

Captain Nemo

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Inspired by the novel
"20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA"
by Jules Verne
and by the 1954 Walt Disney film
written by Earl Felton and directed by Richard Fleischer

SECOND DRAFT
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FADE IN:

EXT. UNDERWATER - THE OCEAN DEPTHS

A curtain of sunlight rippling over a vast ocean floor.

UNDER CREDITS: teeming coral reefs, fleeting shapes, flashes of color. The start of a visual symphony.

A MASSIVE SHOAL takes shape, an undersea tornado composed of TENS OF THOUSANDS OF TROPICAL FISH spiraling together in a giant flock.

As we MOVE IN on the shoal, its twisting colors undulating like a single lifeform, the swirling pillar begins to part, allowing us to see within...

And at the eye of the shoal, tastefully naked and floating in a slow circle, is the man we will come to know as NEMO.

His eyes are closed; he is in a state of bliss. He is breathing in the sea and it does not harm him... his face vivid and alive... the ocean and all within it swirling around him...

LIEUTENANT (O.S.)

We're here, sir.

EXT. FRIGATE - OUTSIDE MUMBAI HARBOR (CIRCA 1850) - DAY

Nemo's eyes open, his reverie broken. He is fully clothed and standing at the bow of a THREE-MASTED FRIGATE on its way into port.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Mumbai Harbor, Captain.

Nemo nods. An austere, impeccably well-groomed British man in his mid-30's, he stares across the Indian Ocean at the approaching shoreline as the wind whips at his hair. He doesn't seem pleased.

EXT. MUMBAI HARBOR DOCKS (BOMBAY, INDIA) - DAY

A tall Indian man -- DAKKAR (mid-50's) -- stands waiting at dockside, craning his neck to get a good look at the gangway as the frigate disembarks.

He sees Nemo coming down the ramp and breaks into a huge smile, waving eagerly. Nemo waves back, and Dakkar gestures to the band behind him:

DAKKAR

Now! Begin!

A FULL-DRESS INDIAN MILITARY BAND begins playing the rousing ballad, "WHEN THE KING ENJOYS HIS OWN AGAIN."

Nemo slows as he approaches -- the band sounds terrible. Nemo cringes, forces a smile as he bows, touching his palms together in greeting. Dakkar returns the bow, grinning:

DAKKAR (cont'd)
(shouting over the band)
Sahib! Welcome home!

NEMO
Thank you, Dakkar! You look well!

DAKKAR
I am, thank you -- Enough!

He silences the band with a flourish -- they all look to Nemo for a reaction. He chooses his words carefully:

NEMO
My people have a saying. "That sounded like a fire at the zoo."

The band members beam with pride, nodding vigorously. Dakkar brings Nemo away, then his gaze darkens:

DAKKAR
Sahib, we are, all of us, deeply saddened by the loss of your mother. The rarest of women.

Nemo falls silent at that, then nods in thanks.

NEMO
I'd like to visit the grave before we head in.

DAKKAR
I would take you there myself... but I am under strict orders to escort you to the Governor General's office without delay.

Dakkar gestures to a nearby PASSENGER TRAIN, where Nemo's bags are already being loaded. Nemo frowns.

DAKKAR (cont'd)
I am sorry.

Nemo fixes him with a look, then marches over to the train:

NEMO

Don't be sorry, Dakkar...

(climbing aboard)

Isn't it obvious I'm the only man
in the world who can bring peace to
this troubled region?

He disappears within. Dakkar climbs aboard after him just as
the TRAIN WHISTLE blows. The train gets underway --

-- passing THREE SEPOY SPIES who stand watching from the
shadows. They wait for Nemo's car to pass, then run to the
last car and climb into it....

EXT. PALACE - OFFICE OF CENTRAL PROVINCES - DAY

A British flag waves over a stolen palace. Guards march along
the high wall, Indian troops run drills in the yard, British
officers oversee them on horseback. Life under the Raj.

The courtyard gate opens, admitting A COACH and military
escort. The coach comes to a stop at the palace steps -- NEMO
disembarks and gazes up at the high dome, then enters --

INT. PALACE HALLWAY - DAY

Nemo and Dakkar stride down a wide, ornate marble hallway.
Dakkar seems hurried, trying to move Nemo along -- Nemo
strolls easily, looking around at the decor, ignoring
Dakkar's growing unease.

DAKKAR

The Governor General is waiting for
you -- there has been much unrest
since the annexation of--

NEMO

What the devil has he done to the
place? All the silks are gone?

DAKKAR

He did not think them befitting an
English cantonment.

NEMO

(suddenly)

Tell me he hasn't had a go at the
library...

Nemo suddenly marches up the corridor, breaking into a trot.
Dakkar has to run to keep up --

INT. PALACE LIBRARY AND AQUARIUM - DAY

A cavernous two-story library furnished in plush velvet and mahogany -- its twin doors burst open as Nemo strides through, marches into the room and halts as he looks up --

NEMO

Ahhh...

His consternation melts.

REVEAL that Nemo is standing before a GIANT TROPICAL AQUARIUM, its glass face filling one entire wall of the library from floor to ceiling. Within it, HUNDREDS OF EXOTIC FISH float lazily in blue water, beautiful and serene.

Nemo stares in calm wonder. Dakkar approaches from behind, stands with him gazing into the aquarium...

FLASHBACK - INT. PALACE LIBRARY AND AQUARIUM - YEARS EARLIER

A brief glimpse of Nemo as a child of ten, gazing into the aquarium with the same look of wonder, a younger Dakkar at his side. Behind them servants are moving furniture, rolling steamer trunks, shooing a WHINING CHILD out of the room. Young Nemo looks up at Dakkar and smiles --

BONNEVILLE (O.S.)

Captain!

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Nemo turns to see MAJOR BONNEVILLE (40's, robust) enter the library, grinning with delight. Nemo snaps-to and salutes:

NEMO

Major Bonneville! Sir!

BONNEVILLE

Oh, never mind that --

(he claps Nemo on the
shoulder)

Look at you, lad! Good to have you
back! How's London treating you?

NEMO

Very well, sir. Miss it already.

