

Why are we slowing?

FARRAGUT

This is where the *Waylander* went down.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - LATER

FIVE SAILORS suit up in HEAVY-FOOTERS -- bulky, old-fashioned canvas diving suits with round brass helmets.

At the same time a bizarre ANTHROPOMORPHIC METAL SUIT is lowered onto the deck. It looks like ROBBY THE ROBOT.

NED

What the hell is that thing?

NAVAL ENGINEER

The Iron Duke. A fully-articulated diving suit with self-contained air supply and communication system.

NED

Someone actually goes in that tin can?

Ned can tell by Farragut's look that he is that someone.

NED

Oh no. Forget it. Send the professor down. He's the fish expert.

JULIE (O.S.)

Don't be such a baby.

Everyone turns to see Julie (in a SAILOR UNIFORM and CAP) approaching with Aronnax. She could easily pass for a young sailor. Except she can't help but size up Ned's sixpack.

NED

Then maybe you'd like to try it on?

JULIE

I'd be happy too.

FARRAGUT

Aronnax! Miss Fleischer is supposed to be confined to your cabin!

ARONNAX

Yes. And if I may have a quick word --

Aronnax steps up to Farragut, whispers so only he can hear.

ARONNAX

With all due respect, Commander, this *is* her father's grave site.

Farragut considers this for a moment. Turns to Julie --

FARRAGUT

Do not get used to this freedom, Miss Fleischer. You have one hour.

JULIE

Thank you, Commander.

FARRAGUT

(back to Ned)

I need you down there, Ned. You're the best tracker I know. You'll see things a hundred other eyes would pass right by.

NED

On land! Not the ocean floor!

FARRAGUT

I've never known you to pass up a chance
for a little adventure.

NED

Forget it. We're not kids anymore. You
can't just say "I dare you" and I'll run
off and do any ol' damn fool thing.

A beat.

FARRAGUT

I dare you.

EXT. THE OCEAN FLOOR - LATER

A CRAB scuttles across the sand. An IRON FOOT crushes it.

Ned is inside the IRON DUKE, lumbering across the ocean
floor. A COMMUNICATION TUBE is all that connects him to the
ship. (We see his face through the Duke's "face" porthole.)

He's followed by the heavy-footed DIVERS, tethered to the
ship with their UMBILICAL AIR HOSES.

NED

All I wanted was one lousy steak.

FARRAGUT'S VOICE

(faint and echo-y)
Do you see anything?

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - DECK - SAME

Farragut holds a VOICE-PIPE that allows him to speak and
listen to Ned.

NED'S VOICE

Yes. There seems to be...an enormous...
amount of water.

EXT. THE OCEAN FLOOR - SAME

Ned lumbers forward. The Heavy-Footers reach the end of their
ropes. Literally. Ned soldiers on without them, past a
massive rock formation. A WALL OF FISH swim by.

After they pass, Ned sees the BOW of a ship directly in front
of him. "W-A-Y-L-A-N-D-E-R." A big gaping HOLE in its side. A
dozen SHARKS swim above the wreckage.

NED

She's down here. Something got to her
alright.

INT. WAYLANDER HULL (UNDER WATER) - LATER

Ned steps through the hole, looks around. The HOLD is filled
with THRASHED and OPENED CRATES.

NED

I'm in the cargo hold. Looks like the
place was ransacked before it went down.

Ned looks around. A DECOMPOSING BODY falls in front of him.

Then he see a STRANGE LOOKING RIFLE-GUN. He picks it up with
the Duke's PINCHER HAND. Pulls the trigger.

PFFT! A pellet fires out. When it hits the ship, BLUE FINGERS
OF ELECTRICITY spread out from the point of impact. WTF!?

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - DECK - SAME

A BELL CLANGS. In the CROW'S NEST, a LOOKOUT rings the bell.

CROW'S NEST SAILOR

Ahoy! The thing itself! Abeam to leeward!

Everyone rushes to leeward. Farragut peers through a LOOKING
GLASS, sees a LONG WAKE made by a DARK SHADOW a mile away.

FARRAGUT

(into Voice-pipe)

Ned, something's coming your way! Get
everyone back to the ship!

INT. WAYLANDER HULL (UNDER WATER) - SAME

Ned lumbers toward the hole. He is just about to step out
when -- a GREAT WHITE SHARK rams its head in, JAWS WIDE OPEN!

The shark clamps down on IRON DUKE, drives Ned back inside.

He is jerked all over as the shark tries to get a piece o'
him. Ned drops the gun. His communication cable is severed.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - SAME

The *Lincoln* prepares for war. All seventy-two cannons are
sticking out of their firing holes. Men are lined up on the
deck with guns. The harpoon-cannon is ready.

Aronnax and Julie watch the approaching shadow.

JULIE
Any idea what it is?

ARONNAX
Fast. Very very fast.

Farragut looks to a group of SAILORS manning the oxygen cables and dive platform.

FARRAGUT
(into voice-pipe)
Ned? What's going on? Where are you?

A COMM. SAILOR reels in the SEVERED communication cable.

FIRST MATE
The creature is in range, Commander.

FARRAGUT
Aronnax, take Miss Fleischer to your cabin. Both of you stay there.

ARONNAX
I need to observe--

FARRAGUT
Take her now! That's an order!

Decision time.

FARRAGUT
Fire at will!

INT. WAYLANDER HULL (UNDER WATER) - SAME

The shark flings Ned across the hold. He lands near the strange gun. As the shark comes at him, Ned gets a grip, presses the trigger and--

PFFFHT! A PELLET hits the shark. Engulfed it in the BLUE FINGERS of ELECTRICITY. The shark writhes in agony, dies.

Ned looks relieved. Then he notices: BUBBLES coming from his suit. A PUNCTURE. Not good.

Then a CANNON BALL smashes though the hull. Really not good.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Ned steps out of the hole to find himself in a war zone. CANNON BALLS drop all around him!

The Heavy-Footers are fleeing as fast as their lead feet will take them. And coming up fast behind them --

THE DARK SHADOW

Ned stops and stares. As it gets closer it slowly takes shape, becomes recognizable...

...and passes right over him. This is no sea monster. It is a man-made vessel. Ladies and gentlemen, I present --

THE NAUTILUS

It's enormous. Just keeps going and going. The metal plating and fins make it look like a menacing CREATURE OF PREY.

CANNON BALLS bounce uselessly off its hull.

Within moments the Nautilus passes over the Divers. Slices through their umbilical hoses. Condemning them.

One Diver's hose gets caught in the Nautilus PROPELLER. The attached diver is pulled into the blades for a grisly demise.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - SAME

The cannons continue their assault as the Nautilus closes in. The HARPOON CANNON fires. The metal blade PINGS off its hide.

FARRAGUT

Prepare for impact!

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - SAME

Ned watches helplessly as the Nautilus slices through the *Lincoln's* hull. An EXPLOSION erupts from the volatile cargo.

INT. ARONNAX'S QUARTERS - SAME

Aronnax and Julie. Thrown on top of each other by the impact.

JULIE

It attacked us!

ARONNAX

Yes, well, there's no cause for panic.
This ship's hull is impenetrable.

The ship GROANS, begins to tilt.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - DECK - LATER

Chaos. Sailors scramble to put out FIRES, to stave off the inevitable. LIFEBOATS are readied.

Aronnax drags his trunks onto the deck.

JULIE

We're going down, Professor! Maybe it's
time to part with your luggage!

As they run toward the LIFEBOATS another EXPLOSION rocks the ship and the LIFEBOATS are engulfed in FLAMES!

The *Lincoln* tilts to a steeper angle. Aronnax loses his grip on one of the trunks. It slides into the water, floats away.

ARONNAX

My books!

Julie kicks the latch off the other trunk. The lid flies open. Wine bottles fall out, roll down the deck.

ARONNAX

My wine! What are you doing!?

JULIE

Getting us off this ship.

EXT. ABRAHAM LINCOLN - DECK - SECONDS LATER

Aronnax and Julie are sitting in the empty trunk, SCREAMING, sliding down the deck like they're on a flume ride! They close the lid and -- SPLASH! -- they're in the water.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - SAME

Ned, GASPING for air, watches in horror as the *Lincoln* sinks before his very eyes. And SHARKS speed toward the buffet.

It's a spectacular sight. And Ned's death knell. He's stranded. Almost out of air.

And then the Nautilus returns.

A LARGE ROUND WINDOW on its side spirals open.

In that window: the BACK-LIT SILHOUETTE of A SOLITARY MAN. Observing the devastation. He seems to look right at Ned.

NED

Who...

NED BLACKS OUT.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - HOURS LATER

Dense FOG. Julie and Aronnax float amidst the debris.

ARONNAX

Hello!? Is anyone out there!?

Silence. While Aronnax continues calling out, Julie fishes a book out of the sea. The Last of the Mohicans.

Julie opens the cover. "To Ned. Welcome Aboard. 'Commander' Dave" is inscribed inside.

Suddenly, the sea begins to RUMBLE. A METAL TAIL-FIN rises beneath the trunk, spilling Julie and Aronnax into the sea.

They grab onto the fin. Up, up, up they go as the Nautilus surfaces beneath them.

Aronnax is standing on a NAUTILUS SHELL design protruding from the tail fin, he pulls Julie up. They see the entire Nautilus spread out beneath them.

JULIE

Still believe in monsters?

A HATCH opens below. Several CREWMEN climb out. Various nationalities. LANGUAGE unknown. They inspect the ship...

...and see Aronnax and Julie (who still looks like a sailor). The crewmen YELL to each other, surround the tail.

ARONNAX

(to Julie)

Let me handle this. I may not have Ned's brawn, but I am well versed in diplomacy.

(he stands tall)

Ahoy! I am Professor Pierre Aronnax of the Paris Museum of Natural History and we are both innocent civilians lost at sea. You are required by international law to take us to the nearest port.

SMASH CUT TO:

PITCH BLACK

Quiet. Until -- GASP! Followed by rapid BREATHING. Shivering. Then FRANTIC MOVEMENT. Like that of a caged animal.

A door opens. LIGHT enters. The animal is Ned. Julie and Aronnax are thrown into his cage, both shivering.

The door slams. PITCH BLACK again. It all happens fast.

JULIE

Ned? Is that you?

NED

Who's there?

JULIE

Julie. And the Professor. We thought you were dead.

NED

Who says I ain't?

ARONNAX

Because if you're dead, we're all dead.
And I feel very much alive...

The ship GROANS. A disturbing sound.

ARONNAX

...for the moment.

NED

Where are we?

And then there was LIGHT. They are inside a SMALL METAL ROOM.
One table. Three stools. Illumined by a single LIGHT BULB.

ARONNAX

In the belly of the beast, I'm afraid.

JULIE

How did you get in here?

NED

I...don't... The *Lincoln*. I saw her...
(realizing)
Dave?

Julie shakes her head.

JULIE

I think we're the only ones who made it.

She hands Ned the soggy book. Whatever he feels, he locks it inside. Aronnax inspects the room. No sign of a door. He is fascinated by the light bulb.

NED

What kind of ship is this?

ARONNAX

It appears to be an electric-powered
submersible. A sub-marine ship. Manned by
a crew of many nationalities speaking a
language I've never heard before.

Ned body-slams the wall.

ARONNAX

Don't waste your energy. These walls are solid steel. It's impossible--

Ned slams into the wall again.

The door HISSES, opens, revealing four CREWMEN armed with the strange "electric" rifles:

A YOUNG INDIAN (19); a European with a burn-scarred face (SCAR); a bald Asian with an EYE-PATCH; and a South Pacific ISLAND NATIVE with a full body tattoo.

Eye-Patch and the Native train their rifles on the prisoners, while Scar brings in a stack of CLEAN DRY CLOTHES and three BLANKETS. The Indian follows with three BOWLS OF FOOD.

Then they exit without a word; the door seals behind them.

JULIE

Last supper?

Ned rips off his soaked shirt, puts on a clean dry one. Starts to remove his pants when...Aronnax CLEARS HIS THROAT, glances toward Julie. Ned could give a shit.

NED

If you see something you haven't seen before, give a holler.

Ned strips off his wet trousers, puts on a clean pair. He sits at the table, sniffs the bowl of stew. Grimaces.

NED

Another reason to get off this barge.

Julie looks at the clothes, looks at the tiny room...and the tiny sink and toilet in the corner.

JULIE

Maybe I should request my own room.

NED

Good idea. I'm sure all the salty sailors in this tub would be happy to know there's a woman on board.

Julie considers her options.

JULIE

Turn around.

Aronnax does. Ned doesn't.

NED

If I see something I haven't seen before,
I'll give a holler.

JULIE

Fine.

She turns her back to Ned, starts to lift her shirt. Aronnax leaps up, grabs a blanket off the pile and holds it up to block the view.

ARONNAX

Ned, you are incorrigible.

NED

That and about a dozen other fancy words.

Julie steps out from behind the blanket, wearing the new clothes. A little baggy, but all the better to hide her shape. She puts the SAILOR HAT on, hides her hair.

JULIE

How do I look?

NED

Guess that depends on how long these boys
have been stuck inside this ship.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NEXT MORNING

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie are asleep on the floor. Julie's head on Aronnax's shoulder.

Aronnax awakens. Notes Julie's position. Smiles briefly. Until she rolls over and places her head on Ned's shoulder.

CLANG. The door opens, revealing the same four armed CREWMEN carrying SHACKLES.

INT. NAUTILUS - SALON/LIBRARY - LATER

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie -- hands shackled -- are escorted into a large, ornate room that looks like a library. Or a museum. It is filled with BOOK, SCULPTURES, PAINTINGS. Definitely not what they were expecting to find on a ship.

ARONNAX

Incredible. There are enough rare
antiquities in this room to make it the
envy of any museum.

NED

You're sure we're on a boat?

Suddenly a large section of the parlor wall spirals open, revealing a large CONVEX OBSERVATION WINDOW and the ocean depths on the other side.

Then a panel beneath the floor slides away at the same time revealing a GLASS BOTTOM. Everywhere they look: endless sea.

ARONNAX

Quite sure.

They step up to the window, witness the mysteries of the deep illumined by the ship's exterior lights.

PROFESSOR

All my life I've dreamed of such a view.

NEMO (O.S.)

If you gaze long into the abyss, the
abyss will eventually gaze back into you.

The man-we-will-know-as-NEMO descends a SPIRAL STAIRCASE. Step by clanging step. He reaches the bottom of the stairs and stands in front of the opposite window. A silhouette backlit by the light outside.

ARONNAX

You speak English.

NEMO

When it serves me.

NED

I saw you. Out there.
(realizes...)
You saved me.

NEMO

I saved the armor suit. You happened to
be in it.

ARONNAX

Who are you?

Nemo steps forward into the light and we see he is none other than PRINCE DAKKAR. Ten years older. Hardened. Long hair, beard. Not dressed like a prince, but like a rogue warrior. A SWORD by his side.

NEMO

I am no one. I do not exist. Nor does
this ship exist. It is most unfortunate
that you have seen what you have.

NED

Unfortunate!? You destroyed our ship! You sent two hundred men to their grave!

NEMO

Two hundred men of war who attacked me without provocation.

ARONNAX

I am a scientist, not a soldier, and we were on a scientific expedition. We thought you were some predatory creature. The whole world thought --

NEMO

Do not be naive, Professor Aronnax of the Paris Museum of Natural History. They were carrying enough explosives to destroy a city. They knew exactly what they were looking for.

Ned and Aronnax both feel like complete suckers. *Were they duped?* Nemo steps up to Ned, scrutinizing him.

NEMO

And what were you looking for?

NED

A quick buck, Captain. Nothing more.

NEMO

There are no captains on this ship. Here beneath the sea we are all equal.

NED

Well the one who calls all the shots and has the nicest room on the boat -- I call that one captain, Captain.

