

STEPPING STONES™

a chapter book

CLASSIC

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

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Chapter 1

The stories began in 1866. First they spread among sailors. The sailors were scared. Next the people along the coasts took up the tales. All over the world, captains and shipowners were worried.

There was a big Thing living in the ocean! A number of ships had seen it. The Thing was shaped like a fish. It was over three hundred feet long. That made it bigger than any known whale!

One ship had seen the Thing blowing huge jets of water into the air. Another ship had seen it shining in the dark. Still another ship reported that it had a long spear for a nose. All the ships said that the Thing moved very fast. Faster than

any sea animal they had ever seen.

The Americans were the first to act. They brought the ship *Abraham Lincoln* to New York. There it was armed to fight a sea monster. Its captain was Commander Farragut.


I myself was in New York at the time. I had been out in Nebraska on a science trip. Now I was on my way back home to France.

My name is Professor Pierre Aron-nax. I teach at the Paris Museum of Natural History. I am also the author of a book called *The Mysteries of the Ocean*. Of course, everyone in New York wanted to know what I thought about the Thing.

I believed that the Thing was a giant sea unicorn. My idea settled the question in most people's minds.

On July 2 a new report came in. A





Professor Aronnax is determined to catch the sea monster everyone calls the Thing. Instead, it's the professor who gets caught! He is trapped in an undersea world filled with magnificent creatures and ancient secrets. Is it a

prison or a paradise? Is escape possible? Or is he locked up forever inside the Thing—a man-made submarine run by the mysterious Captain Nemo?