BONNEVILLE

Yes... well. Best come along, meet
the devil in his den.

NEMO
He sent you down for me, didn't he?

BONNEVILLE
Moment he heard the coach!

INT. GOVERNOR GENERAL'S OFFICE - DAY

A wide suite with an open balcony overlooking the palace courtyard -- below, SEVERAL HUNDRED INDIAN SOLDIERS are running drills, British officers shouting orders at them.

The GOVERNOR GENERAL (late 60's) stands at the rail looking down at them. Muttonchops, moustache -- no riding crop, but from the look on his face he might as well be carrying one.

NEMO stands at attention behind him, facing the General's desk, waiting for him to acknowledge his existence. Bonneville stands back by the door watching. Sweaty silence.

GOVERNOR GENERAL
Captain!

NEMO
Sir?

GOVERNOR GENERAL
Out here.

Nemo spins formally on one heel, marches out to the balcony, then halts at the General's side.

NEMO
Sir.

GOVERNOR GENERAL
Look down there. At those men...
(Nemo does)
Two months ago most of them were tending farms. Herding the Raja's goats in Jhansi province, or begging in the streets. Not a one of them good for anything.

Nemo has an answer to that, but says nothing.

GOVERNOR GENERAL (cont'd)
The discipline of the service is vital to maintaining order, and making men of roustabouts and vagabonds. That is why we've --

He turns to Nemo for the first time, and is suddenly enraged:

GOVERNOR GENERAL (cont'd)
Where is your uniform? How dare you
report to me dressed like this!

NEMO
I wanted to speak with my father
before meeting the General. Sir.

The General blanches. If it weren't obvious before, it is
now -- the General is Nemo's father. He heads to his desk:

GOVERNOR GENERAL
We have nothing to discuss. You
have your orders.

NEMO
(producing an envelope)
I do. Signed the morning after she
perished, I see.

GOVERNOR GENERAL
I tolerated your silly fish studies
in deference to your mother. Now
that she's gone, I see no reason to
further abet your folly.

NEMO
I've never heard twin doctorates at
Royal Academy referred to as "fish
studies" before, but nevertheless --

GOVERNOR GENERAL
Mind your tone!

NEMO
(tossing the orders onto
his father's desk)
Do you really mean to compel my
service here?

GOVERNOR GENERAL
You are a captain in Her Majesty's
Guards. We have need of seasoned
officers, and you know the region
as well as any white man alive. I
would be derelict if I did not
demand your presence here.

NEMO
"Her Majesty" has need of more
officers because she's been seizing
India's provinces with every excuse
she can invent --

GOVERNOR GENERAL

That's enough!
 (returning to his papers)
 Major Bonneville, escort this man
 to his assigned post immediately.
 And in proper uniform! Dismissed!

He wipes his brow with a kerchief and glances up at the
motionless ceiling fan:

GOVERNOR GENERAL (cont'd)

Damn it --
 (calling out)
Wallah! Boy!

He doesn't give Nemo a second glance. Nemo straightens,
 salutes, then marches out of the room. Bonneville follows --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

BONNEVILLE

Wait a moment!

Bonneville intercepts Nemo just outside the door:

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

Don't judge him too harshly.
 Consider his position: How is he to
 maintain the respect of those under
 his command, if his own son won't
 fight for the same cause as they?
 (off Nemo's look)
 This is bigger than the province,
 bigger even than India. You must
 understand the nature of power.

A CRY from behind them -- Nemo and Bonneville turn to see a
 SLEEPING SERVANT BOY being thrashed awake by an older servant
 shouting in Hindi. The boy cries out and frantically tugs the
 pulley next to his stool -- inside the open doorway, the
General's ceiling fan begins to move again.

The servant continues to yell and slap at the boy. Nemo and
 Bonneville exchange glances, then walk away...

EXT. PALACE DRILL GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

Nemo is in full uniform now, sword and pistol at his side,
 sitting astride a mount as the troops run ARTILLERY DRILLS.
 Sepoys and sowars race between the ranks, white oxen haul
 cannon into position on a field surrounded by high walls.

Nemo looks grim as he oversees them, walking his horse alongside the rear flank by the high fortress walls...

... where he passes the THREE SEPOY SPIES, who are now in uniform and carrying rifles along with the other Indian troops. They watch him pass and exchange glances, gripping their rifles. They look up at the wall...

EXT. PALACE HIGH WALL - CONTINUOUS

TWO INDIAN SENTRIES patrol the high wall. They pass each other -- then one of them spins and throws a garotte around the other's neck, pulling him down out of view...

EXT. DRILL GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Nemo stops, thinks he hears something. He spins on his horse, brings it around to face the camp wall, squinting, keen...

In the b.g. on the wall high behind him, ANOTHER SENTRY is pulled down out of view.

Nemo looks out over the sepoys, several of whom are looking up at him suspiciously as they pass out cartridges. Something's wrong...

Nemo trots to the back wall of the yard, where an ELEPHANT is being washed down by two MAHUTS (trainers). He walks his horse alongside the elephant and pets its head --

NEMO

Here, Annie! Give us a lift, girl.

Nemo steps from his horse onto Annie's trunk like a stunt rider. The elephant helpfully lifts him up along the wall; Nemo grabs it and hauls himself up the side --

EXT. PALACE HIGH WALL - CONTINUOUS

Nemo's leg comes over, he climbs to his feet and looks down --

-- to see SEVERAL HUNDRED ARMED INDIAN INSURGENTS waiting on horses just outside the palace gates. They all look up at him at once, an entire army about to invade. Frozen moment.

Nemo spins and shouts:

NEMO

ALARM!!

-- AND ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

The insurgents outside all OPEN FIRE, shredding the wall around Nemo as he crouches and runs for his life --

-- as INSIDE THE CAMP, half of the troops turn and begin shooting at their officers and each other. Men fall dead -- the sepoys break ranks and scatter -- PANIC AND CHAOS --

NEMO (cont'd)
Secure the west gate!

Nemo ducks along the wall, running parallel with the rebels below him who are rushing the palace gates -- distinctive among them are A GROUP OF ELITE "DURGA DAL" WARRIORS on horseback, in white robes with scarves over their faces.