Nemo glares at him -- *this one's trouble*. Then he steps up to Julie. In her baggy clothes and sailor's hat she is easily mistaken for a young lad. She glances down, avoids his gaze.

NEMO

You are a soldier are you not?

Aronnax quickly steps in front of her, protective.

ARONNAX

This is my assistant James. And I assure you neither he nor the rest of us had any malicious intent toward you or your ship. We are guilty of no crimes, and I insist you release us.

NEMO

I am inclined to release you back to the sea where I found you.

ARONNAX

That would be murder! There are laws --

NEMO

The laws of nations are meaningless to me. You have stumbled upon a secret that cannot be known. Whatever fate I choose for you, that secret will remain beneath the sea.

Nemo issues a command in the foreign language. The crewmen grab the prisoners --

NED

I'll choose my own fate if ya don't mind.

-- and with that Ned head-butts Scar in the nose. In the next ten seconds, several things happen:

Ned grabs a marble BUST and WHACKS Eye-Patch across the head. The tattooed Native fires at Ned...

Ned leaps up and grabs a steel girder in the ceiling. The pellet just misses him and strikes the wall, electrifies it.

Ned swings and kicks the Native, sends him across the room. Then grabs a chair and SMASHES it against the observation window. It bounces right off.

Nemo BARKS a COMMAND into a VOICE-PIPE. Then draws his sword as Ned pulls over a bookcase, cuts him off.

NED

(to Julie and Aronnax)

Jump in at any time!

Ned grabs a another chair and uses it as a ram/shield to charge through the door...

ARONNAX

Where does he think he's going to go?

INT. NAUTILUS - SAME

Ned runs down a labyrinthine metal grated corridor...turns a corner and encounters three more ARMED CREWMAN.

Pellets ELECTRIFY the walls all around him. Several of them hit the chair, igniting it.

Ned hurls the chair, runs to the other end of the corridor, more CREWMEN appear.

Ned rushes through an open door, out of the frying pan and...

INT. NAUTILUS KITCHEN - SAME

...into the kitchen. Boiling pots. SHARK carcasses. FISH HEADS. LOBSTER tank. OCTOPUS and EELS hangings from hooks.

Ned is almost choked by the smell. A startled COOK hurls a MEAT CLEAVER at him. Ned barely avoids the flying blade.

The Cook reaches for several KNIVES. Ned grabs a hollowed-out GIANT TORTOISE SHELL and uses it as a shield. Knives stick to it like darts to a board.

Then he hurls the shell like a discus, bringing a shelf full of pans crashing down on the Cook.

PFFT! An ELECTRIC PELLET strikes the wall next to Ned. Two crewmen have entered the kitchen.

Ned grabs a dead HAMMERHEAD by the tail and swings it at them. Knocks over a BOILING CAULDRON of CHOWDER. The crewmen slip, fall into the hanging eels and octopuses.

Ned dives through the door...

INT. NAUTILUS CORRIDOR - SAME

...and back into the metal corridor. CLANGING FOOTSTEPS approach. Ned climbs up a spiral staircase...

INT. NAUTILUS - UPPER LEVEL

...and emerges inside an oval MAP ROOM. A GIANT GLOBE is in the middle, suspended on a pole. Just past it: a door. Ned swings it open...

INT. HELM - SAME

...and enters the brains of the Nautilus. Two viewing windows. Steering wheel. Gears. And two startled NAVIGATORS.

NED

Don't mean to interrupt, but could you point me to the first class cabins?

The Navigators look at each other then rush forward; Ned slams the door in their faces, grabs an AXE off the wall and jams it in the door handle.

Three more CREWMEN run down the corridor toward the map room.

Ned kicks the pole that holds the globe in place. It drops, rolls and sticks in the door blocking the entrance.

Ned drops down the stairwell...

INT. NAUTILUS - MAIN LEVEL

...and sees the original four crewman coming his way. He continues going down the stairwell. Down, down, down...

INT. ENGINE/FURNACE ROOM - SAME

...and drops onto a metal grated catwalk above the sprawling hellish bowels of the Nautilus.

Giant GEARS and SPROCKETS turn and churn, moving the massive PROPELLER SHAFT. Six crewmen shovel coal into a giant FURNACE/POWER GENERATOR.

Ned works his way across the catwalk as the four Crewmen drop down behind him. Three others appear in front of him.

Ned considers his fleeting options...leaps off the catwalk and hooks his shackle chain on a giant sprocket tooth.

ON THE CATWALK

Two crewman take aim, fire.

ON NED

Pellets strike all around him. The sprocket carries him toward another sprocket. The teeth of the two sprockets intersect and slice through Ned's chain.

He drops down onto the propeller shaft. Slides/surfs along its slippery surface...

...but loses his balance and falls onto a pile of COAL, slides down to the base and sees:

SERKO. A gigantic African crewman with tribal scars on his face standing over him with a SHOVEL.

Serko takes a WHACK at Ned. Ned barely avoids the blow.

He grabs a shovel of his own and swings it at Serko's midsection. It's like hitting a brick wall.

Serko grabs Ned's severed chains and tosses him like a rag doll back into the coal pile. Then he lifts him up over his head and is about to throw him into the FIERY FURNACE when --

NEMO (O.S.)
Serko! Barada nikto!

Serko hesitates, sees Nemo up above, standing on the catwalk.

INT. NAUTILUS SALON - LATER

Ned falls to his knees, writhes in agony, engulfed in the blue fingers of electricity. The ocean abyss is visible beneath him through the glass bottom.

Aronnax and Julie watch helplessly as the electric fingers slowly dissipates leaving Ned writhing on the floor in agony.

NEMO
Do not test me again. I am not a
barbarous man...*by nature*.

Serko grabs Ned, pulls him to his feet.

NEMO
There is no escape from this ship. Where
I travel you will find nothing but
unforgiving seas should you be foolish
enough to try. Any further act of
sedition and I will return *all of you* to
the sea. Expect no more mercy.

Nemo bellows a command. Crewmen grab the prisoners.

ARONNAX
How long do you intend to keep us?

NEMO
Until I'm ready to reveal myself to the
world.

ARONNAX
When will you reveal yourself to us?

Nemo steps up to the window. Faces the sea.

NEMO
You may call me Nemo. This ship is the
Nautilus.

INT. HOLDING CELL - SAME

Ned, Julie, and Aronnax are tossed back into their cell.
Three concealed bunks are lowered from the wall. The escorts
leave; the door seals shut. Ned crawls in a bunk.

ARONNAX

Were you trying to get us all killed? You can't escape from an underwater ship!

NED

Who says I was trying to escape? I wanted to see as much of it as I could so we know what we're dealing with.

Aronnax is silenced; Julie is impressed.

JULIE

What are we dealing with?

NED

I'd say she's a hundred yards from bow to stern. Four levels. We're on number two. She's fueled by coal, and the whole operation requires about twenty crewmen. Odds I can work with.

ARONNAX

Odds that will get us tossed into the sea! We need to obey his rules and do as we are told. This is only temporary.

JULIE

How can you be so sure? He's a cold-blooded murderer, professor. He killed my father. And every other innocent on the *Waylander*.

ARONNAX

We have no reason to believe he had anything to do with that.

NED

Then explain why I found one of his stinger guns in its hold.

News to Aronnax. News to Julie.

ARONNAX

But why would he do such a thing?

NED

Because he's a pirate and a villain. Probably robbed them blind first.

Julie looks like she knows something else. But keeps silent.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT - LATER

The Nautilus sails through the ocean. All the lights inside the ship are out except one --

INT. NEMO'S QUARTERS - LATER

Candle lit. A large desk overflows with CHARTS, navigational INSTRUMENTS. Two things to note: A SEPIA-TONED PHOTO of Nemo/Prince Dakkar with his family; and a grimy, water-damaged WOODEN BOX.

In front of a large viewing window there's a GOLDEN STATUE of the Hindu god SHIVA holding a TRIDENT.

Nemo, shirt off, prays in front of the statue, holding his son's NAUTILUS SHELL in his hands. His back is scarred from three bullet wounds.

A KNOCK at the door. Nemo rises.

The Cook enters carrying a tray that is overflowing with a small DEAD OCTOPUS. He sets it on Nemo's desk. Exits.

Nemo picks up a knife and slices through the octopus's ink bladder. BLACK INK spills into the tray.

Nemo then opens the wooden box and removes --

AN ANCIENT STONE TABLET

Crumbling, jagged at the bottom. Nemo pours the ink over its surface, and ANCIENT CUNEIFORM WRITING is revealed.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

A FISHING BOAT. FISHERMEN haul in their NETS. Filled with TUNA...and the blue CORPSE of a NAVY SAILOR.

One of the FISHERMEN sees something off the stern. YELLS.

The *Lincoln's* LARGE STEERING WHEEL floats on the water. Sprawled out on top of the wheel: Farragut's lifeless body.

The Fishermen pull him onto the ship. Lay him out. Dead.

FISHERMAN #1

Poor bastard.

A very faint MOAN. Not dead.

FISHERMAN #2
Lucky bastard!

They spring into action to revive him...

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN DEPTHS - WEEKS LATER

The Nautilus moves through the ocean terrain, its path illuminated by an electric BEACON at the front of the ship.

Two curious HUMPBACK WHALES swim along beside it. One of them peers into the observation window...

ARONNAX (V.O.)
It has been weeks since we have seen our mysterious host, and I am no closer to understanding what drives him.

INT. NAUTILUS SALON - SAME

...where we see Aronnax sitting in a chair in front of the window, observing, writing in a journal.

ARONNAX (V.O.)
During the day, Miss Fleischer --
(he scratches something out)
-- my assistant James and I are granted access to the salon. I am not sure to what we owe this courtesy, but I am grateful nevertheless. I have seen remarkable things, and at times forget that I am a prisoner.

Julie examines the library's artifacts as if she were browsing through a museum...or looking for something.

ARONNAX (V.O.)
I cannot say the same for my companions. And while we at least have the luxury of this remarkable room...

INT. ENGINE/FURNACE ROOM - SAME

Ned, dripping with sweat, shovels coal alongside Serko.

ARONNAX (V.O.)
...Ned is forced to labor in the bowels of the ship.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Aronnax and Julie eat dinner together, alone in the kitchen. Aronnax has his napkin tucked in his shirt. Ned is escorted in, covered with SOOT.

ARONNAX (V.O.)

We dine together every evening, but Ned grows more and more unpleasant with each passing day.

He grabs Aronnax's napkin, wipes his sooty face, and stuffs it back in the professor's shirt. Then he grabs a lobster, tears into it like it's a drumstick.

EXT. NAUTILUS - DECK - NIGHT

Starry night. The Nautilus has surfaced. Crewmen are working. Ned, Aronnax, and Julie are escorted onto the deck.

ARONNAX (V.O.)

The only contact we have with the outside world is when the Nautilus surfaces to replenish its air supply. None of us have seen daylight since we boarded.

Ned observes the STARS...while Serko, now Ned's full-time "guard," observes him.

INT. SALON - ANOTHER DAY

Julie sits at the window, making faces at some STRANGE FISH while Aronnax sits beside her sketching it.

ARONNAX (V.O.)

But I must admit --

JULIE

(reading over his shoulder)
-- "I am in no hurry to leave this magnificent laboratory." Exactly whose side are you on, professor?

Aronnax slams his journal. Indignant, embarrassed.

ARONNAX

The side of reason. If we're going to be here for awhile we might as well make the best of it. It would be a crime against science not to record what I have seen.

Julie grabs his ink pen. Looks at the sharp tip.

JULIE

It would be a bigger crime to let a man
get away with murder.

Aronnax quickly and nervously grabs the pen away from her.

EXT. NAUTILUS DECK - NIGHT

Ned, covered in soot, watches as Serko and the other boiler
room crew smoke cigars. Serko holds one up as if to offer it.
Ned walks over, takes it.

NED

Much obliged, Serko.
(he lights up, takes a puff)
So what's your story? How'd you end up
with this motley crew?

SERKO

Bad men take me from my home many years
ago. Put many of us in chains to take us
to Nedland's country. On boat we hear
stories of Man Who Rides in Whale and
frees men from bondage. We pray to God to
send this man. God heard our prayers and
Nemo set us free. This is my home now.

(beat)

Perhaps God also heard Nedland's prayers.

NED

Prayin's against my religion. I count on
no one but myself.

ON JULIE AND ARONNAX

Standing near the tail. Aronnax takes a deep breath.

ARONNAX

Ah. Fresh air. It's the one thing I truly
miss about the surface.

CIGAR SMOKE envelopes him as Ned approaches. Aronnax coughs.

ARONNAX

Must you spoil everything?

Ned notices several crewmen stealing glances at Julie.

NED

Looks like the fish-heads are starting to
take an interest in our pretty boy.

(hands the cigar to Julie)

Give it a try. Might put some hair on
your chest.

She takes a drag on cigar. Blow out a smoke ring. Like a pro.

JULIE

Where do you think we are?

NED

A long way from home. Unless the stars
have been lying to me, I'd say we're
somewhere in the Arabian Sea.

Julie reacts.

JULIE

Are you sure?

Suddenly the sky lights up in the distance. A ROCKET'S RED
GLARE; BOMBS BURSTING in air.

Several warships are revealed by the light. Firing at the
coast. Flying RED FLAGS with a WHITE CRESCENT and STAR.

A flurry of activity sweeps across the deck. Nemo rises up
out of a hatch, walks right past Aronnax, Ned, and Julie.

ARONNAX

What's happening?

NEMO

War, Professor. Man's never ending
struggle against himself. This is what
the surface has to offer.

Nemo bellows a command to the crew. Several of them grab Ned,
Aronnax, and Julie.

NEMO

I'm afraid I must confine you all to your
quarters until further notice.

Crewmen drag them away. Nemo climbs onto the helm, scans the
horizon with his SPYGLASS.

INT. HOLDING CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie are sealed inside their cell.

NED

Those were Ottoman warships. And from the
looks of it, we're heading into the
Strait of Hormuz. We may not get another
chance like this.

ARONNAX

You're not seriously thinking of trying to escape!?

NED

Done thinking. We'll be no more than twenty miles from shore.

JULIE

Then it's true. He does have it.

NED

Has what?

JULIE

A map.

Off their confused looks --

JULIE

My father was an archeologist. He was working in Ceylon and uncovered a stone map leading to something buried in Iraq. He had it with him on the *Waylander*.

ARONNAX

And you think Nemo has it?

JULIE

He's taking us into the Gulf. It can't be a coincidence.

NED

Told you, professor. Your poor misunderstood genius is just a common pirate trying to get his hands on a little booty.

ARONNAX

If that's true --

NED

-- then he's taking this tub to land.

EXT. PERSIAN GULF - SUNRISE

The cradle of civilization. The rising sun glistens off the still waters. Less than a mile away: LAND.

And a hundred meters below the surface:

THE NAUTILUS

It maneuvers through a GRAVEYARD of SUNKEN SHIPS from bygone eras. Some with gaping wounds. Some standing on end.

INT. HOLDING CELL - SAME

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie are sound asleep. EMPTY PLATES on their table. The cell door slowly opens.

Scar stands guard as the Cook retrieves the plates. As he exits and the door starts to close behind him --

Ned's eye open. He throws a FORK across the room. Perfectly timed so the door closes on it...and doesn't seal.

Ned, Julie, and Aronnax leap out of bed. Ned pulls the door open. He takes a quick peek.

ARONNAX

Now what?

NED

We wait.

ARONNAX

For what?

NED

For them to drop anchor.

JULIE

Then what?

NED

We escape.

ARONNAX

What you're saying is: this escape plan doesn't actually come with the plan.

NED

It's a work in progress.

ARONNAX

So is our demise.

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - SAME

The Chief Navigator is at the wheel. Nemo stands in front of the helm's two "eye" windows. He studies the inky imprint taken from the stone tablet.

As the Nautilus clears the graveyard of ships, it approaches a sheer rocky land mass.

NEMO
Reduce speed.

(All dialogue between Nemo and his crew will be in the unknown language and subtitled.)

Nemo examines the terrain, sees: a small opening at the base of the land mass. It looks like an OPEN SERPENT'S MOUTH.

INT. HOLDING CELL - SAME

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie listen as the engines stop. They hear the sound of the RATTLING anchor chains unspooling.

INT. NAUTILUS - LATER

Deserted. Quiet. Except for Ned, Julie, and Aronnax moving stealthily down a corridor. The ship seems deserted.

They reach the HATCH LADDER. Ned starts climbing.

NED
Six steps to freedom.

JULIE
I'm not leaving.

ARONNAX
Neither am I. This is too risky.

NED
Have both your brains turned to chowder?

JULIE
I'm not leaving without my father's map.
He was willing to die for it --

NED
One person dying for it is enough. We're
all getting off this ship and we're
getting off now!

Ned turns the crank to open a HATCH...and WATER starts to pour in around the seal. Ned quickly tightens the crank.

ARONNAX
It would appear we're still submerged.

NED
Thank you, Professor Obvious.

INT. SALON - LATER

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie stand in front of the observation window, see: a long line of DIVERS in suits with BRONZE HELMETS, ARMOR PLATING, and BRONZE AIR TANKS marching across the sea floor. They look like aquatic Stormtroopers.

NED

You want your map? Odds are it's right out there. And so is our way out of here.

INT. DIVING CHAMBER - LATER

A dozen DIVING SUITS are lined along the walls. The bulky Iron John suit sits nearby.

Ned and Julie are suited up sans helmets. Ned grabs two ELECTRIC RIFLES from a rack.

NED

They fire electrically charged pellets.
On the surface they'll just sting. A lot.
Underwater, they're lethal.
(hands one to her)
So try not to point it in my direction.

Julie nods. Aims it at the professor standing on a platform above the dive chamber.

JULIE

You're coming with us.

ARONNAX

As much as I'd love to follow you to certain doom, I think I'll continue on my present course, thank you very much. And besides, who would pull all these fancy levers if I was down there?

Julie smiles. Lowers the gun.

JULIE

Good luck, Professor.

ARONNAX

You too, Miss Fleischer.

JULIE

You can call me Julie.

ARONNAX

And you can call me Pierre.

Ned's had enough of that mush. He places Julie's helmet over her head, locks it on.

NED

As soon as we reach civilization we'll
send someone to find you.

ARONNAX

I'll be sure to leave a light on.

Ned puts his helmet on. He and Julie each grab a METAL RING that has been lowered from above. Aronnax pulls a lever and the room fills with water.

ON NED AND JULIE

Submerged. The floor retracts beneath them and they are lowered into the sea by the rings...

EXT. SEA FLOOR - SAME

They reach the sea floor several meters below the Nautilus. They let go of the rings and follow the path of the other divers.

A HUNDRED YARDS AHEAD

Nemo and his crew enter the serpent's mouth. Inside: stairs carved into the stone. Nemo leads the way...

INT. SHIMMERING POOL - DAY OR NIGHT?

A still pool. Then hundreds of BUBBLES disturb the surface as Nemo and his crew rise out of the water like humanoids from the deep.

Their helmet lights cut through the blackness, giving us brief glimpses indicating they are inside a stone structure.

They step out of the pool. Two Crewmen carrying a large "searchlight"-size LANTERN set it on the ground and fire it up. It turns night into day and we see that we are --

INT. SUMERIAN TEMPLE - UNDERGROUND

A massive stone structure. Buried and unseen for thousands of years. Frightening statues are carved into the stone.

Nemo removes his helmet. Followed by the others. They stand in awe at what they see.

NATIVE CREWMAN

What is this place?

NEMO
*Ancient Sumeria. No human has set foot
here for 5,000 years.*

Nemo leads his men deeper into the structure.

INT. TREASURE ROOM - SAME

Nemo and his crew enter a room filled with hundreds of GOLDEN OBJECTS and PRICELESS JEWELS. A storehouse for all the treasures of a lost civilization...

...but Nemo seems to have no interest whatsoever. He motions for his crew to keep moving.

INT. SHIMMERING POOL - SAME

Ned and Julie rise out of the pool, remove their helmets. Stare in awe at the sights before them.

JULIE
The professor's gonna be mad when he
finds out he missed this.

NED
I'm sure we can find a gift shop
somewhere.

They proceed deeper into the structure.

INT. THE INNER CHAMBER

Nemo and his crew arrive at a large circular room. Seven life-size stone statues of HALF-MAN/HALF-FISH DIVINE BEINGS (known as THE SEVEN SAGES) are stationed around the perimeter.

He approaches one of the statues. It has a breastplate with a UNIQUE SYMBOL carved into it. Nemo presses the symbol...

...and the wall behind the Sage slides opens, revealing --

A HIDDEN VAULT

Nemo steps inside. A STONE ALTAR in the middle of the room holds a STONE "KEY" (a cylindrical object about eight inches tall with ancient writing carved on its surface).

Nemo picks up the stone, holds it like it's sacred.

INT. TREASURE ROOM - SAME

Ned and Julie enter the treasure room. The jaw-dropping display of wealth stops them dead in their tracks.

JULIE

I think we found the gift shop.

NED

"X" marks the spot. Looks like your
father's map was right on the money.

Julie picks up a GOLDEN, JEWEL-ENCRUSTED DAGGER.

INT. INNER CHAMBER - SAME

Nemo places the stone key in a METAL CASE. Crewman retrieve
the other stones from the other vaults...

INT. SEVENTH VAULT - SAME

The Native crewman stares at the stone altar. It's EMPTY. No
stone key. He looks around as if it may have fallen off...

INT. TREASURE ROOM - SAME

Ned examines a LARGE JEWEL. Then shoves it in his dive pouch.
He picks up a golden ceremonial mask.

NED

Maybe this trip was worth it after all.
We can live like kings just by filling
our pockets.

(beat)

Question is: why did Nemo come all this
way and walk right past it?

No response from Julie. Ned turns to look. She's gone.

INT. INNER CHAMBER - SAME

Six stones in the metal case. One slot left to fill. The
Native crewman runs up to Nemo --

NATIVE CREWMAN

The seventh key is missing!

NEMO

Search the temple! Find that key.

Crewmen scatter. All but one. Nemo turns to him.

NEMO

*Take a couple of men and search the
treasure room.*

The crewmen doesn't budge.

NEMO

Is there a problem?

The crewman lunges at Nemo with the jeweled DAGGER. Nemo, caught by surprise, deflects the blade but it still manages to make a SMALL CUT across his cheek.

Nemo struggles with the crewman. Other crewmen join in to help him. The attacker is overpowered, thrown to the ground.

NEMO

You will pay dearly for this mutiny.

Nemo removes the crewman's dive helmet, revealing Julie and her long flowing hair. Nemo and the crew are taken aback.

NEMO

This truly is a day of surprises.

NED

Here's another shock for you.

They turn and see Ned aiming an electric rifle at Nemo.

NED

Sorry I'm late to your party, Cap'n. My invitation must've got lost in the mail.

He reaches down for Julie, helps her to her feet.

NED

But we can't stay long anyway --

The whole chamber RUMBLES and SHAKES. Like there's an earthquake. The roof crumbles. RUBBLE falls all around them.

Then an EXPLOSION ROCKS the chamber.

Everyone dives for cover. Nemo and his crew put their helmets on for protection.

Ned and Julie get separated from the crew...and their helmets.

NED

Couldn't sit still, could you? Had to go and make this difficult.

A large section of the ceiling collapses. DAYLIGHT shines down from above....

...and a dozen ROPES drop down. Then a dozen ARAB DIGGERS slide down the ropes into the chamber.

When they reach bottom, they look stunned and horrified to see the men in the futuristic diving suits.

Nemo and his men are equally stunned, not so horrified.

ARAB DIGGER

We have awakened the Sea-Gods!

The Diggers drop to their knees and bow reverently.

More people slide down the ropes: this time uniformed OTTOMAN (TURKISH) SOLDIERS. Armed with SWORDS and RIFLES.

There leader is KER KARRAJE. A ruthless, nasty, cutthroat sonofabitch. He will kill you just for reading this.

The two sides assess the situation. Then --

KER KARRAJE/NEMO

Fire!

A hail of bullets versus a hail of electric pellets. Arab Diggers dive for cover. Ottomans are zapped, stunned.

Bullets, for the most part, only ding the diving armor on the Nautilus crew as they retreat toward the treasure room.

An Ottoman soldier falls near Ned. Ned grabs the soldier's rifle, strips him of his sword. He hands the sword to Julie.

JULIE

That's hardly fair!

He takes the sword, gives her the rifle. Then leaps up to join the battle.

A GUNSHOT hits his sword blade, sheers it in half.

Ned drops back down, hands Julie the broken sword and takes the gun. He pops back up. FIRES two shots. Both strike Ottomans in their gun hands, knocking their rifles away.

Ned leaps from their cover, grabs their diving helmets, dodges Ottoman bullets and returns safely.

JULIE

Why don't we surrender? They're not our enemies.

NED

Ottomans aren't known for taking prisoners. At least not with their heads still attached.

(MORE)

NED (CONT'D)
(hands her a helmet)
Put this on.

ON THE GUNFIGHT

Ker Karraje draws his sword, lunges at Nemo's crewmen, pierces his blade through the exposed areas around their diving armor, killing two of them instantly.

He sees other crewmen picking up the metal case, carrying it away. He fights his way toward them...

Another crewman gets shot in an exposed area between his armor plates. He falls. Nemo lumbers through the rain of bullets to retrieve him. Valiantly hauls him up over his shoulder...

...and comes face to face with Karraje. Karraje stabs the wounded crewman, killing him.

KER KARRAJE
Give me the stones.

Suddenly, the entire chamber starts to collapse around them.
Karraje barely avoids being crushed.

Nemo rejoins his crew and they back their way through the treasure room, firing every step of the way.

Ned and Julie follow after Nemo. But a pile of rubble cuts them off.

Another of Nemo's crewmen -- the YOUNG INDIAN -- gets trapped under the rubble, separated from the others.

When the dust clears, Ned and Julie discover they have been completely sealed off from Nemo and his crew...and have no way of getting back to the Nautilus.

Then the chamber wall begins to FISSURE. Water seeps through.

Ned pulls Julie toward the dangling ropes. Their only way out now. But Ker Karraje and the Ottomans reach the ropes first and are pulled to the surface.

Ned and Julie are left alone with the frightened Diggers. As the room rapidly fills with water.

INT. SHIMMERING POOL - SAME

Nemo and his crew make it back to the shimmering pool, and return to the water.

When the small band of pursuing Ottomans arrive on the scene they are baffled by the sudden disappearance of the Men in Strange Suits...and then crushed by the collapsing temple.

INT. INNER CHAMBER - SAME

Ned and Julie are up to their chests in water. The fissure gets wider and wider until --

The entire wall gives way. Tons of WATER rushes in. We read Ned's lips through his face plate --

NED

Shit.

Ned and Julie are engulfed, tossed around like clothes in a washer. Drowning soldiers swirl all around them. Ned grabs an ELECTRIC RIFLE that floats past.

Another wall caves in. Ned and Julie are blown right through the hole...

INT. UNDERWATER PASSAGE - SAME

...and whisked through a water-filled passage. They bounce off the walls, get spun around, caught in the current.

Ned grabs Julie, pulls her close to him as they spin through the tunnel like a human torpedo.

EXT. EXCAVATION SITE - DAY

A patch of desert where the Euphrates empties into the Gulf.

Dozen of tents. Ottoman flags. SCAFFOLDING and WOODEN PLANKS surround the EXCAVATION SITE which is now FLOODED.

Arab diggers drag bodies from the water. Including the young Indian from Nemo's crew who got trapped in the rubble.

EXT. NEARBY OASIS - DAY

CAMELS drink. Arab Diggers rinse off, wash their garments.

The water starts to BUBBLE and GURGLE.

A DIGGER peers into the water...and a GLOVED HAND shoots up.

He jumps back. Grabs a shovel. As do the others.

Ned's helmet rises out of the water. The Diggers start YELLING and banging it with the shovels.

Then the end of the electric rifle appears. FIRES. A pellet hits one of the Arabs in the chest. He convulses, electrified. The others drop their shovels and run away.

Ned emerges. Grabs Julie's hand and pulls her out.

INT. COMMAND TENT - DAY

A UNION JACK hangs inside. Two BRITISH SOLDIERS stand guard at the entrance. Two more lounge in chairs, playing cards. Ker Karraje enters.

BRITISH GENERAL (O.S.)
Come on in, Mr. Ker Karraje. Show me what the years of hard work have brought us.

KER KARRAJE
It has brought nothing. Someone got there before us.

Reveal the British General to be --

GENERAL ANSON. The General who ordered the execution of Prince Dakkar's uncle and cousin. And whom we left for dead.

GENERAL ANSON
How is that possible? We have the only copy of the tablets. You did destroy them?

KER KARRAJE
They went to the bottom of the sea with the *Waylander* and the doctor.

GENERAL ANSON
Then how --

KER KARRAJE
They came from the sea.

EXT. OASIS - SAME

Ned pulls off his helmet. And his air tank. Tosses them aside. He is downright giddy.

NED
How was that for an escape? I mean --
Whoosh! -- here we are. Dry land. Good ol' mother earth! Come give us a kiss.

As he drops to his knees to kiss the ground, a GUNSHOT hits the tree behind him.

Ned looks up, sees: a DOZEN OTTOMAN SOLDIERS riding toward him, firing their guns.

JULIE (O.S.)

Can I interest you in a hump?

Julie is sitting on a kneeling DROMEDARY CAMEL. Ned runs to the camel as a bullet hits his discarded air tank. KA-BOOM!

The camel leaps to its feet and sprints across the desert. Ned barely manages to grab onto one of the saddle straps and is pulled along by the fleeing camel.

Ned pulls himself up to a hump. He grabs a RIFLE out of the camel's pack and starts firing at the Ottoman pursuers.

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - SAME

Aronnax, the whole ship to himself, stands at the wheel, spinning it round and round, pretending to steer.

ARONNAX

This is your Captain speaking. Man your stations! Prepare to dive!

The helm door flies open, startling Aronnax. Nemo and his Navigators enter. And Nemo looks really really pissed.

ARONNAX

I'm sorry. I can explain.

Nemo pushes him aside. The Navigators start the engines.

NEMO

Never lie to me again.

ARONNAX

I never --

NEMO

The girl. Your assistant. If that's who she is.

ARONNAX

Are they okay?

NEMO

They're about to discover the Ottomans won't be nearly as accommodating or as civil as I have been.

(to Navigator)

Reverse engines!

ARONNAX

We can't just leave them!

NEMO

I lost four men today. I do not intend to lose any more.

Nemo YELLS out an order. A Crewman enters and grabs Aronnax.

ARONNAX

Do what you want to me. But the girl has suffered enough at your hands.

NEMO

I saved her life. As I did yours. A mistake I will gladly correct.

ARONNAX

Her name is Julie Fleischer! Her father was the archeologist you murdered. The one you stole the map from!

He now has Nemo's undivided attention.

EXT. DESERT - NEAR THE EUPHRATES - DAY

Ned and Julie ride across the desert. Ahead of them: a newly constructed TRAIN BRIDGE crosses the Euphrates.

Behind them: the Ottoman Soldiers close the gap.

And behind the soldiers: General Anson and Ker Karraje riding fine ARABIAN STALLIONS, gaining ground.