As Nemo ducks gunfire from within and without, REBEL SENTRIES run toward him -- Nemo shoots one dead, clashes swords with another then runs him through. He looks across the yard --

-- and sees HIS FATHER and SEVERAL INDIAN GUARDS braced at the rail of their office balcony, firing down into the chaos. He shouts and waves but they don't see him --

OUTSIDE, the insurgents are clashing with loyal sepoys at the open gate as Nemo reaches the UPPER GATEHOUSE. He leaps over two dead soldiers, dives for the gate release and throws it --

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The sepoys fall back as A HUGE METAL GRATE COMES SLIDING DOWN from above, crashing into place to secure the compound with most of the insurgents still massed outside the gate.

Nemo looks pleased, runs back to the inner wall and looks down into the compound --

-- just as SEVERAL TRAITOR SEPOYS wheel two of the fort's own HEAVY CANNON around behind the troops to aim at the gate, directly below where Nemo is standing --

NEMO
LOOK OUT!!

The CANNONS FIRE, COMPLETELY OBLITERATING THE GATE AND HALF OF THE WALL BELOW NEMO. Nemo falls through the floor as it collapses, twenty feet onto the mass of fighters below --

Nemo hits the ground hard, ruined mortar raining onto his back. He winces, rolls out of the way as the invading rebels storm through the ruined gate --

Several DURGA DAL WARRIORS ride through on horseback, their riders slashing through with their swords, heading for the steps into the palace. Nemo sees THE LEAD WARRIOR (RANI) break free of the throng, scarf falling away to reveal --

She's a woman. She spins on her horse and charges for the palace steps at a full gallop --

Nemo's gaze flashes to the stairs, then to the balcony two stories above -- where Bonneville and Nemo's father are still trapped, firing down into the crowd.

Nemo leaps to his feet, bleeding -- he runs out of the skirmish, climbs onto a horse and gallops to the opposite side of the palace. (What is he doing? Is he running away?)

Behind him, Rani vaults the stairs on horseback --

INT. PALACE FOYER AND HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rani bursts through the doors, her horse rearing back, kicking air and scattering soldiers. MORE REBELS flood the foyer behind her as she pulls the reins around hard and takes off down the wide marble hallway.

British soldiers run into the hall to block her path, firing at her -- she meets them all head-on, pistol in one hand, saber in the other, the reins of her horse clenched in her teeth. The soldiers can't even slow her down -- she is an unstoppable force, shooting and slashing as she charges full bore along the hallway.

As she races past the tall windows, she doesn't see the other rider outside, pacing her, glimpsed from window-to-window, growing closer and gaining until --

NEMO'S HORSE CRASHES THROUGH THE WALL OF WINDOWS directly into Rani's path, skidding on its hooves. Rani's horse slams into Nemo's mount -- Nemo and Rani are thrown together, swords clashing -- they match steel as their horses panic, circling each other, then galloping parallel down the hall --

A BLISTERING SWORDFIGHT ON HORSEBACK. Nemo and Rani are side-by-side, slashing at each other as their horses gallop headlong through the palace. Soldiers ahead of them dive and scatter -- Rani suddenly peels off to the left with Nemo fast on her heels --

INT. PALACE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rani and Nemo charge into a fully-furnished BALLROOM. Their horses leap, demolishing banquet tables laden with silverware and fine china.

They circle once in the middle of the floor -- Rani slashes at a HANGING CHANDELIER and sends it crashing down, Nemo leaps over it --

Rani races across the ballroom to the opposite doors, Nemo in hot pursuit. They duck under the doors and charge through them --

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Rani and Nemo erupt from the ballroom in a white heat, hooves sliding on marble. Rani aims her pistol back at him and fires, tearing through Nemo's left arm. Furious, Nemo spurs his horse until he's side-by-side with her again, THEN LEAPS OFF OF HIS HORSE AND TACKLES HER. They topple from their mounts in a sudden tumble --

Nemo and Rani hit the floor rolling, kicking and grappling at each other. They roll through an open doorway --

INT. PALACE LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Rani cuffs Nemo across the face with the handle of her saber, then rolls out from under him and onto her feet to fight.

Nemo leaps to his own feet, sword up, then slams the library doors shut and bolts them, trapping Rani in here with him. They circle each other at swordpoint.

Rani attacks Nemo with vigor, saber slashing at him. Nemo parries and blocks -- their swords ring steel as they back into the room and across the floor -- thrusting, dodging, climbing desks, leaping furniture -- suddenly their blades slide into a clinch, bringing them close enough to kiss --

-- and Rani headbutts Nemo full in the face. Nemo is stunned, falls backwards over a desk, his sword clattering to the floor.

Nemo slams against the wall, slides back up it to his feet --

-- to find himself staring straight down the barrel of Rani's pistol, aimed right between his eyes.

Frozen moment. He's caught dead in her sights. She can't possibly miss.

Nemo draws himself to full dignity, chin-up, back against the wall, and stands ready to meet his death...

But Rani doesn't shoot. She glances at the wall behind him, then makes a subtle jerking motion with the pistol.

Nemo blinks. (What?)

Rani does it again, glancing at the wall behind Nemo and gesturing to one side. Nemo squints, then looks back up at the wall himself --

NEMO IS STANDING WITH HIS BACK AGAINST THE GLASS OF THE GIANT AQUARIUM, with hundreds of beautiful, innocent fish swimming directly behind him.

Rani glares and jerks the pistol again, her meaning clear: Move away from the fish. Nemo glares back, plants his hands on his hips:

NEMO

No!

Rani swears in Hindi. She spins to retrieve her sword -- Nemo dives away and goes sailing across a desk, spilling books -- She spins, he leaps to his feet --

Rani brandishes her saber. Nemo brandishes -- the Kama Sutra, its pages open to a lusty drawing. Rani blinks, frowns --

Nemo slams the book shut over Rani's blade, wrenches it to one side and punches her full in the mouth. He wrests the saber away from her and they roll over a couch together, grappling atop one another when suddenly --

THE LIBRARY DOORS POUND LOUDLY, rattling against the bolt. Soldiers outside, ready to flood into the room.