ON NED AND JULIE

Faces covered in dust. Ned squints, sees something on the horizon, across the bridge. Looks like...TRAIN SMOKE.

NED

Can you make this smelly beast run any faster!?

Ned turns, sees Ottomans closing in.

He takes Julie's AIR TANK off her back, tosses it onto the ground behind them. Then turns himself around on the camel. Aims the rifle.

And waits. The tank gets further and further away. The Ottomans get closer and closer. And when they're right on top of the tank --

Ned hits it with a well-aimed bullet. KA-BOOM! Perfect shot. Ottoman horses and riders spill in all directions.

Ned just bought them a bigger lead. But there's still the train.

EXT. EUPHRATES - DOWN RIVER - SAME

A quiet change of pace. TWO OLD FISHERMEN sit in their boat. Relaxing. One of them gets a TUG on his line.

He pulls with all his might and the NAUTILUS RISES TO THE SURFACE right in front of them.

They watch awestruck as it passes by. Aronnax sheepishly waves at them. The Fishermen timidly wave back.

EXT. DESERT - NEAR THE EUPHRATES - SAME

Ned and Julie. The bridge is less than a hundred yards away. They're gonna beat the train. And they're way ahead of their pursuers...

NED

We got it beat! We got 'em all beat!

...until the camel abruptly stops at the edge of the bridge. Ned and Julie are thrown from the humps, land on the tracks.

Ned slowly gets up, sore.

NED

You stupid, ugly, sad excuse of a horse.
That's the straw that broke your back!

Ned raises his gun to shoot. The Camel spits on him, covers his face in goo. The TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS.

JULIE

Ned! Stop fooling around! We have to go!

They lumber across the tracks but it's difficult in their bulky suits. And to make matters worse:

The Ottomans -- Anson and Karraje now leading the pack -- are nearing the bridge from behind them.

The TRAIN is less than a hundred yards away in front of them.

And the Nautilus is coming up the river beside them.

Ned and Julie stop in their tracks. Literally.

NED

Death by train, death by gunshot, or
death by Nemo. Pick your poison.

Julie strips away the plating from her dive suit. Ned does the same until they are down to the black rubber underlining. They pull off the boots, step to the edge of the bridge.

NED

On the count of --

A GUNSHOT pings the bridge. They jump into the water...

...and swim toward the Nautilus. BULLETS rain around them.

They reach the Nautilus, climb onto the deck. More bullets PING around them.

JULIE

Right back where we started.

NED

Such is my luck.

Ned opens the hatch. They drop down inside...

INT. NAUTILUS - SAME

... and are greeted by Nemo, Aronnax, Serko, and others.

NED

Gotta hand it to you, Captain. You throw
one helluva party.

Serko drags him away. Then Nemo turns to Julie.

NEMO

Miss Fleischer. It is an honor to have
the daughter of such a brilliant man
aboard my ship.

She slaps his face. Nemo doesn't react.

NEMO

There will be much for us to discuss. At
another time.

(to the crew)

Take us home.

EXT. EUPHRATES RIVER - SAME

Soldiers fire uselessly at the Nautilus. General Anson and Ker Karraje sit on their stallions, watching as the Nautilus disappears below the surface.

General Anson just stares. Doesn't say a word.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VOLCANO ISLAND - DAY

Somewhere in the Indian Ocean. An island that is little more than a SMOKING VOLCANO.

The Nautilus -- half submerged -- approaches the island. As it gets closer it dives...

EXT. UNDERWATER TUNNEL - SAME

...and passes through an opening at the base of the volcano.

EXT. CAVERN - LATER

The Nautilus surfaces inside a cavern. STALACTITES pierce down from above; STALAGMITES rise from below.

The Nautilus docks at a man-made WHARF inside the cavern. A string of ELECTRIC LAMPS light the cavern.

Hatches open and crewman secure the Nautilus. Ned, Aronnax, and Julie exit. Followed by Nemo and the rest of the crew, four of them carrying the CASE containing the stone keys.

EXT. CENTER OF THE VOLCANO - LAGOON - DAY

Crewmen row the DINGHIES into the center of the volcano. Ned, Aronnax, and Julie are blinded by the SUNLIGHT. As their eyes adjust, they see --

Dozens of abodes are carved into the rock around the lagoon like Anasazi CLIFF DWELLINGS. They have wooden fronts and are decorated with refuse scavenged from lost ships.

MINE CARS roll in and out of a series of tunnels, bringing COAL to the surface from an UNDERWATER MINE.

A COAL REFINERY belches SMOKE into the air, giving the appearance that the volcano is active and smoking.

NEMO

This is our home. In the very heart of an extinct volcano. Safe, secret, sheltered from the fury of hurricanes and humankind. The outside walls are sheer and insurmountable.

(to Ned)

In case you're wondering.

They dock the dinghies near the village. A HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN live here. Everyone with a job to do -- preparing food, clothing, all the needs of this mini-society.

Nemo is greeted reverently with smiles and slight bows of the head. He's a returning hero.

JULIE

These are all your people?

NEMO

They belong to no one but themselves. They are the world's oppressed and forgotten. They have chosen to live and work here, to escape the brutalities of civilization. Here they want for nothing.

ARONNAX

What is this language you speak?

NEMO

The language of the New World.

Nemo leads them up a flight of stone stairs to a PALATIAL COLUMNED ENTRANCE carved into the stone. Above the entrance, an inscription in Latin: *MOBILIS IN MOBILE*.

INT. STONE PALACE - SAME

Like the dwellings, it has been furnished from items reclaimed from the sea: statues, chandeliers, a PIPE ORGAN.

NED

Why have you brought us here? So you can enslave us forever in your new world?

NEMO

Because I am convinced now that it was fate that brought each of you to me. Even you, Mr. Land, for reasons that are not yet clear. As for you, professor --

Nemo removes a thick book from a library shelf. It is the book Aronnax himself has written.

NEMO

-- you were never a stranger to me. It was your work that first introduced me to the wonders of the sea.

ARONNAX

You've read my book?

He hands the book to Aronnax. It is well-worn, filled with hand-written notations.

NEMO

I hope you don't mind. I took the liberty to make a few corrections.

JULIE

And why did fate bring me here? So you can kill me as you did my father?

NEMO

I did not kill your father. His ship was attacked and sank by the Ottoman Navy.

JULIE

And you just happened to find his map.

NEMO

I retrieved it from the wreckage.

JULIE

You're a liar.

NEMO

Your father was bringing me the map, Miss Fleischer. He was going to join us.

The proverbial bomb. Dropped. Nemo removes a stack of LETTERS from a pouch inside a desk.

NEMO

Although I never had the pleasure of meeting him face-to-face, your father and I corresponded for over ten years. We shared a common interest in certain antiquities.

He hands the bundle to Julie. She browses through the letters. Realizes --

JULIE

You were his mysterious benefactor?

Nemo nods. And Julie sees him in an entirely new light.

JULIE

All these years...his excavations, his work. My father owed everything to you.

NED

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Did I miss something here? *He's* the bad guy!

JULIE

Mr. Nemo was the only person who believed
in my father's theories.

ARONNAX

Theories about what?

NEMO

A lost world.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL ANSON'S COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

General Anson drinks alone. Finishes a bottle. Then opens a
LOCKED BOX. Inside is a PISTOL. And a LEATHER JOURNAL with an
ornate "D" on the cover (see page one).

It is filled with notes and diagrams. Sketches of the Seven
Sages. Mathematical equations. And a rough sketch/blueprint
of the Nautilus.

An Ottoman soldier enters, salutes. Anson closes the book.

OTTOMAN SOLDIER

The prisoner has revived.

INT. MEDICAL TENT - LATER

Nemo's young Indian Crewman is strapped to an operating
table. His leg bloody and broken. An OTTOMAN DOCTOR stands
nearby as Anson enters with Karraje.

GENERAL ANSON

That will be all, doctor. I will assume
full responsibility for his treatment.

The doctor leaves. Anson turns to the helpless young Indian --

GENERAL ANSON

I have many questions for you. And I hope
you will have many answers.

Karraje picks up a nasty looking SURGICAL TOOL.

CUT TO:

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - NIGHT

An open roof. Silk curtains blow in the night breeze. Nemo,
Ned, Julie, and Aronnax sit on CUSHIONS around a table. There
is a bounty of food. BOTTLES of SPIRITS. A HOOKAH.

Professor Aronnax examines one of the "key" stones.

ARONNAX

You say you found these in Sumeria...yet
I don't recognize the markings.

NEMO

They are from a much older culture.

ARONNAX

How is that possible? Sumeria is the
oldest civilization known to man.

NEMO

Yet it is a mystery to us. Seemingly
overnight they developed an advanced
knowledge of science, astronomy,
medicine...but where did it come from?
According to their myths it was a gift
from an even older civilization, a
civilization perhaps even more advanced
than our own. The Sumerians called them
the "People of the Sea" because they
arrived on ships long before anyone had
ever seen a sea-going vessel.

Ned takes a toke on the hookah, blows out smoke, amused.

NED

If they were so advanced, what happened
to 'em?

NEMO

Their civilization was destroyed by a
cataclysmic flood 10,000 years ago. All
their knowledge now lies buried beneath
the sea.

Aronnax takes a toke on the hookah, nearly coughs up a lung.

ARONNAX

Surely you're not talking about Atlantis?

NEMO

Atlantis is a fantasy. But it derives no
doubt from some inherited wisdom.
Countless civilizations rise, fall, and
vanish forever in the blink of an eye. It
is the endless cycle of existence.

NED

Let's say this place did exist. What
makes you think you can find it?

NEMO

Before the flood, a great sailor from this land -- a man named Zisudra -- took the seven keys to their library of knowledge, sailed to Sumeria, and buried them for a future generation to uncover.

Nemo holds up one of the stones.

NEMO

These are the keys to finding their lost world and to opening their library.

NED

So all this, the Nautilus, everything, is so you can find some soggy old books?

NEMO

Not books, Mr. Land, knowledge. Knowledge that will save the human race.

Ned looks a little skeptical.

NEMO

Why do we wage wars and commit unspeakable atrocities? We fight for resources, for security. But what if we had the knowledge to end famine and poverty, to cure disease, to create an unending energy source? The secrets to all these mysteries are in their library. With them we can eliminate the need for man's inhumanity to man.

NED

You underestimate your species, Captain. We'll always find a reason to kill each other.

NEMO

I believe we are meant for something greater.

(beat)

Unfortunately, we only found six keys.

JULIE

That's because Zisudra hid the seventh key somewhere else.

Everyone turns to her.

JULIE

There were two tablets. My father only had one of them with him on the *Waylander*. The second one leads to the seventh key.

NEMO

Where is this other tablet?

JULIE

Missing.

NEMO

Missing?

JULIE

Stolen. I'm pretty sure now it was the Ottomans. But the good news is: my father kept a copy hidden in a safe place.

NEMO

Where?

She dips her finger in a sauce, draws several CUNEIFORM FIGURES on the table...

NEMO

You have it all? In your head?

...then she stops, licks the sauce off her finger.

JULIE

I want my own room this time.

NEMO

I believe that can be arranged.

Ned takes a long drag on the Hookah. He's not so sure handing over this information will be a wise move.

CUT TO:

EXT. EXCAVATION SITE/ANSON'S BASE CAMP - NIGHT

General Anson and Ker Karraje exit the medical tent; Karraje is holding the Indian's diving helmet like a trophy as they walk across the base camp.

GENERAL ANSON

How do you know he wasn't lying?

KER KARRAJE

I can tell by the screams.

GENERAL ANSON

Then take your men and bring me those six stones. I'll get the seventh one myself.

They reach what appears to be a small BRITISH WARSHIP sitting upright in the sand, far from water.

Anson walks up the plank to the deck and we see that the ship is an AIRSHIP. A dirigible-shaped HOT AIR BALLOON floats above the body of a ship. A large PROPELLER on the stern provides forward thrust.

As Anson's twelve BRITISH CREWMEN untether the ship, he yells down to Karraje --

GENERAL ANSON

Bring me Nemo alive if you can. If not, then his head and his ship.

KER KARRAJE

What does it mean? *Nemo*?

GENERAL ANSON

It's Latin. It means "no one."

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - NIGHT

Nemo, shirt off, kneels in front of Shiva. Flickering CANDLES provide ominous lighting.

FLASHBACK TO:

Dakkar in Bundlekind. The night of the revolution.

DAKKAR

I am Prince Dakkar!

GENERAL ANSON

You are no one!

The cannons BLAST. FLASH TO --

EXT. DAKKAR'S INDIAN PALACE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

In FLAMES. Dakkar -- now with a beard and wearing war-torn clothes -- rides up on his horse, leaps off, and runs inside.

INT. DAKKAR'S INDIAN PALACE - SAME (FLASHBACK)

Ransacked, pillaged. FLAMES everywhere. Dakkar runs inside, sees the BODIES of his WIFE and SON. Lying in pools of blood.

DAKKAR

Sita! Sagar!

Dakkar runs toward them and -- BANG! -- a gun fires. He goes down. Behind him: A FIGURE IN SHADOW. He fires two more shots into Dakkar's back. Leaves him for dead.

Dakkar crawls across the floor, reaches his wife and son. Sees his son's NAUTILUS SHELL lying next to him. Dakkar cries out, and the anguish of a thousand oppressed souls escapes from his lungs.

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - NIGHT (NOW)

Nemo slowly raises his head, his eyes look like those of a wild, blood-thirsty animal.

This does not look like a man who wants to save mankind.

INT. JULIE'S DWELLING - NIGHT

Julie sits at a candlelit table, drawing the cuneiform symbols on a piece of parchment.

She looks up, startled, sees: Nemo standing in the door frame. Something is draped over his arm.

JULIE
You frightened me.

NEMO
That was not my intent.

An awkward beat as they stare at each other. Julie notices the fresh cut on his cheek.

JULIE
Sorry about the --
(she touches her own cheek)
I didn't know --

NEMO
It will heal. I'm quite used to scars.
(changing subject)
Here. I brought this for you.

He hands her a GORGEOUS DRESS made of silk. It's the exact same dress his wife was wearing on the beach in the prologue.

NEMO
I thought you might be tired of trousers.

Julie holds it up to her body.

JULIE
It's beautiful. Where did you find it?

NEMO

It belonged to a princess I used to know.
You remind me of her.

She blushes a bit. Then --

JULIE

Oh! I have something for you too.

She hands him the parchment with the newly scribed symbols.

JULIE

Hot off the press.

Nemo examines it intently. Looks like a bunch of symbols.

JULIE

You can make sense of all that?

NEMO

It's a navigational chart hidden inside
the text of a simple story. Longitudes,
latitudes, they're all here. But it will
take some time to decipher.

(he kisses her hand)

Good night, Julie. And thank you.

As he starts to leave --

JULIE

Was she beautiful?

Nemo turns.

JULIE

The princess. Was she beautiful?

NEMO

Very.

EXT. CLIFF DWELLING - SAME

Ned watches from the shadows as Nemo leaves Julie's dwelling.

INT. JULIE'S DWELLING - LATER

Julie is standing in front of a cracked, salvaged mirror
holding the dress in front of her, posing. Ned enters.

NED

All I got was a pair of socks.

JULIE

Would it hurt you to knock?

Ned taps the whiskey bottle against the entrance frame.

NED

You and the Captain all chummy now?

JULIE

You still don't trust him, do you?

NED

Not even if he was squirming at the end
of my harpoon.

She grabs the bottle from his hand. Takes a drink.

JULIE

I think you're jealous.

He takes the bottle. Takes a gulp.

NED

Then you don't know me very well. 'Cause
if there's one lesson I've learned in
this life, it's that nothing is more
dangerous for a man who values his
freedom than a woman who values hers.

She gets right in his face, her lips close to his.

JULIE

I dare you.