Rani and Nemo freeze. THE POUNDING GETS LOUDER. Rani hisses into Nemo's face:

RANI

If those are my people, you'll be shot on sight!

NEMO

And if they're mine, you'll be executed...

They grin in satisfaction -- then their smiles fade as they each realize, they could both get killed. They look to the door, and each other...

Nemo grabs Rani in a hostage hold and hauls her backwards into the library, his hand over her mouth, Rani kicking all the way. He drags her over to a CUL-DE-SAC --

INT. LIBRARY CUL DE SAC - CONTINUOUS

Nemo pulls Rani back with him into the shadows -- she struggles until he pulls a BAYONET BLADE from his belt and holds it to her throat.

Rani freezes, tense. They wait in silence, a swath of light across their eyes, hiding together in the dark. Listening...

Suddenly the sound of the LIBRARY DOORS SPLINTERING INWARD and crashing to the floor. BOOTS ON MARBLE, soldiers searching the room. ORDERS BARKED IN HINDI.

Rani and Nemo listen, breathless. Their eyes dart as they wait for some clue as to whose side is out there. Then...

BONNEVILLE (O.S.)
They're retreating! Capture as many
of the mutineers as possible.
They'll be wanted for questioning --

As the BRITISH VOICES CONTINUE, Rani sighs, accepting defeat. She begins to speak --

RANI
I --

Nemo silences her, still intent, still listening. She looks at him warily -- isn't he going to turn her in?

BONNEVILLE (O.S.)
Have they found the General?

DAKKAR (O.S.)
He lives, but is badly wounded.

BONNEVILLE (O.S.)
Damn!

Nemo frowns, eyes darting. Rani notices, listens with him:

DAKKAR (O.S.)
There is other news -- the rebels
have taken Jhansi fort.

Nemo and Rani are startled by that.

BONNEVILLE (O.S.)
Jhansi has fallen? What about our
officers, their families?

DAKKAR (O.S.)

They were promised safe passage,
but when the gates were opened...
A massacre, sahib. Every man, woman
and child slaughtered.

Rani gasps in horror. Nemo covers her mouth -- and is amazed to feel tears rolling down her cheeks. He watches her, relaxes his grip as Rani shakes in his arms, racked with grief.

BONNEVILLE (O.S.)

Come with me...

Bonneville and Dakkar's footsteps fade, leaving silence.

Nemo looks down into Rani's glistening eyes. She looks back at him, defiant through her tears. He takes her by the arm --

INT. PALACE LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Nemo brings Rani out into the now-empty library, spins her around to face him. They circle each other warily, half appraisal, half mating dance. Finally Nemo speaks:

NEMO

Do you believe that all British are
evil? If you do, then leave now and
we'll kill each other another day.
If not, I would speak with you.

Rani considers that. She looks out at the corridor as several soldiers rush by, then at Nemo. Then...

Eyes never leaving his, Rani begins to undress. Nemo is startled -- until she draws the white sash away from her robe and lets it fall to the floor, revealing a colorful sari underneath. She approaches Nemo.

RANI

I am Rani Savarna Saraladevi of the
Durga Dal.

She begins bandaging his wounded arm with the sash.

RANI (cont'd)

I fight for love of India, not for
hatred of the British.

NEMO

Did you plan this attack?

RANI

If I had planned it, we would have taken this palace back by now and you would be my prisoner. And I would never have permitted the murder of children!

NEMO

Who plotted this rebellion?

RANI

I do not know -- only that the Governor General was the target.

She is distracted by the aquarium, begins staring into it.

NEMO

You would have killed him?

RANI

I would rather not kill anybody, Captain. But you do not belong here... and India will not win her independence through an excess of kindness.

Rani has been watching the aquarium, but now she seems enraptured by it. Nemo notices her staring at one specimen in particular, a beautiful shelled sea creature.

NEMO

That's called a cephalopod. The exact species is --

RANI

Nautilus pompilius. An emperor nautilus.

NEMO

That's right. How do you know that?

Rani looks around at the library, her gaze becoming wistful.

RANI

Because this used to be my room...

Nemo is stunned silent...

FLASHBACK - INT. PALACE LIBRARY AND AQUARIUM - YEARS EARLIER

Nemo as a child of ten, gazing into the aquarium, a younger Dakkar at his side.

Behind them servants are moving furniture, rolling steamer trunks, shooing a WHINING CHILD out of the room. Young Nemo looks up at Dakkar and smiles.

Then Nemo glances over his shoulder -- to see YOUNG RANI, a child of six, being ushered out of the room in tears. Their eyes meet, tearful moment, just before she is shown the door.

Young Nemo smiles and turns back to his new aquarium without another thought...

INT. PALACE LIBRARY AND AQUARIUM - BACK TO SCENE

Nemo blinks at the sound of APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS from the corridor. He looks to the open doors --

NEMO

We'd better get you out of here.
There's a servant's door behind --

He turns to find Rani gone; he is alone in the library. Behind him, an ADJUTANT appears at the door.

ADJUTANT

Captain! You're needed, sir.

Nemo remains a moment, lost in thought... then he follows the Adjutant out and away up the hall.

INT. PALACE INFIRMARY - LATER

The General is unconscious, his head bandaged from a graze. Nemo and Bonneville stand over him, conferring quietly.

BONNEVILLE

I've put in for a three-fold increase in troops, heavy arms and materiel. After today's attack, they'll have to approve it.

NEMO

But why, though? Why him? What were the rebels hoping to accomplish?

BONNEVILLE

I don't know. But you must consider the possibility that it was your arrival that triggered the attack.

Nemo frowns, ponders that.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - MORNING

A modest cemetery with many new graves. At the moment, it's abandoned -- save for Nemo, who stands silently at the foot of one grave, staring at the headstone.

It reads, "BELOVED WIFE AND MOTHER." We do not see the name and never will.

Nemo stands -- and is surprised to see RANI watching him from beneath a tree. He motions for her to join him; she approaches quietly. They stare down at the grave together.

NEMO
Cholera. She died in agony.

RANI
Your mother was well-loved. Few British would devote such care to the sick and outcast among us.

NEMO
Yes. Lot of good it did her...
(at the graves)
Or them.

Rani has brought flowers. She places them on the grave as Nemo looks on, intrigued. She stands:

RANI
I cannot be seen with you. If you would speak at length, we must find another place to meet.

Nemo nods, thinking. Then:

NEMO
How well can you swim?

EXT. UNDERWATER - LAKE SADHANNA - DAY

Nemo's dive breaks the water in a torrent of bubbles. He wears a long-body bathing suit, in the fashion of the day.

EXT. LAKE SADHANNA - CONTINUOUS

Nemo swims out to a SMALL ISLET in the middle of the lake, wades into a secluded cove hooded by whistling pines with long fronds. He treads water, waiting.

A ripple approaches the cove from the opposite direction -- Rani breaks the surface as she swims under the hanging fronds. She sees Nemo, swims toward him cautiously.

EXT. ISLET COVE - LATER

Nemo and Rani sit at the water's edge peeling pomegranates, eating as they talk.

NEMO

The Raja married you off at the age of twelve? Your own father?

RANI

He tried to, for the dower. But my "beloved" died of old age two nights before the wedding!

They break into laughter together. Rani grows pensive.

RANI (cont'd)

Here a man may take twelve wives and outlive them all. But a woman's husband is chosen for her, and upon his death, she is expected to throw herself onto his funeral pyre, to preserve the family honor...

NEMO

Or to join a band of women warriors, and live as an outcast.

Rani says nothing. Nemo watches her, a quiet moment. Then:

NEMO (cont'd)

I want to bring an end to British rule in India.

(off her look)

Peacefully.

RANI

How? What can one man do?

NEMO

Alone? Perhaps nothing. But a man and a woman, together...

He offers her a pomegranate. A smile comes to her lips.

RANI

Perhaps.

She takes the fruit.

SEQUENCE - NEMO AND RANI BEGIN A SECRET COURTSHIP

A SERIES OF BRIEF SCENES UNDER MUSIC follows, in which their secret alliance becomes something much more:

INT. CANTONMENT BARRACKS - SEPOY QUARTERS - NIGHT

The sepoy's are asleep in their bunks when the doors burst open and Nemo strides in with SIX GUARDS. He points to three bunks in succession -- the guards quickly pull THE THREE SEPOY SPIES out of their racks and haul them away...

EXT. LAKE SADHANNA - DAY - WIDE

Nemo and Rani swim toward the islet from opposite sides of the lake...

EXT. SATPURA PLAINS - DAY

Rani and her Durga Dal warriors, all women, run swordfighting drills with dagger and scimitar. Rani corrects one woman's stance, shows her a better move...

EXT. JOG FALLS BASIN - DAY

Rani parries with Nemo along the shoreline at the base of a MASSIVE WATERFALL... she steals his dagger from his belt and pokes him with it, laughing...

EXT. UNDERWATER - GOA CORAL REEFS AND MARINE BED - DAY

Nemo and Rani swim through A CORAL PARADISE, silhouettes against rippling blue sunlight. Both wear brass-leather visors and pearl-diver belts as they descend together.

Rani leads Nemo through stony corals, reefs fringed by bright yellow polyps, purple anemones, crimson tube sponges. Their shared fascination is obvious as they exchange glances.

Nemo finds a large oyster, they dig it out together...

EXT. ISLET COVE - DAY

Nemo and Rani hover over the oyster as Nemo carves it open -- and removes a HUGE BLUE PEARL, opalescent and very rare...

INT. PALACE INFIRMARY - DAY

Nemo and Bonneville confer with a DOCTOR -- behind them the General is still convalescing, quite weak...

EXT. UNDERWATER - GOA CORAL REEFS AND MARINE BED - DAY

Nemo and Rani plunge into the water and sink to the seabed, each of them holding a large stone.

They stand facing each other, looking smug as they hold their breath underwater, staring at each other, a challenge...

INT. GOVERNOR GENERAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Bonneville is seated behind the General's desk, facing A ROW OF NAVAL COMMANDERS AND CAVALRY CAPTAINS (Nemo among them) who await his orders. An ADJUTANT takes sealed packets from Bonneville, hands them out to the officers...

EXT. UNDERWATER

RANI stares at us, not a bubble escaping her lips, her hair a beguiling swirl behind her...

INT. CAVALRY STABLES - DAY

Nemo has summoned DAKKAR, who listens carefully as Nemo gives him a letter to deliver, with secret instructions...

EXT. UNDERWATER

NEMO stares at us, grinning... he can hold his breath just as long as Rani can, and he means to prove it...

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY

Nemo on horseback, leading A LANCER REGIMENT through one of the villages. They pass natives and onlookers...

... as Dakkar weaves through the crowd to meet a veiled woman in a colorful sari. He hands her the letter from Nemo...

EXT. UNDERWATER

Rani and Nemo, still staring each other down... strain in their faces now, suspense building...

EXT. VINDHYA RANGE - DAY

NEMO'S REGIMENT is making its way through a narrow mountain pass when there is a rumble from above -- and suddenly DOZENS OF FRESH-CUT LOGS roll down the mountainside and across the path, blocking all passage. GUNFIRE FOLLOWS, pocking the wall several feet above the lancers' heads.

Nemo calls out orders, signals his troops to fall back -- but not before stealing a glance up the ridge to see Rani looking down at him, surrounded by her Durga Dals...

EXT. UNDERWATER

ON THE TWO OF THEM -- Nemo, then Rani, staring each other down... hearts pounding, bubbles escaping, one of them's going to break...

Rani suddenly seizes, gasping water. Nemo drops his stone and grabs her, kicking for the surface, pulling her up... up...

EXT. ISLET COVE - CONTINUOUS

They break the water gasping, Rani coughing violently. Nemo holds her up and pulls her back toward shore:

NEMO

Rani! Rani...

He pulls her into the shallows, their arms wrapped around each other, shoulder-deep in the water. Nemo holds her close and brushes her hair from her face, looking into her eyes:

NEMO (cont'd)

Rani...

Rani begins to breathe evenly again. She opens her eyes and looks into his, nose-to-nose with him, until they become still together. Breathless moment.