A beat. And then they kiss. Mutually. Passionately. As they
do, they back toward the entrance. Then Julie gently pulls
away. Smiles.

JULIE

You're free to go now.

She grabs the bottle from his hand and closes the door in his
face. Then she smiles, takes a drink.

CUT TO:

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND BASE - NEXT DAY

Lots of activity as the crew prepares for the next voyage.

INT. MINE TUNNEL - SAME

Ned, Serko, and several of Nemo's ISLANDERS shovel coal into
mine cars. Others push the cars through the tunnel toward the
Nautilus dock. Ned is quiet, brooding.

NEMO (O.S.)

Mr. Land!

Nemo, Scar, the Tattoo'd Native, and two others are facing Ned. Armed with REAL RIFLES. Looks like an execution squad.

NEMO

We're going to gather food for the long journey ahead. Perhaps you'll join us.

NED

I can feel the bullet in my back already.
No thanks.

NEMO

Unfortunate. I thought you might like some meat during your final voyage.

NED

Final --
(beat)
Did you say meat?

EXT. CAVERN - LATER

Ned, Nemo, and the Crewmen are in the dinghy, ready to shove off as Julie runs down the docks wearing the dress.

The crewmen stare as Nemo takes her hand, helps her on to the dinghy. Ned doesn't like it one bit. It shows.

JULIE

Didn't think I was going to pass up a day
at the beach did you?

She sits beside Nemo. The crewmen shove off, row the dinghy into a small cave-tunnel until they reach a dead end.

Mechanical gears grind and the dead end opens. WATER cascades from a WATERFALL on the other side. They pass through...

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

...and into the ocean. A SMALL TROPICAL ISLAND is on the horizon. The crewmen raise a MAST and set SAIL for it.

NEMO

There, Mr. Land. That is where we hunt.

EXT. TROPICAL ISLAND - LATER

The dinghy rests on the beach. Nemo and the crewmen grab gear and real rifles. He hands a rifle to Julie.

NEMO

Stay close to the shore and you'll be fine. The island is uninhabited.

Julie heads to the surf, waves to Ned and the crew.

JULIE

Happy hunting.

Nemo grabs supplies. Ned has his eye on the rifles.

NEMO

Tell me, is it true you were a deserter from your Union Army?

NED

You lookin' to bag yourself a reward?

NEMO

I wish only to appease my curiosity. You don't strike me as the type --

NED

Let's just say I'd seen enough of what man can do to his fellow man.

NEMO

Then you and I are not so very different.

Nemo hands a rifle to Ned. He can't believe it. One shot and he's a free man. Nemo knows exactly what he's thinking.

NEMO

I lost four of my best men in Sumeria. If you'll join me on this next voyage and stop being a nuisance, you'll be free to go when we return. I'll leave you with enough riches so you can spend the rest of your life any way you please.

NED

Last time someone made me an offer like that, I ended up with you.

NEMO

I would consider that a blessing.

EXT. TROPICAL ISLAND - JUNGLE - LATER

Ned and Nemo walk through the jungle, followed by the others.

They come across the RUSTED REMAINS of old EQUIPMENT and STRUCTURES. Like a small, defunct shipyard.

NED

I thought this island was uninhabited?

NEMO

It is. Now. This is where I built the Nautilus.

NED

You built it.

NEMO

With the help of a few of my loyal countrymen and the island's natives who now live with us in the volcano. The parts were manufactured all over the world, sent to different addresses under different names and then brought here, piece by piece --

Ned motions for silence. A WILD BOAR is grazing not too far from them. Crewmen raise their rifles; the boar takes off running. Everyone chases after it...

EXT. TROPICAL ISLAND - BEACH - SAME

Julie walks along the beach until it comes to a rocky end. She set down her rifle and climbs up the rocks...

From the top of the rocks she sees -- a WARSHIP. Anchored in a secluded cove.

JULIE

A ship?

She watches as a flag is raised. It's an OTTOMAN FLAG! She loses her footing, slides down into the cove...and catches the attention of several OTTOMAN SOLDIERS.

She tries to climb back up the rocky wall but it's insurmountable from this side.

EXT. JUNGLE - SAME

Ned and Nemo both come to a stop. Facing each other across a small RIVER BED. They're all alone. The BOAR between them. But they are ignoring the boar and instead staring intently at each other.

Then, as if on cue, they both raise their rifles aiming at each other. Their eyes narrow...

...and they FIRE simultaneously. When the smoke clears, they're both standing...and there is a DEAD OTTOMAN SOLDIER behind each of them. They just saved each other's lives.

More Ottomans charge out of the jungle. Ned and Nemo shoot and fight their way through them. But more keep coming...

EXT. COVE - SAME

Ottoman soldiers are chasing Julie. She runs toward the jungle...just as Ned and Nemo come running out --

JULIE

Run!

NED

Run!

-- with a dozen Ottomans chasing them!

Ned and Nemo practically run into Julie, see the Ottomans chasing her...and the ones chasing them. They are surrounded.

ELSEWHERE

Nemo's crewmen are hidden in the jungle, watching everything. They sprint back to the dinghy.

EXT. OTTOMAN SHIP - HOURS LATER

Julie, Ned, and Nemo are tied to a mast.

JULIE

Here we are again. All tied up and nowhere to go.

NED

Just keep quiet. I have a plan.

JULIE

(to Nemo)

Ned's escape plans are notorious for their lack of escape.

NED

You messed up the last one! Not me!

JULIE

Fine. Let's hear it.

NED

I don't have time to go over it.

JULIE

Right. And what if I have a plan?

NED

Then I'd like to hear it.

JULIE

I don't have time to go over it.

NEMO

Were you two ever married?

NED

She's not my type!

JULIE

He's not my type!

Ker Karraje walks on deck. Sizes up his prisoners as he walks around the mast. Stops in front of Ned.

KER KARRAJE

This one we don't need.

He stops in front of Julie. Looks at her lecherously.

KER KARRAJE

This one we can find a use for.

Then he stops in front of Nemo.

KER KARRAJE

This one...must be *no one*. I believe we have something of yours.

Ottoman soldiers drag the young Indian crewman onto the deck.

KER KARRAJE

He's not very good at keeping your secrets. He lead us right here to your island in exchange for his life.

They drop him in front of Nemo. He is clearly dead.

KER KARRAJE

Unfortunately, I'm not very good at keeping my word.

NEMO

You will die for that.

In a flash, Karraje has a KNIFE at Nemo's throat.

KER KARRAJE

You're lucky I need you alive or you would join him.

EXT. OTTOMAN SHIP - SAILING - LATER

The ship is out to sea. The island a speck in the distance. Ned is at the end of a PLANK, tied up.

Ottomans are laughing, throwing stuff at Ned. More Ottomans restrain Julie; Nemo is still tied to the mast.

In the water below are hundreds of deadly bulbous JELLYFISH.

KER KARRAJE

They look harmless, but one sting will cause pain that you could never imagine. Two will paralyze you. Three will stop your heart.

(beat)

So pray that you drown.

JULIE

Let him go!

KER KARRAJE

You'll be joining him as soon as we're finished with you

(to Nemo)

Where are the six stones?

Nemo remains silent, shows no emotion.

NED

I'll be more than happy to tell you myself! Let the girl go, and I'll take you to them.

JULIE

No! I'll take you if you let him go.

NED

Julie!

(through clenched teeth)

I have a plan.

Karraje draws his sword, cuts the top button off Julie's dress. Looks at her sadistically.

KER KARRAJE

You will take me anyway.

Julie spits in his face. Karraje doesn't flinch or wipe the spittle off his face, he laps it up with his tongue. Then aims his gun at Ned.

KER KARRAJE

Walk.

Ned doesn't move. Then Karraje puts the pistol barrel up to Julie's temple.

KER KARRAJE

One of you dies. The choice is yours.

Ned is stuck between a walk and a dead place. Julie and Ned look at each other. We can tell that they really care for each other, but afraid to admit it.

JULIE

Ned!

He shakes his head, *don't say a word*. Offers a slight smile.

NED

It was a good plan.

And with that he steps off the plank. But instead of a splash we hear...CLANK!

Karraje and the Ottomans rush to the edge, see --

Ned standing on the surface of the ocean!

Or so it would appear. Until --

The Nautilus rises up beneath him!

The Ottoman ship tips to a forty-five degree angle as the Nautilus continues to rise beneath it.

Ottomans grab onto anything they can, sliding and falling across the sloping deck. Karraje slides into the open hold.

Julie grabs hold of a mast rope to keep from falling. As the ship tilts, she pulls herself toward the end of the mast.

ON THE NAUTILUS

Hatches open and the entire CREW emerges, armed with the electric guns.

As the Ottomans pop up over the edge of their tilting ship, Nemo's crewmen pick them off with electric pellets.

Serko, Scar, and the Native throw GRAPPLING HOOKS over the side of the Ottoman ship and scale its tilting hull.

Ned is right there with them.

ON THE OTTOMAN SHIP

It's like fighting in a funhouse. Everything at an angle. Almost impossible to move without hanging onto something.

The Native slices through Nemo's ropes, frees him. Then hands Nemo his sword. Nemo ends up face to face with Ned.

NEMO

You were willing to betray me.

NED

You were willing to let them kill me! So
let's call it even --

(he fends off an attacker;
takes his sword)

-- and teach these thugs some manners!

Julie SCREAMS. Ned sees her clinging to the end of the mast, out over the water. He swashbuckles his way to her...

Ker Karraje climbs from the hold, fires his pistol. Almost hits Nemo. Nemo slashes his way toward him...

...as Ned works his way toward the mast. He sees an Ottoman coming up behind Serko.

NED

Serko!

Ned throws his sword like a dart. It WHIZZES past Serko's ear and stabs the Ottoman behind him in the forehead.

Serko nods to Ned. *Thank you, I owe you one.*

Ned grabs another sword from a dead Ottoman, continues...

ON THE NAUTILUS

Crewmen continue the electrifying assault. Aronnax appears on deck. Ducks the gunfire, dives into a dinghy...

ON THE OTTOMAN SHIP

Nemo makes his way to Ker Kerraje. Ker Karraje tosses his pistol and draws his sword. The two warriors go mano y mano. And in case you're wondering: Nemo = Badass.

Elsewhere, Ned climbs onto the mast, tries to get to Julie.

Meanwhile, other Ottomans hoist a CANNON up the sloping deck. Position it to fire at the Nautilus. The fuse is lit...and then the cannon rolls back down the sloping deck, points straight up...and FIRES!

Everyone looks up. Wondering where the cannonball will drop.

It drops on the mast. Right between Ned and Julie. Julie's end dangles down, hanging on by a thread... right over the deadly jellyfish.

JULIE

Ned! Help!

Ned crawls along the mast toward Julie. The ship buckles. He loses his footing, almost falls into the water.

An Ottoman isn't so lucky and falls into the sea. He screams in agony as he is engulfed by the jellyfish.

Up above: hand-over-hand, hanging under the mast, Ned shimmies his way toward Julie, risking life and limb...

...as the Ottoman ship tilts even further, almost dipping Julie into the jellyfish infested waters.

Ned struggles valiantly to get to her. Finally makes it to the end of the mast. Reaches down to her...

...just as Aronnax rows under her in the dinghy.

ARONNAX

Going my way?

Julie smiles, drops into the dinghy. Gives Aronnax a big hug.

JULIE

Pierre! You saved my life!

ARONNAX

I'm capable of a little derring-do myself, you know.

They row away, leaving Ned dangling thanklessly above them.

ON NEMO AND KER KARRAJE

Swashbuckling like the best of 'em. As the ship flounders, Nemo gets the upper-hand and stabs Karraje right through the shoulder, nailing him to the ship.

NEMO

A captain always goes down with his ship.

EXT. NAUTILUS - MOMENTS LATER

The gunfight is still raging as Nemo, Ned, and the others reach the deck. Aronnax row up on the other side with Julie.

Then dozens of surviving Ottomans leap onto the deck.

NEMO
Everyone down below!

INT. NAUTILUS - HELM - SAME

Nemo, Ned, Aronnax, and Julie stand before the helm windows.
Outside: the Nautilus deck is crawling with Ottomans.

NEMO
Vile bloodthirsty animals.

NED
Couldn't agree more. So let's dive and
let the jellyfish have at 'em.

Nemo doesn't do anything. Almost all of the Ottomans are on
deck now. Several of them try to open the hatches.

Then Ker Karraje appears on deck, bleeding from his wounded
shoulder, holding Nemo's sword.

NED
Any day now, Cap'n.

Karraje walk up to the helm window. Stares at Nemo, POUNDS on
the glass, yelling (but we can't hear him).

NEMO
Now.

A crewman pulls a lever and the outside of the Nautilus
becomes ELECTRIFIED!

Ottomans start smoking, cooking instantly from the inside out
as if strapped to a giant electric chair.

At the helm window: Ker Karraje screams silently as his body
smokes and his flesh melts away...until he is nothing more
than a SMOULDERING SKELETON.

Aronnax gags. Julie and Ned stares in shock. Nemo acts as if
he no more than killed some roaches.

NEMO
I'm sorry we didn't have a chance to get
your meat, Mr. Land.

NED
S'okay. I think I just lost my appetite.

KA-BOOM! A blast rocks the Nautilus. Outside one of the "eye"
windows they see the second OTTOMAN SHIP approaching.

NEMO
Ahead full!

A Navigator pulls a lever. The speed increases. Ramming speed. They are heading straight for the ship. The Ottoman ship fires more CANON BLASTS.

NEMO
Close shield!

Another lever is pulled. Steel "lids" close over the eyes. But Nemo's eyes remain open, focused, unfeeling. Canon balls ping off the hull.

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie looks at each other. Surely he's not--

NEMO
Brace yourselves.

EXT. OTTOMAN SHIP - SAME

The TURKISH SAILORS scurry around in a panic, watching as the Nautilus speeds toward them and sinks below the surface...

INT. OTTOMAN HULL - SAME

The Ottomans try to flee as the Nautilus's LANCE NOSE pierces through the hull. One unlucky Ottoman is skewered on the end as water rushes in...

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - SAME

Ned, Aronnax, and Julie are flung around like they're in sever turbulence as the ship shudders. A HORRIBLE SOUND fills the ship. Like twisting metal.

And then silence. Nemo turns to Julie.

NEMO
Now you have your revenge.

But she's not so sure she wants it anymore.

EXT. SEA - SAME

The flaming Ottoman ship sinks into the sea as the glowing wake of the Nautilus disappears on the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Not the D.C. we know today. There are no monuments and the CAPITAL BUILDING is under (re)construction;

its dome surrounded by scaffolding. Several BLACK and WHITE workers hoist the BRONZE FREEDOM STATUE onto the dome.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME

Farragut is standing in his room, watching the Capital construction from his window. ADMIRAL MASON enters.

ADMIRAL MASON

You're looking good, Commander.

FARRAGUT

I feel good, Admiral. Any news? How soon can you get me back out there?

ADMIRAL MASON

They're still debating. The War Department wants us to try to capture it so they can build a fleet of their own.

FARRAGUT

Capture it!? What are we supposed to do, throw a net over it and reel it in? We need to destroy it before it attacks again.

ADMIRAL MASON

I agree.

FARRAGUT

Good. Because I know how to find it.

Farragut close the door and then pulls a map out from under his mattress. It is filled with notations and marks.

FARRAGUT

A ship of that size is going to have to refuel on a fairly regular basis. But it can't just pull into any old port. It has to have its own source. Based on when and where it has been seen, the distance it traveled, and my best estimates of its size and speed --

He circles an area in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

FARRAGUT

-- I've pinpointed that source.

ADMIRAL MASON

That's a rather large area.

FARRAGUT

That's why I'll need the entire fleet.

ADMIRAL MASON

The entire fleet! You better stay in bed another month!