Nemo kisses her. Rani touches his face, then kisses him back, overwhelmed. They become lost in each other, the passion between them deep and genuine.

INT. GOVERNOR GENERAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Nemo stands before Bonneville's desk with another packet of orders, frowning as he reads them. Bonneville grins and rises, comes around to take Nemo's arm:

BONNEVILLE

Your notice of honorable discharge, Captain! As acting-Governor General I am hereby kicking you out of this man's army, and sending you back to Royal Academy where you belong!

Bonneville beams. Nemo is speechless for a moment.

NEMO

But what of my father?

BONNEVILLE

He'll recover, and by the time he resumes command, you'll be on a ship somewhere with Mister Darwin, photographing turtles. You always wanted to be in the Navy anyway, as I recall...

He brings Nemo out to the balcony --

EXT. BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

On the drill grounds below are three times as many troops as before, with noticeably more elephants and cannon.

BONNEVILLE (CONT'D)

In any case, he can no longer claim special need of your service. We've enough troops and artillery to fight half of India now! Don't give it another thought.

NEMO

Major... I appreciate the gesture. But I've since committed myself --

BONNEVILLE

(gently)

Do you have any idea what the Raja will do to her, if the two of you are discovered?

Nemo stares at Bonneville in shock.

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

The horrors of the pit, Captain. Then for you, the scandal. Questions, inquiries... your father's legacy destroyed...

(leaning in)

Take her with you if you must, but leave now. While you can.

(he smiles)

And name a sea monster after me.

EXT. LAKE SADHANNA - ON SHORE - NIGHT

Nemo and Rani kneel face to face by the fire, moonlight dappling the water behind them. Nemo wears his civilian finest; Rani is bejeweled and exquisite.

RANI (V.O.)

Do you know the meaning of love?

Nemo presents Rani with a gift: A BRIDAL HEADPIECE with their BLUE PEARL set in the center. Rani beams, moved nearly to tears, then bows her head formally as he puts it on her.

RANI (V.O.) (cont'd)
I have devoted my life to India...
It is all I have ever known.

Nemo dips his ring into an ornamental bowl, and traces a line of vermilion powder from the center of Rani's hairline to the crown of her head. Clearly this is part of a ritual...

RANI (V.O.) (cont'd)
But the rebellion has failed. The
British have more than tripled
their forces, and most of the
reinforcements are Indian.

Rani looks into Nemo's eyes. He bows; she puts a garland of flowers around his neck. Then he does the same for her...

RANI (V.O.) (cont'd)
I long for sovereignty... but I no
longer want to fight my own people
in order to save them.

They take each other's hand, rise together and take seven steps to the north, towards the water.

RANI (V.O.) (cont'd)
You have asked me to come away with
you, to travel the world... and I
would go. But I would make such a
journey with no one but my husband.

NEMO (V.O.)
And I would ask such a sacrifice of
no one but my wife.

They reach the water's edge and turn to each other -- it is done. They have just completed the *Gandharva Vivaha*, the Hindu marriage rite. Rani whispers aloud:

RANI
Beloved...!

Their arms glide around each other and they kiss, until the kiss becomes everything. Their silhouettes DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - NIGHT

A TYPHOON AT SEA. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING, waves spraying foam in the gale... and A STEAMSHIP rolling perilously atop them.

EXT. STEAMSHIP FLYING BRIDGE - NIGHT

The SHIP'S CAPTAIN and CREW are struggling to keep her afloat as the typhoon pounds them without mercy. The Captain cups his hands, shouts into the ear of his FIRST MATE -- the Mate staggers across the pitching deck and down a hatch --

INT. STEAMSHIP BELOW DECK - CONTINUOUS

FIRST MATE

More steam! Stoke her till she bursts!

He runs aft towards the engine room -- and past an OPEN STATEROOM where Nemo tends to Rani.

RANI lies in a swaying hammock, Nemo kneeling at her side -- and THEIR INFANT SON crying in her arms. Nemo looks out the door as the ship pitches wildly:

NEMO

The fool's going to sink us!

He looks from the door back to his wife and child, clearly torn. Rani can see it in his face:

RANI

I'll look after him -- Go! Go!

INT. STEAMSHIP BELOW DECK - CONTINUOUS

Nemo emerges from the stateroom, careening with the boat. He makes his way through the hold, past an IRON DIVING BELL and DIVING SUIT secured by thick cables, and up a narrow stair...

EXT. STEAMSHIP DECK - NIGHT

Nemo emerges from the mizzen hatch and is immediately lashed by rain and gale force winds. A HUGE WAVE SWAMPS THE SHIP'S WAIST, nearly washing Nemo overboard -- he dodges a falling spar and edges his way to the BRIDGE. He accosts the Captain:

NEMO

We must steer into the gale!

STEAMSHIP CAPTAIN

WHAT?! Are you mad?!

NEMO

It's the fastest way to come clear of the storm! Keep it off our beam until it passes over us --!

STEAMSHIP CAPTAIN
GET OFF MY BRIDGE! GET OFF BEFORE I
THROW YOU OFF --

ANOTHER HUGE WAVE BREAKS, SWAMPING THE BRIDGE and sweeping Nemo clear across the deck into the gunwale. When the wave clears, Nemo struggles to his feet, wipes his eyes to find --

THE BRIDGE IS EMPTY. The Captain has been swept away, with nothing left after him but the ship's wheel spinning madly.

Nemo looks out at the breaking swells coming at the ship side-on. He grabs the spinning wheel, nearly breaking his arms as he wrestles with it, holds it steady...

Nemo gauges the breakers, timing the peaks and troughs. THE SHIP RISES ON A CRESTING WAVE, HIGHER AND HIGHER... Nemo waits, hanging onto the wheel as the deck tilts beneath him, perilously close to capsizing... then suddenly he spins the wheel hard about --

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - WIDE

The steamer BANKS INTO THE WAVE HEAD-ON, COMING NEARLY VERTICAL... TOPS IT... THEN DIPS INTO THE HOLLOW STRAIGHT DOWN, disappearing as if it's just gone over the edge of the world. RAIN AND SPRAY overwhelm it and DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN FOGBANK - PRE-DAWN

Silence. Calm seas, an impenetrable mist -- and THE STEAMER, gliding calmly INTO VIEW, low in the water but still afloat.

EXT. STEAMSHIP DECK - SAME

Nemo helps Rani out onto the deck, their baby asleep in her arms. They join SEVERAL CREWMEN who are peering out into the mist as they work the pumps; behind them, the First Mate has taken over the wheel. It is deathly quiet, save for the slow chug of the engine.

RANI
Where are we?

NEMO
No way to tell...

Nemo ascends the bridge stairs, approaches the First Mate.

NEMO (cont'd)
Bearing, Mister Norris?

FIRST MATE

Dunno, sir.

Nemo looks into the binnacle at the SHIP'S COMPASS -- it's spinning like a metronome, back and forth between two different headings. Nemo looks out into the mist.

NEMO

Best keep her luff till this passes. Don't want to waste what coal we --

(he sees something)

Wait.

On the main deck, Rani sees it, too -- she is pointing off to port -- the men around her begin to react --

Nemo looks at the compass again, then back up at Rani: WE SEE that she is pointing in precisely the same direction the compass keeps skewing over to. Nemo turns to the Mate:

NEMO (cont'd)

Bring us five points to port.

(tapping the compass)

Along the leftmost of these two headings.

EXT. OCEAN FOGBANK - SAME

Getting lighter. The steamer coasts to the edge of the mists, then glides through them and out of the fog --

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - OFF VULCANIA ISLAND - ESTABLISHING

-- to discover VULCANIA ISLAND: sheer cliffs sloping upward from a forested shoreline to form a massive volcanic cone.

Rani joins Nemo at the binnacle, drawing a lewd stare from the First Mate. She looks down at the compass with Nemo -- it is now pointing firmly at the island, despite the rising sun looming behind it.

RANI

That's not north.

NEMO

No. It's something else...

EXT. VULCANIA COAST - MORNING

The steamship has anchored a few hundred yards out from a rocky stretch of coastline, as A SMALL CUTTER carrying ten men rows away from it and towards the shore.

EXT. VULCANIA SUMMIT - LATER

From here, the steamship is a distant apparition as Nemo leads a SCOUTING PARTY up the rocky face of the mountain.

Most of his party is still emerging from the treeline as Nemo reaches the edge of the summit. He trudges to the top of it, looks down into the crater's mouth and is dumbstruck --

NEMO'S POV - WIDE

AN ABANDONED MINING AND SMELTING FACILITY rests on the shore of A WIDE LAGOON, completely land-locked and nestled like a gem at the bottom of the dormant volcano.

NEMO
(calling down)
Hel-loooo!... HEL-LOOO...!

The only response is his own echo. Nemo signals his men to follow him, and begins to descend into the crater.

EXT. VULCANIA LAGOON SHORE AND GRAVEYARD - DAY

Nemo and his party reach the bottom of the crater and make their way along the lagoon's edge towards the facility. They round a bend in the shoreline and Nemo stops short --

NEMO
Hold.

The men freeze and look around them -- they're standing in A FIELD OF FRESH GRAVES. Jagged wood crosses, mounds of brown earth, rising up the hillside. There are well over a dozen of them.

Nemo squints, then moves on, his men following him....

EXT. MINING AND SMELTING FACILITY (VULCANIA BASE) - DAY

Nemo and his party approach the facility. It is A FULL INDUSTRIAL COMPOUND composed of several wide, low buildings, with NUMEROUS SIDE PIPES AND SHAFTS jutting out of the complex and into the walls of the crater itself.

Eerie silence. Nemo and his men reach the face of the compound and fan out, drawing their pistols.

NEMO
HELLO-O-O...!

Again, only echoes. Nemo motions to the doors of the various buildings -- the men split into two-man groups and push them open, disappearing inside.

Nemo ventures further into the compound alone. He approaches one of the larger buildings, a wide hangar-like structure that extends into the crater wall...

INT. MINESHAFT AND FOUNDRY - CONTINUOUS

Nemo pulls open the doors, spilling light into A CAVERNOUS FOUNDRY. He enters, taking it all in.

ROWS OF CAST-IRON DECKPLATES, each several inches thick, lie scattered about the floor. Near them, A MASSIVE DORMANT FURNACE. Iron molds, rolling tracks. All in shambles.

Nemo presses on. At the far end of the foundry: AN OPEN MINE SHAFT with boring equipment, cart rails and an overhead pulley-and-tackle system. The edges of the mine are scorched.

Nemo crouches. The floor is also scorched, with radial burn marks emanating out from the mouth of the mine -- everywhere except behind the furnace.

Nemo stares into the mine. What happened here...?

EXT. MINING AND SMELTING FACILITY (VULCANIA BASE) - DAY

Nemo emerges into the sun, heading towards another structure when suddenly he hears something. He stops, waits -- there it is again, from the building behind him. A FAINT SCRATCHING SOUND, almost too low to hear.

INT. VULCANIA INFIRMARY ANTEROOM - DAY

Papers blow across the desk and floor as Nemo enters a small office. Deserted, like everything else here...

MORE SCRATCHING, louder now. Nemo turns -- it's coming from behind a door at the back of the office. A door that has been boarded and nailed shut from the outside. Nemo approaches it.

From within: A RASPY, INHUMAN BREATH. Nemo glares...

MOMENTS LATER - the crewmen gather behind Nemo as he and another man pry the boards away with an iron rod. The last board falls -- Nemo takes the handle, looks to the men, they're ready with their pistols -- he pulls the door open --

-- AND AN EMACIATED, SKELETAL MAN FALLS INTO THE ROOM AND COLLAPSES AT NEMO'S FEET.

The crewmen stagger back. Nemo kneels and cradles the man, whose eyes are wide with horror: skin pallid, his naked scalp dotted with lesions and strange burns.

NEMO
What happened here? Where is everyone...?

The man can only wheeze, teeth rotted, mouth crusted with blood. Nemo looks up from him, then into the room beyond:

NEMO (cont'd)
God Almighty!