FARRAGUT

That thing killed my men. *Our* men, Admiral. And a very close friend. We need all the firepower --

ADMIRAL MASON

One ship, Commander. But do not engage. You find this thing's nest then you can have the fleet.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTARCTICA - DAY

Miles and miles of ice, glaciers, and snow. Quiet. Serene. Untouched. Until the Nautilus SHOOTs UP through the ice and comes to a rest on top of a FROZEN LAKE.

INT. NAUTILUS SALON - SAME

The inside of the ship is covered with a thin layer of ice. Ned, Julie, and Aronnax are looking out the window, wearing FURS. All that is visible is a solid layer of ice.

Nemo enters with a crewman carrying several pairs of boots.

NED

This is the island in the south you were talking about? Antarctica!?

NEMO

Ten thousand years ago it was a tropical paradise.

NED

Then let's come back when they re-open.

The crewman sets the boots on the table. Julie examines one. Very sharp "teeth" protrude from the soles.

NEMO

Shark-teeth, Miss Fleischer. You will find them quite helpful on the ice.

EXT. ICE LAKE - LATER

Nemo, Ned, Aronnax, Julie and a dozen crewmen -- dressed in FUR and goggles, carrying electric rifles -- march across the ice with their shark-tooth boots. They all use walking sticks for balance; Ned carries a HARPOON.

Nemo stops when they reach a small HILL OF ICE. He removes his goggles and gloves. Takes some navigational measurements, consults a map.

NEMO

This is it. We're here.

Nemo bellows a COMMAND. His men raise their electric rifles and BLAST the hill of ice with hundreds of ELECTRIC PELLETS.

The ice drips away, partially exposing something underneath until we see the semblance of an ANCIENT SAILING VESSEL --

JULIE

Zisudra's ship.

INT. ZISUDRA'S SHIP - LATER

Nemo, Ned, Julie, Aronnax and the crew step into the ancient ship. We say ancient, but it is both ancient and modern at the same time. Something from a civilization that gave rise to Sumeria, Egypt, India...

NED

This lost world you're looking for?
They're the ones who built this?

NEMO

As I said, their knowledge was quite advanced.

NED

Where'd they get the knowledge?

NEMO

That is a mystery for another day.

The METAL WALLS are covered with HIEROGLYPHICS. And in the center of what looks like the helm: a FROZEN BODY. Wearing armor. The swirling NAUTILUS SPIRAL on his chest plate.

And in his hands: the SEVENTH STONE KEY. Nemo breaks it loose. Holds it up to the light.

NEMO

The last piece of the puzzle.

EXT. ANTARCTIC SKY - DAY

General Anson's AIRSHIP flies over the frozen continent. Anson and his men, freezing, scan the horizon. One of them spies a TINY BLACK SPOT several miles ahead...

BRITISH SOLDIER

Sir! You might want to look at this.

Anson takes the binoculars, observes.

GENERAL ANSON

Our Ottoman friends are proving to be quite useless. Load the cannons.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - SAME

Nemo leads Ned, Julie, Aronnax and his crew away from the ship and across the ice toward the distant Nautilus. Suddenly, the ice EXPLODES in front of them...

...and then a DARK SHADOW falls over the ice. They look up and see: the Airship. Flying a British flag. Four cannons aimed at them.

Nemo and his crewmen instinctively raise their guns to fire back...but they used all their ammo "thawing" the ship.

They try to run but another EXPLOSION cuts them off. They take cover behind scattered ice formations.

NED

Seems like someone is always crashing your party, Captain.

The Airship hovers above the ice. General Anson and two Brits (wearing hoods, goggles) walk onto the ice while the other Brits train rifles and cannons on Nemo's crew.

GENERAL ANSON

We do not wish to kill you, but we will. All we want are the artifacts.

(beat)

I know you're there, Nemo. You have one minute to make your choice.

ON NEMO, NED, THE OTHERS

Bunkered down behind the ice formations. Ned looks at Nemo suspiciously.

NED

Looks like the Brits want to make the world a happy place just like you, Captain. Maybe we should join forces.

NEMO

They are butchers. Do not trust them.

ARONNAX

We'll never make it back to the ship.

Julie looks at Ned's harpoon.

JULIE

Are you as good with that as you say you are?

NED

Even better.

ON ANSON AND HIS MEN

Waiting. Then Nemo appears, holding the seventh stone key.

He approaches General Anson. Stands face to face with him, though neither can see each other's face.

GENERAL ANSON

Let me see your face.

Nemo slowly removes his hood and his goggles.

NEMO

How do you know my name?

General Anson removes his own hood and goggles.

GENERAL ANSON

Because I gave it to you.

Nemo fills with rage when he sees him. He lunges at Anson. Anson's men quickly pull him off, clock him in the jaw with the butt of their rifles. Nemo drops to his knees, bleeding.

GENERAL ANSON

I'll remember to be more thorough the next time I kill you.

Nemo now realizes that it was general Anson who shot him in the back and killed his family.

He lunges again like a wild animal and gets hit hard by the Brits' rifles two more times.

Nemo is back on his knees, bloodied and bruised. General Anson picks up the stone key while Nemo, undetected, removes a shark tooth from his boot.

NEMO

Why my family? They did nothing to you.

GENERAL ANSON

You ruined my life, Hin-doo. I was blamed for your rebellion. My men and I were stripped of our rank and honor, and now we're forced to live like outlaws. Just like you.

NEMO

You and I...are nothing alike.

GENERAL ANSON

We're after the same thing, aren't we?

General Anson removes Dakkar's journal from his coat.

GENERAL ANSON

I know what you're looking for. And now you're going to help me get it.

At that instant, Ned leaps up and hurls the harpoon. It passes right through the balloon of the Airship. Air HISSES out of the hole, and the ship sways uncontrollably...

...creating enough of a distraction for Nemo to slash the throat of one of the armed Brits with the shark tooth and to slice the leg of the other one with his shark-tooth boot.

Nemo grabs one of their rifles, is about to shoot Anson...

...when the nose of the Airship SLAMS into the ice, causing a huge FISSURE.

Nemo loses his balance. The rifle falls into the water. Anson loses his grip on the stone and it rolls across the ice.

ON NED AND THE OTHERS

The frozen lake starts to split apart. Three of Nemo's crewmen are sucked under the ice.

The ice splits apart all around Julie and Aronnax. They barely keep their balance.

NED

Get back to the ship!

Aronnax and Julie start running, leaping from ice chunk to ice chunk. Nemo's crew stays. Loyal to the end.

They see the Brits dropping ANCHORS, getting the Airship back under control. And loading her CANNONS. They run across the cracking ice toward --

NEMO AND ANSON

The ice spiderwebs all around them, cracking under their weight. The stone key teeters equidistant between them.

They both make a play for it. The stone slides away, teeters on the edge of the shattered ice, ready to fall into the water at any moments.

Nemo and Anson fight on the ice. Anson falls, Nemo stands over him ready to crush his face with the shark-tooth boot.

Anson grabs onto the boot, forces it away from his face...and sends Nemo flying back onto the ice.

Anson is about to grab the stone when the ice gives way. He falls into the water and is carried away under the ice.

Nemo grabs the stone key just before it falls into the water.

General Anson breaks up through the ice further away. He climbs out. Nemo stares him down. A great divide now prevents him from going after him.

Ned appears. Aims a rifle at General Anson and then...Nemo pushes the barrel just as Ned fires, causing him to miss.

NEMO

He dies by no hand but my own.

But now he's too far away. Revenge will have to wait.

ON JULIE, AND ARONNAX

Heading toward the Nautilus. ICE breaks apart, shoots up all around it. Then CANNON BALLS land. And BULLETS strike.

A huge CHASM appears in the ice, growing wider and wider separating them from the Nautilus.

Julie loses her balance and is about to fall into the freezing water when Ned shows up and pulls her back. She falls into his arms.

NED

Right back where we started.

JULIE

Such is my luck.

He grabs her and leaps across the chasm. Nemo and the others follow. Aronnax is about to leap when a BULLET hits him. He SCREAMS in pain, falls.

JULIE
Professor!

He's stuck on the other side. The chasm too wide to jump now. But Ned is about to try when another cannon ball BLASTS the ice, knocking him over. A new fissure spreads out, coming right at Ned and Julie like a freight train.

Ned knows there's no way to save Aronnax. So does Aronnax.

ARONNAX
Go on...without me. I'm afraid...this is
where...I get off.

He passes out. Dies? We're not sure. Ned grabs Julie. Has to force her to run as she keeps looking back, upset.

ON THE NAUTILUS

Huge chunks of ICE shoot up around the Nautilus. Nemo and his men make it on deck and disappear down the hatches as --

Ned and Julie run across the ice, trying to beat the fissure.

NED
Hold the boat! Hold the boat!

They leap onto the Nautilus. Ned and Julie take one last look back. See two Brits, rifles in hand, running toward Aronnax.

Ned and Julie drop into the hatch. Seal it.

EXT. ICE LAKE - AIRSHIP - DAY

General Anson, shivering and wrapped in a blanket, is on the deck of the Airship. Watching as the Nautilus disappears beneath the crumbling ice.

GENERAL ANSON
Get this balloon repaired now!

Anson looks back out at the ice. Sees his men carrying Aronnax's lifeless body toward them.

CUT TO:

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - LATER

Ned and Julie look out the "eyes" as the navigators steer the Nautilus away from the hazardous ice. Both seem quite somber. Nemo enters, followed by crewmen carrying the metal case containing the stone keys.

NED

What's the story with you and the Union Jackass?

NEMO

He murdered my countrymen and my family, then he shot me in the back and left me for dead. It is my blessing and my curse that I survived.

Nemo removes the stones, placing them one-by-one on a golden stands that looks like an ancient compass.

JULIE

He's behind everything. He's the one who stole the maps...and killed my father.

NED

What's his interest in these? He doesn't seem like the saving-the-world type.

NEMO

There is more than one way to use knowledge, Mr. Land.

NED

You're sure these rocks will help us find the lost world?

NEMO

We don't have to find it. They take us.

Nemo places the seventh stone in the center of the spiral. And then, as if they contained some kind of magnetic energy, they begin to vibrate.

The rock crumbles, revealing seven GOLDEN OBJECTS underneath. Each has a UNIQUE GLOWING SYMBOL carved into its surface.

The Navigators look startled as the Nautilus stops and turns one hundred and eighty degrees...on its own.

NEMO

We are all just along for the ride now.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTARCTICA - NIGHT

The Airship's balloon is repaired and slowly re-inflating. A Brit bandages Aronnax's leg.

ARONNAX

You're sure there's no bullet in there?
I'm quite sure I felt it.

BRITISH SOLDIER

It just grazed you.

ARONNAX

Perhaps there's one lodged in my back. I
was certain that I was dying. My life
flashed before my eyes.

General Anson walks on deck.

GENERAL ANSON

I do apologize for the leg, professor. I
had no idea you were a civilian being
held prisoner by that madman.

ARONNAX

I wasn't a prisoner. And he's not a
madman. He wants to help the world. He
means no harm.

GENERAL ANSON

He is a terrorist! In India, he led a
rebellion that cost thousands of innocent
lives. What he hopes to discover is
something that will cost millions more.

ARONNAX

Cures for disease? An end to poverty?

GENERAL ANSON

Do not fall for his lies.

General Anson places Dakkar's journal in front of Aronnax.
Opened to a page with a terrifying picture of LORD SHIVA, THE
DESTROYER. A beam of energy shoots out of the god's third
eye, incinerating the planet. It's chilling.

GENERAL ANSON

That is what he wants, professor. The Eye
of Shiva, an ancient weapon that will
bring the civilized world to its knees.

ARONNAX

And what do you want?

GENERAL ANSON

Only to make sure it doesn't end up in
uncivilized hands.

Aronnax's not sure who to trust at this point. Anson picks up a sharp medical instrument, examines it rather ominously.

GENERAL ANSON

So if you have any information that might help, the world will be in your debt.

ARONNAX

Will you promise not to harm him? Or any of his people?

GENERAL ANSON

Of course.

ARONNAX

And if there's no weapon you let him go.

GENERAL ANSON

You have my word.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDER THE SEA - DAY

The Nautilus sails past a series of active UNDERWATER VOLCANOS spewing lava.

INT. NAUTILUS - HELM - SAME

Ned, Julie, and Nemo are at the window. The whole room is bathed in a RED GLOW. Everyone is sweating, watching the volcanic eruptions outside.

NED

You better hurry up and find what you're looking for or we're all gonna start cooking in this oven.

NEMO

Patience, Mr. Land. It's just ahead.

The Nautilus passes right between two of the volcano and we get our first good view of --

THE LOST WORLD

The RUINS of an entire ancient city designed in concentric circles. Protected by the circle of volcanoes. LAVA flows through what were once canals.

NEMO

What was lost, has now been found.

Julie looks out in awe.

JULIE

It's here. It's really here.

NEMO

Your father was right, Julie.

JULIE

So were you.

They pass over the ruins. Strange, never before seen FISH swim in and out of the ruins and crumbling statues. Ned sees the remains of several ships.

NED

I'm seeing it. But I'm still not believing it.

NEMO

Perhaps you need a closer look.

EXT. LOST WORLD - UNDER WATER - LATER

The Nautilus hovers over the lost world. The dive doors open and the brass rings lower the divers.

Nemo, Ned, and Julie land on a crumbling road. Their helmets are different this time. Each one has a small ANTENNA protruding from it.

Nemo motions for them to turn small BRASS KNOBS on their chest guard. As they do --

NEMO

Can you hear me?

-- they hear Nemo's voice. They look duly impressed by the early (and as yet undiscovered) radio technology.

NEMO

They don't have much range so stay close.

The divers walk through the ruins, like astronauts on a strange planet. The architecture is like an advanced version of Egypt/Ancient India.

Their destination is just ahead: a towering ZIGGURAT.

Nemo leads. Followed by Ned and Julie. Then Serko and Eye-Patch carrying the metal case. The rest follow. All armed with the electric guns.

A CRUMBLING STONE BRIDGE

Leads to the front of the Ziggurat. LAVA flows like a river beneath it, surrounding the Ziggurat like a moat.

NED

Your lost world looks a lot like Hell.

Nemo crosses first. A few pieces of the bridge crumble underfoot, but he makes it across. The others follow.

EXT. ZIGGURAT - UNDER WATER

They climb the steps to the entrance. A sealed door is covered with hieroglyphics. Nemo "reads" them.

Nemo removes one of the golden keys from the case, holds it up to its corresponding symbol on the door. Both symbols GLOW. And the door opens.

NED

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.

INT. ZIGGURAT - GROUND FLOOR

They enter an enormous, empty chamber. The door seals behind them. No way out. Nowhere to go.

But there is a symbol on the floor.

Nemo holds a second golden key over the matching symbol. Both GLOW and the floor rises, carrying them toward the ceiling.

It looks like they might be crushed. But the ceiling opens. The floor stops at the foot of three steps. At the top --

SIX STATUES

The half-men/half-fish divine beings (like those in Sumeria). Each wears a breastplate containing their unique symbol.

NED

Who are these guys?

NEMO

The Seven Sages, guardians of all knowledge.

Nemo places the six stone keys in the corresponding palms...and then the wall opens, revealing --

THE LIBRARY

An endless maze filled with thousands of CRYSTAL SKULLS. They all walk inside the enormous chamber.

NEMO

Every secret, every answer to every question man has ever had is within our reach.

Ned picks up one of the skulls.

NED

Where are all the books?

NEMO

Those are the books, Mr. Land. The skulls of Shiva.

Nemo places a crystal skull on an ALTAR-LIKE PODIUM. A BRIGHT LIGHT shoots into the crystal and the DOMED CEILING is filled with ANCIENT WRITING projected from within.

JULIE

I wish my father could have seen this.

Julie examines a skull, peers through it...looks around...and SOMETHING PASSES through her line of site. Too fast for us to see. Julie jumps, drops the skull.

JULIE

There's something in here.

Everyone looks around. See nothing. Nemo motions for three crewmen to investigate.

NEMO

Whatever it was, I'm sure we scared it away.

Nemo replaces the crystal skull, motions for them to move on.

ON AN INVESTIGATING CREWMAN

His helmet light shines down a corridor. A SHAPE flies past in a superfast BLUR. Or maybe he just imagined it...

He turns a corner and something flies right at him. Before he can register what it is, or even scream, it engulfs him.

ON NEMO AND THE OTHERS

They reach a spiralling stone staircase. Step by step they wind their way to the upper chamber of the Ziggurat...

INT. UPPER ANTECHAMBER

The Seventh Sage stands guard, holding a TRIDENT. On his breastplate is the NAUTILUS SPIRAL.

NED

All your knowledge is downstairs,
Captain. There something else you're
looking for?

NEMO

Knowledge is power, Mr. Land. And the
greatest knowledge of all --

Nemo places the seventh key in the sage's palm. The floor rises and the ceiling SPIRALS open above them. When it stops they are --

INT. SHIVA TEMPLE

Home to a COLOSSAL SHIVA STATUE. Six arms. Three eyes. Serpent draped over his shoulder. Trident in his hand.

NEMO

-- is the Will of God.

The statue stands on a six foot tall base. On the base: an engraving of a LARGE EYE. The pupil: a nautilus spiral.

Nemo presses his hand against the spiral. A BRIGHT LIGHT blasts out. And then the base opens, revealing --

THE EYE OF SHIVA

A green crystal (the size of a football) surrounded by a metallic structure and gyro mechanisms. It does indeed resemble an eye. Or an ancient bomb.

JULIE

What is it?

NEMO

The Eye of Shiva.

INT. LIBRARY - SAME

The two other investigating crewmen continue to search.

One of them finds a HOLE in the crumbling wall. Leans down. Shines his helmet light inside. Sees something. Reaches in and pulls out...a DIVE HELMET. Head still inside.

And then a TENTACLE whips out and pulls him into the hole.

INSIDE THE HOLE

Make that: NEST. Filled with dozens of squirming GIANT SQUID. Each with a body ten feet long and twenty more feet of tentacles. And they're not happy to be disturbed.

The crewman registers a second of panic before being ripped apart. He lets out a HORRIBLE SCREAM. Then the SQUID swim en masse out through the hole...

INT. SHIVA TEMPLE

Everyone hears the SCREAM in their helmets.

NED

Whatever was swimming around down there,
I think they found it.

Serko grabs the Eye...

...just as three SQUID swim into the chamber. A crewman is quickly engulfed.

Everyone BLASTS away with electric guns...

The squid wrap their tentacles around the crewman like anacondas...and his oxygen tank BURSTS causing a mini pressurized explosion that blows out the chamber wall.

The crewmen are scattered, blown all over the place. The seventh sage is shattered. His TRIDENT lands near Ned. Ned picks it up...

...as two more SQUID swim into the room. Crewmen fire at them, electrify them. Then see that more are on their way.

Crewmen struggle to close the door, but a dozen tentacles work their way through.

NED

Nice work, Captain. You brought us right
into a nest of giant squid.

NEMO

This way!

Nemo motions toward the GAPING HOLE in the wall caused by the explosion. They all go through...

EXT. ZIGGURAT - TOP

...and stand on the narrow ledge overlooking the ancient ruins. And the MOAT OF LAVA ten stories below them.

JULIE
There's no way down!

They see the Nautilus in the distance.

Nemo boldly leaps off the ledge...and freefalls (more floating then falling since they're in water) down along the side of the Ziggurat, occasionally bumping off the side.

He lands safely, just missing the Lava Moat.

Then Ned, Julie, and the others JUMP. Serko and the Native jump while holding the Eye.

INT. ZIGGURAT UPPER CHAMBER - SAME

Tentacles flail all over the place as a dozen squid blast into the room, engulfing the crewmen who were trying to close the door on them.

The surviving crewmen run for the hole-in-the-wall, dive out headfirst...

EXT. ZIGGURAT - DOWN BELOW

Ned and Julie land safely near Nemo. Serko and the Native land on the bridge...but it gives way under the Native. He dangles over the LAVA holding onto the Eye of Shiva...which is held by Serko...

...who is losing his footing, about to be pulled in...

...until the Native realizes what is happening. He lets go of the Eye and falls into the lava.

INT. UPPER CHAMBER - SAME

The Squid finally squeeze through the door...

EXT. ZIGGARUT - SAME

...and blast out of the hole like bats from a belfry. They see their free-falling prey and make for them like dive bombers.

A DIVE-BOMBING SQUID catches a crewman and wraps its tentacles around him. The crewman struggles...

...as they both fall into the MOAT OF LAVA.

The other squid fly toward the rest of their escaping prey.

DOWN IN THE RUINS

Ned and the others see the swarm of dive-bombing squid make mincemeat out of the crewmen.

NED

Only thing worse then seafood...is when
you're the seafood.

Ned holds a gun in one hand, the trident in the other.

NED

So let's fry us up a mess of calamari.

And here come the squid.

Ned, Nemo, and everyone else open fire. It's an underwater,
electrified alien bug-hunt.

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - SAME

A hundred yards away. The two Navigators see the ELECTRIC
BLASTS up ahead. They spring into action, drive the Nautilus
forward, dragging anchors...

EXT. RUINS - SAME

Blue fingers of electricity are hitting everything. Squid are
fried, emitting HORRIBLE SQUEAKING SCREAMS as they go down.

BLOOD clouds the water. LAVA bubbles all around. It is Hell.

NEMO

Hold them! The Nautilus is on its way!

Eye-Patch is swarmed, carried away by a squid...right over
the lava. He fires his rifle into the squid's beak. Both he
and the beast are engulfed in the electric fingers and
plummet into the lava.

ON THE FRONT LINES

Ned leads the assault. But a SQUID gets through and wraps its
tentacles around him, shakes him around.

Serko looks at Ned, wants to help --

NEMO

Serko! Leave him! Protect the Eye!

Serko looks at Nemo, looks at Ned. Then sets the eye down and
goes hand-to-hand with the beast. Julie provides cover,
firing at other squid.

Serko pulls the squid's beak apart. It shrieks as blood shoots out.

Ned is freed. But Julie runs out of ammo. A PAIR of angry SQUID descend upon Serko.

Ned grabs the trident, dips it into the lava, creating WHITE HOT weapon.

He stabs one of the squid in the eye. It smokes, screams. Then Ned stabs the other squid. It floats away, dead.

Serko falls to the ground, unconscious.

NED

Hang in there, buddy. I got you.

Ned grabs him, carries him over his shoulder.

Up ahead, Nemo is carrying the eye. The surviving crewmen lumber toward the Nautilus, firing away at the squid swarm as they keep coming and coming...

BENEATH THE NAUTILUS

Nemo, Ned, Julie and the survivors grab the brass rings and are pulled into the hull, blasting at squid all the way up.

INT. NAUTILUS - DIVE CHAMBER - SAME

They make it inside, still firing as the floor hatch closes.

Safe.

Not quite.

A squid is inside with them. It thrashes about, swiping at everyone as the chamber slowly drains.

Its tentacle wrap around Nemo's throat, choking him. A crewman raises his gun, but Ned knocks it away.

NED

You shoot that in here you'll electrocute us all!

Nemo squirms, gasps, the life being strangled out of him. Ned watches, almost as if he wants Nemo to die. Then, at the last second, he impales the beast with a harpoon.

The squid screams, releases Nemo. The room drains of water and blood.

Ned pulls the helmet off Serko. Blood is sputtering out of his mouth. He stares at Ned, smiles slightly.

SERKO

Nedland. Goodman.

He reaches out his hand in friendship. Ned takes it. Then Serko is gone. Everyone is silent. Nemo removes his own helmet, gasping for air. Turns to Ned.

NEMO

You saved my life. I thank you.

NED

Who says I was aiming at the squid?

Not meant to be funny. At all.

INT. NAUTILUS - SALON - LATER

Ned and Julie watch as surviving crewmen bury Serko and the others on the sea floor.

Nemo descends into the salon. Cold. Distant. Followed by two armed crewmen.

NED

Was it worth it?

NEMO

They gave their lives willingly for the sake of humanity.

NED

You don't give a flying fish about humanity. You came here for one thing, and it wasn't knowledge.

JULIE

It's a weapon, isn't it?

NEMO

It is an instrument of god. Shiva creates, Shiva destroys. Our present world has failed, as you have seen yourself. *Man* is the monster that plagues this planet. It is time to kill the beast and start over.

NED

How does humankind just start over?

NEMO

By design. When opened, the Eye of Shiva unleashes a power we cannot comprehend. What is land will become sea, what is sea will become land --

NED

That's primitive nonsense. There's no weapon that can do that.

NEMO

The planet *is* the weapon, Mr. Land. The Eye merely sends an energy pulse down into its very core, waking it from its slumber. Within hours it will generate violent earthquakes and tidal waves, storms and hurricanes. Within days, complete worldwide devastation.

JULIE

And everyone dies except Noah and his Ark.

NEMO

And those he has chosen to survive.

Ned is ready to bring Nemo down right now. But then notices the armed crewman staring at him, fingers on the trigger.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - DAY

Nemo is on deck with the armed crewmen. Julie is locked inside the helm, watching through the eyes as Ned is forced into a dinghy.

NEMO

I promised I would set you free after I had what I wanted.

NED

Just in time for the end of the world. Thank you very much, Captain.

NEMO

If it's primitive nonsense then you have nothing to worry about. You have enough supplies to last you a month. And enough treasure to last a lifetime.

The crewmen unfasten the dinghy, push it away from the ship.

NEMO

May we both find peace, Mr. Land.

Ned takes one last look at Julie as the eyes close. Then Nemo steps down a hatch. Seals it behind him.

The Nautilus slowly moves forward. The Eyes close. Ned looks down at the chest of GOLD COINS in the dinghy.

He makes his choice, dives into the water and swims as hard and as fast as he can toward --

THE NAUTILUS

Ned climbs on deck just as the ship begins its descent. He tries to open a hatch. Locked. Shit.

He looks around. Notes the two nautilus shell designs protruding from the tail fin -- escape pods!

Ned runs to the back of the ship, climbs the tail as the Nautilus starts to submerge. He finds a small hatch, pries it open and squeezes inside...

INT. ESCAPE POD - SAME

A small one-man spherical pod. There is a small seat with two bike peddles attached. Two boxes of supplies.

As water pours in, Ned seals the hatch. PITCH BLACK. Then a light flickers on...because Ned is pedalling! Lights and oxygen: all man-powered. It's going to be a long ride.

CUT TO:

A BINOCULAR POV

Watches the SMOKING VOLCANO in the distance. The smoke suddenly stops.

LIEUTENANT (O.S.)
Commander!

The binoculars lower, reveal that we are --

EXT. AMERICAN WARSHIP - "THE AVENGER" - DAY

The man with the binoculars: Farragut. The LIEUTENANT approaches, unrolls a map of the area.

LIEUTENANT
We're running out of islands, Commander.
Should we expand the search?

FARRAGUT
Notice anything odd about that volcano?

Farragut hands him the binoculars.

LIEUTENANT

You think it's about to blow?

FARRAGUT

That was my first thought. But what kind of volcano turns itself on and off all day?

The Lieutenant doesn't catch his drift.

FARRAGUT

These islands are sitting on a large bed of coal, Lieutenant. I think we're looking at a refinery.

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANO ISLAND - CAVERN - DAY

The Nautilus docks. Two crewmen rise from the hatch carrying the Eye of Shiva. Nemo, Julie, and the Navigators follow. No one is there to greet them.

INT. VOLCANO BASE - MOMENT LATER

Nemo, Julie and the surviving crewmen (and the Eye in a crate), row a dinghy from the cavern and into the center of the volcano...

...where they see: bombed-out destruction all around them...the dead bodies of several of Nemo's islanders...

JULIE

What happened?

...and then the round a bend and see the Airship anchored on the lake near the palace stairs, it's balloon inflated.

They stop rowing, look behind them. Two Brits step out of the shadows aiming rifles at them. And just ahead, at the dock, six more Brits and a cannon.

The dinghy has no choice but to dock.

BRITISH SOLDIER #3

Welcome home, your highness.

They bow, mocking. Two Brits commandeer the Eye.

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND BASE - LATER

Nemo, Julie, and what's left of the Nautilus crew -- hands all bound -- are marched to the palace. They pass the surviving islanders, enslaved in a chain-gang, shovelling coal into the SMOKING FURNACE. Aronnax is chained with them.

The islanders look at Nemo with pleading eyes; Aronnax looks apologetic. The Nautilus crewmen are forced to join them...

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - SAME

...while Nemo and Julie are escorted into the palace. The library has been pillaged and destroyed. General Anson is sitting at the table at the far end, drinking from a goblet as Nemo and Julie are escorted inside.

GENERAL ANSON

It's good to be king, isn't it? Much better than being a prince.

NEMO

You have what you want. Release the others.

GENERAL ANSON

There you go again. Always trying to give orders. When will you learn --

He rises, walks up to Nemo, holding a sword...and hits him square in the jaw with the handle.

GENERAL ANSON

-- I don't take orders from any Hin-doo.

INT. CAVERN DOCK - SAME

The escape pod hatch opens. Ned takes a quick look around. Sees two Brits standing guard on the dock.

MOMENTS LATER

The Brits hear a LOUD BANG near the tail. They investigate. See the open pod hatch. Look down inside --

As Ned drops down from the tail behind them and quickly takes them out of commission. Grabs their rifles.

EXT. NEMO'S ISLAND BASE - MINES - LATER

Two Brits stand guard over the chain-gang. Ned, wearing a BRITISH UNIFORM and carrying two rifles, approaches.

NED

You fellas need a break?

Ned knocks 'em out cold, strips them of their guns.

ARONNAX

Ned! It's me, the professor! This is all my fault! The General is no General! He's a madman! Nemo was telling us the truth.

NED

Not exactly. So keep quiet. I'll be back for you in two shots.

Ned sneaks away. Marches past the Airship. Since he's in uniform they don't pay a lick of attention to him.

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - SAME

General Anson's men set the Eye on the table.

GENERAL ANSON

I was expecting something...bigger. Nevertheless, I thank you for all your hard work. I promise to take very good care of it.

JULIE

Why are you doing this?

GENERAL ANSON

Because my Britannia has become weak. She no longer has the guts to rule and is letting the savages walk all over her. With this, no one can stand against me. I will take the reigns of Britannia and restore her dignity.

JULIE

You have no idea the kind of power you're playing with. You'll destroy the world.

GENERAL ANSON

Better that than have it taken over by animals.

Anson places his sword tip at Nemo's throat.

GENERAL ANSON

Good night, sweet Prince.

He is about to end Nemo's life when a GUNSHOT sends his sword flying. Two more gunshots disarm the Brits.

Ned enters. A rifle in each hand. He aims one at Nemo --

NED

I signed onto this little adventure to
kill a monster.

-- and the other one at General Anson.

NED

Only I'm not so sure which one of you is
the scariest one. So I'm gonna hang both
your heads on my wall.

He is just about to pull the triggers when -- BAM! -- a huge
hole is blown through the palace wall!

Ned looks out the hole and sees -- the American warship.

NED

You've got some bad timing, boys.

During the distraction, Anson grabs the Eye. But Ned is right
there, rifles aimed at him.

NED

Set it down, Happy Jack. I will kill you.

GENERAL ANSON

And I'll be glad to take you with me.

He turns the pupil of the Eye. An ENERGY PULSE rocks the
volcano, blowing everyone off their feet...and then an
endless BEAM OF LIGHT shoots out of the Eye into the sky.

EXT. THE AVENGER - DECK - SAME

Farragut sees the LIGHT SPECTACLE. BLACK CLOUDS begin to
swirl above the sea. A WHIRLPOOL in the sky. The sea CHURNS.

FARRAGUT

What in God's name --

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - SAME

The palace begins to shake, rock falls. Nemo is the first to
stir. He's battered and covered in dust. Then he notices:
Anson is missing.

Nemo grabs a sword from a dead Brit, uses the blade to cut
through the rope binding his wrists.

EXT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - SAME

General Anson runs onto the Airship. Two Brits are already there. The balloon flame is stoked and the ship rises...

INT/EXT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - SAME

Nemo moves past rubble toward the entrance and sees the Airship balloon rising up outside.

He runs, leaps from top of the palace stairs and grabs onto the metal plating on the side of the ship as rises.

INT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - SAME

Another BLAST shakes things up. Julie and Ned rise up from the rubble, as the earth shakes under their feet. They stare at the GLOWING EYE and the eerie energy shooting up from it.

Ned tries to move toward it, but it's like walking into a tornado. And it's hot as hell.

NED

How do you stop that thing!?

JULIE

I don't know!

NED

Where's Nemo!?

EXT. NEMO'S ISLAND PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Ned and Julie race outside and see the Airship above them. One of the TETHER ROPES is dangling from the side. They see Nemo climbing into one of the cannon openings in the hull.

Ned looks out over the base, sees the cavern leading to the Nautilus. Rock is falling all around it.

NED

Get the professor and take the Nautilus out of here before the whole place comes crashing down.

JULIE

What about you?

NED

I have a flight to catch.

The stone palace begins to collapse, rocks falls around them.

NED

Go!

Julie races down the palace steps...

...as Ned climbs up the rocks to the top of the palace...and then to the rim of the volcano.

The Airship passes over head. Ned is going to leap for the tether rope. If he misses...it's a long drop down to the sea.

Ned takes a deep breath, leaps...

...and grabs the rope.

EXT. FARRAGUT'S AVENGER - DECK - SAME

The *Avenger* rolls back and forth in growing SWELLS. LIGHTNING FLASHES from the darkened sky.

Farragut watches as the Airship floats up out of the volcano. His crew FIRE their cannons at it...

...until Farragut sees the UNION JACK flying high.

FARRAGUT

Hold your fire! She's flying friendly colors!

EXT. AIRSHIP - SAME

General Anson and the two remaining Brits stare in awe at the energy beam shooting from the volcano. They have no idea what they just unleashed.

Behind them: Nemo rises up out of a hatch. He slits the throats of the Brits. Then approaches Anson from behind.

NEMO

I should stab you in the back. But unlike you, I am no coward.

General Anson turns, surprised. Then draws his own sword.

GENERAL ANSON

Good. Then you won't scream and beg for mercy the way your family did.

Nemo lunges at Anson. Anson's blade meet his and the two enemies attack each other relentlessly, without pity, unleashing ten years of hatred.

EXT. NEMO'S ISLAND BASE - SAME

Julie reaches Aronnax and the chain gang. The entire volcano is literally collapsing all around them.

ARONNAX

Julie! Thank God! You have no idea what
I've been through.

She fires a PISTOL at Aronnax's chains, severs them. She looks at the others. Including the Navigators.

JULIE

We have to leave this island. Now.

They nod in complete agreement. Julie blasts their shackles.

EXT. AIRSHIP - OVER THE OCEAN

Nemo and Anson are fighting to the death as the ship sways back and forth with no one steering. They're fighting next to the FLAME BARREL under the balloon.

General Anson climbs up the balloon ropes. Nemo follows...

BENEATH THE AIRSHIP

Ned struggles to climb the tether rope, hand over hand, inch by inch, as the sea rages below and strong winds blow. He witnesses the volcano splitting apart and falling into the sea one massive chunk at a time.

EXT. AIRSHIP - BALLOON/DECK - SAME

General Anson and Nemo continue to clash in the web of roping that covers the balloon, working their way to the top. They both struggle to maintain their grip while fighting.

Anson's foot gets entangled in the rope. He drops his sword, dangles upside down.

He's a fly caught in a spider's web as Nemo works his way closer and closer.

Anson struggles to get loose but Nemo HACKS at the ropes holding him.

Anson falls...

The ropes slow his descent, but he hits the deck hard, breaking his leg, and knocking over the FIRE BARREL, setting the ship on fire. Anson SCREAMS as his face gets burned.

He crawls across the deck as the FLAMES spread. He grabs a PISTOL from one of the Dead Brits.

EXT. CAVERN DOCK - SAME

Julie, Aronnax, and the remainder of Nemo's crew run along the dock to the Nautilus as the cavern collapses all around them, shattering the dock.

At the last second, with the dock crumbling beneath their feet, they leap onto the Nautilus...and drop down the hatch.

EXT. AIRSHIP - SAME

The ship slowly "sinks" in the air as the balloon deflates.

On deck, the FLAMES spread fast. Anson leans against the starboard side, holding his pistol, looking for Nemo.

He hears something ROLLING across the deck. A LARGE CANNON rolls through the flames, coming right at him. Anson tries to move but the CANNON BARREL pins him to the ship.

Then Nemo appears. Walks right through the flames holding his sword. Animal eyes. Anson aims the pistol at him.

GENERAL ANSON
Stay right there, Hin-doo.

NEMO
I am Prince Dakkar!

Nemo keeps walking. Anson fires. The bullet hits Nemo in the stomach. Nemo pauses for a second. Then keeps walking.

NEMO
And you --

Nemo sticks his sword in the fire, uses the hot tip to light the cannon fuse.

NEMO
-- are no one.

Nemo light the fuse. Anson's eyes get wide with fear.

KA-BOOM! Anson is blown through the side of the ship, ripped to pieces just like Dakkar's country men.

Nemo looks out over the sea. He's in pain. But somehow looks relieved of a great burden. Then he sees the ENERGY BEAM blasting up from the crumbling volcano.

Ned climbs up on the other side of the ship.

NED

How do we stop it, Captain?

Nemo turns, but before he answers, the FLAMES engulf the ropes connecting the balloon to the ship. The balloon goes up in flames, the ropes SNAP...SNAP...SNAP...

Ned is so very annoyed. He looks to the Heavens.

NED

I just got up here!

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

The FLAMING AIRSHIP plummets a hundred feet into the water...

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - SAME

Julie, Aronnax, and the Navigators are at the helm watching. They head toward the flaming, sinking airship.

EXT. *THE AVENGER* - DECK - SAME

Farragut and his crew are also watching...

CROW'S NEST SAILOR

Submersible astern!

...and then see the Nautilus heading to the wounded airship.
Farragut almost smiles.

FARRAGUT

Prepare depth charges!

EXT. AIRSHIP DECK - SAME

Good news: the plunge put out the fire. Bad news: the ship is sinking fast. Ned supports Nemo as the Nautilus pulls up right next to them.

As they get onto the deck, a LOUD ROAR fills the air --

The last of Nemo's Island crumbles and disappears into the ocean. But the ENERGY BEAM is shooting up into the sky.

INT. NAUTILUS - HELM - MOMENTS LATER

Nemo, Ned, Aronnax, Julie and the surviving crewmen are at the helm windows as the ship dives. Nemo looks weakened, still bleeding from his wound. His every breath is labored.

Outside, under the sea, they can see the energy beam shoots up from the ocean floor amidst the remains of the island.

NED

How do we stop it, Captain?

NEMO

I thought you...would understand. You said...you had seen enough of what man... can do to his fellow man.

NED

I was talking about myself, Captain.

His confession hangs there for a second. Maybe he even wishes he hadn't said it. But there it is.

NED

If God has a beef with us, let him pull the trigger.

Nemo looks at Ned...Aronnax...Julie.

NEMO

We can run the Nautilus into it at full speed, penetrate it with the nose. But the energy we absorb may be fatal.

A BLAST suddenly rocks the ship.

ARONNAX

What was that!?

They look out of the window and see several DEPTH CHARGES falling right outside.

NED

Close the windows! Now!

A Navigator pulls a lever, but a blast SHATTERS one of the windows. Water flood inside the helm before the window closes and seals it.

Another BLAST causes the entire ship to tip on its side and then back up again. It GROANS. Lights FLICKER on and off. Ned pounds the ceiling.

NED

Hey, up there! We're on your side!

The Navigators pull levers. Dive deeper. Another BLAST. Nemo looks concerned, turns to his guests.

NEMO

I'm afraid our journey together must end here. We're unable to surface. You'll have a chance in the escape pods.

Ned looks at the crewmen.

NED
What about them?

CREWMAN
We stay. With Nemo.

Loyal to the end. Nemo takes one last look at his guests.

NEMO
Forgive me. I only wanted a better world.

Julie looks at him sympathetically, touches his face.

JULIE
Goodbye, Prince Dakkar.

Another BLAST. More water.

NED
You heard the Captain! Let's move!

INT. NAUTILUS CORRIDOR - SAME

Ned, Julie, and Aronnax are in waist high water. They reach the hatches to the ESCAPE PODS. Ned opens one...and water comes rushing out.

NED
Looks like that pod already escaped.

They look nervous. Ned opens the other hatch. The pod is still there. Another BLAST rocks the ship. Lights FLICKER.

NED
In you go, professor.

Aronnax climbs into the pod. As Julie starts to climb in --

NED
This will launch you to the surface.
Signal the ships as soon as you can.

JULIE
You're not coming!?

NED
I have a plan.

JULIE
No you don't. You've never had a plan!

NED
This time I do.

JULIE
What!? What is it!?

NED
To make it back to you.

Ned kisses her.

NED
I'll see you on the top side, Julie.

Ned seals them in the pod, pulls a release lever...

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - MOMENTS LATER

Ned wades back into the helm. It is still filling with water.
The DEPTH GAUGE needle is at two hundred feet.

NED
God told me you might need a little help.

NEMO
You're either very brave or very foolish.

Another BLAST. The engine stops. The light goes out. (The glow of the distant ENERGY BEAM provides the only light.)

NEMO
We've lost all power and we're sinking.
Assuming the hull doesn't rip apart, our only choices will be drown or suffocate.

NED
Then I'm going with foolish.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - LATER

The ESCAPE POD shoots out of the water and bobs like a cork.

EXT. THE AVENGER DECK - LATER

Crewmen aim guns at the pod as it is secured to the side of the ship. The hatch opens. Aronnax climbs out.

FARRAGUT
Professor Aronnax!?

ARONNAX
Commander Farragut?

Then Julie climbs out.

FARRAGUT

Miss Fleischer! I can't believe it!

JULIE

Ned is on that ship, Commander!

FARRAGUT

Cease fire!

INT. NAUTILUS HELM - SAME

The depth gauge hits five hundred feet. Then there's a LOUD CRUNCH as the Nautilus hits bottom and tilts at a forty-five degree angle. A hundred yards from the Eye.

NED

We can still go out there and shut it down manually, can't we?

NEMO

The heat will melt our diving suits.

NED

Maybe yours but not mine.

INT. DIVE CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Crewmen help Ned into the Iron Duke. The whole ship shakes from the quaking ocean floor outside.

NEMO

I knew there was a reason I saved you.

NED

I thought you saved the suit?

Ned and Nemo exchange a brief smile as Ned is sealed inside.

EXT. NAUTILUS - OCEAN FLOOR - LATER

The dive chamber floor opens and Ned slides out in the Iron Duke. The ground is shaking beneath him.

Ned approaches the Eye. The LIGHT is blinding. And he's starting to sweat inside his suit.

INT. NAUTILUS - NEMO QUARTERS - SAME

Two crewmen carry Nemo into his room. Books are on the floor. The Shiva statue has fallen over.

They leave him alone. He picks his son's NAUTILUS SHELL off the floor. And a SEPIA-TONED picture of him with his family. A tear runs down his cheek.

NEMO
Almighty God. Enough. Enough.

A VIOLENT JOLT shakes the ship.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - SAME

The ground rips apart around Ned. He barely keeps his balance. He looks back and sees the Nautilus teetering on the edge of a deep chasm.

But Ned continues, focused on the job at hand. The Eye is right in front of him in the rubble. He glances heavenward.

NED
Not that we deserve it. But give us one more chance.

He reaches out his hand...the light and heat is intense...the earths shakes...the Eye drops between two rocks...

Ned reaches for the Eye...the Iron Duke's arm barely fits between the rocks...and then gets stuck.

The earth shakes again. More ground gives way under the Nautilus...

...but the rocks move enough for Ned to get the Iron Duke's arm inside. He struggles to turn the pupil...

...until there is a BRIGHT FLASH. Then the beam is gone. And the earth is still.

Ned smiles, relieved. Then sees the Nautilus slide into the chasm.

Ned hurries toward it as the ship falls all the way in.

Ned looks down. Sees Nemo through his window. The glass spider-webs as the Nautilus disappears into the Abyss.

Then Ned realizes: he's stranded. Until he sees the Avenger five hundred feet above him. Its ANCHOR on the ocean floor.

EXT. THE AVENGER - LATER

Calm sea. Blue sky. Farragut, Julie, and Aronnax are on deck looking out at the water as SAILORS raise the anchor.

FARRAGUT
Farewell, old friend.

As the anchor rises out of the water, we see the Iron Duke standing on it. Everyone yells excitedly. Julie and Aronnax smiles at each other.

ARONNAX
Incorrigible.

EXT. THE AVENGER DECK - MINUTES LATER

Ned is removed from the suit. Farragut is all smiles.

FARRAGUT
I believe I owe you a steak.

Ned smiles. Farragut reaches out his hand...then -- CRACK! -- Ned punches him square in the jaw.

FARRAGUT
What the hell was that for!?

NED
For lying to me. The "monster," the professor, the harpooner. It was all a cover-up. You knew all along what you were hunting.

FARRAGUT
It was a classified mission. And in case you forgot, I used it to save your life!

Ned reaches his hand down for his old friend. Helps him up.

NED
That's why I'm only hitting you once.

They smile. Ned throws his arm around him. All is forgiven.

NED
Have I got one whale of tale for you, old friend. One whale of a tale.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO HARBOR - DAY

A CROWD gathers around the docked AVENGER. A newspaper headline reads: "MONSTER DESTROYED! ARONNAX CONFIRMS IT WAS A GIANT NARWHAL." An artist has drawn the creature.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO SALOON - SAME

A rowdy mix of PROSPECTORS, COWBOYS, and a few tarty, gold-loving WOMEN. A waitress carries a plate with a HUGE STEAK on it across the saloon to --

-- a corner table by the FIREPLACE. Where we see Ned sipping an ale. She slams the plate down on his table.

WAITRESS

Sorry about the wait.

NED

You have no idea.

Ned tucks a napkin into his collar. Meticulously lifts his utensils like a high priest handling divine instruments. He cuts into his steak, holds up a bite.

ARONNAX (O.S.)

Bon appetit.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL --

Ned is not dining alone this time. Aronnax, Julie, and Farragut are sitting at the table with him. All with big steaks in front of them.

NED/JULIE/FARRAGUT

Bon appetit.

They all take a bite. Savor every bite. Ned raises his glass.

NED

To land.

They raise their glasses. And then the saloon starts SHAKING.

BAR PATRONS

Earthquake!

People scream and flee from the saloon. A WOODEN BEAM falls near the table. But they don't flinch. They CLINK glasses.

ARONNAX/JULIE/FARRAGUT

To land.

And then they drink. Ned smiles at Julie.

NED

Such is my luck.

Then they all resume eating their steak as if nothing happened. New friends and old with many adventures to come.

FADE OUT.