INT. VULCANIA INFIRMARY - CONTINUOUS

The room is filled with corpses. Sprawled on the floor, strewn across sick beds... their bodies oddly contorted... every one of them bearing the same strange burns.

Nemo gapes in horror. Behind him, the crewmen recoil; several bolt out the door in fright:

CREWMAN (O.S.)
A plague! It's a plague colony!

Nemo leans over the poor wretch:

NEMO
Who did this to you? What were you doing here?... What is this place?

The man's breath grows weak, weaker... and he dies in Nemo's arms. Nemo sets him down, stands. He turns to the others.

NEMO (cont'd)
We've no choice but to offload our equipment and make repairs here. Pass the word -- we must not eat or drink anything that we find.
(determined)
I need to study this...

SEQUENCE - NEMO DISCOVERS THE SECRET OF VULCANIA

A SERIES OF BRIEF SCENES pass swiftly UNDER MUSIC:

EXT. LAGOON - DAY

The crewmen stand solemnly before a HUGE FIRE in a clearing near the water. Their demeanor makes it evident: they're standing at a FUNERAL PYRE...

INT. MINESHAFT AND FOUNDRY - LATER

Nemo has AN OLD-STYLE CAMERA AND TRIPOD, taking pictures of the radial burns inside the foundry. A POWDER FLASH --

INT. VULCANIA MAIN SUITE - DAY

Nemo examines the PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES he has exposed. Pictures of the lagoon, the dead men, the foundry...

He frowns, looks closer at the foundry plate. There are TINY RADIATION SPOTS ON THE GLASS, not present on the others...

EXT. STEAMSHIP DECK - DAY

TWO CUTTERS are shuttling supplies back and forth from the steamship to the beach head. On deck, Rani directs the operation as A PALLET OF CRATES AND EQUIPMENT MARKED "ROYAL ACADEMY, LONDON" is lowered into one of the cutters.

She turns away and catches sight of the First Mate -- who is staring at her through the rigging again, with lewd interest.

Rani stares back, then suddenly hurls a dagger directly at his face. He screams -- as the blade stops mere inches from his eye, impaled in a rope, quivering under tension.

Rani smiles. The Mate quickly finds something better to do...

INT. MINESHAFT AND FOUNDRY - LATER

Nemo pulls a long rope hand-over-hand -- at the other end a MINE CAR emerges from the shaft, Nemo's CAMERA AND TRIPOD mounted within. Nemo hauls the car out, takes the camera...

INT. VULCANIA MAIN SUITE - EVENING

Nemo compares the new plates, examines them. THEY ALL BEAR HEAVY RADIATION STREAKS. He rubs his chin in thought...

EXT. STEAMSHIP HULL - DAY

Crewmen hang over the side on rope rigs, effecting repairs...

EXT. VULCANIA SUMMIT - DAY

Nemo waits at the lip of the crater as crewmen tow his equipment up the slope -- then RANI comes walking up the hill as well, carrying their child.

Nemo takes her hand, then lifts their son out of her arms and holds him up high, nuzzling the boy's belly. They laugh and cross the summit together...

INT. FOUNDRY - NIGHT

Nemo has fashioned a LEAD SHIELDING PLATE in the furnace. Drenched in sweat, he hoists it over to a cooling vat...

INT. MINESHAFT - NIGHT

The shielding plate is now affixed to a MINE CAR AXLE BASE, behind which stands Nemo wearing his diving suit and helmet. Nemo rolls the shield into the mine like an astronaut...

Soon there's an ETHEREAL LIGHT up ahead. Nemo's eyes go wide behind the glass of his helmet, as the LIGHT GROWS BRIGHTER:

NEMO'S POV - A VEIN OF GLOWING ORE embedded deep within the mine, casting off a strange light. From behind the shield, he takes a long pair of tongs and breaks off a chunk of the ore, gazing at it in wonder, until THE GLOW FILLS THE SCREEN...

EXT. STEAMSHIP DECK - EVENING

CREWMAN

Mumbai Harbor, sir.

Nemo nods, standing with Rani at the bow of the ship, now off the coast of India again. Nemo holds their sleeping son in his arms. They stand looking out together at the approaching shoreline.

RANI

Are you certain that your father will honor your wishes?

NEMO

He must honor them. I'll give him no choice.

(he turns to her)

Think of it! Your nation and mine, all the people of the world, living as equals.... This discovery could mean the end of all war.

Rani gazes at him ruefully.

RANI

You truly believe that.

NEMO

Of course I do. Don't you?

Rani looks away, contemplative. Then:

RANI
 When the world is ready...
 (she smiles at him)
 In God's good time.

EXT. MUMBAI HARBOR DOCKS - NIGHT

The steamship is docked now, as a winch lowers Nemo's DIVING BELL from the steamer onto a FLAT-BED RAILROAD CAR.

MUSIC OVER the scene as DAKKAR arrives, bewildered to see Nemo again. Nemo introduces Rani, gives instructions -- he kisses his child, embraces Rani, then sends them off with Dakkar. He climbs the railroad car...

INT. GOVERNOR GENERAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The General is dining with Bonneville as LT. CARSTAIRS enters:

CARSTAIRS
 Sir? Telegraph from Mumbai Station.
 Your eyes only.

The General frowns, opens the message and reads:

GOVERNOR GENERAL
 What's this? From my son?
 (reads further, then)
 Preposterous!

EXT. LAKE SADHANNA - ON SHORE - NIGHT

The DIVING BELL and flatcar rest on a stretch of rail near the lake bed. A WATER PUMP chugs nearby, with hoses running from the lake and into the top of the bell.

Nemo stands by, waiting -- as HIS FATHER and BONNEVILLE ride into view over the hill and descend to the lakeside. Nemo meets them as they dismount:

NEMO
 Father --

GOVERNOR GENERAL
 What is this nonsense? Summoning me here in the middle of the night.

NEMO
 I've been well, thank you. Major Bonneville!
 (a glance at his father)
 I hadn't expected to see you here.

GOVERNOR GENERAL
It was only at the Major's
insistence that I've come at all.

BONNEVILLE
Now, General -- he may surprise us!
(to Nemo)
Was that your lovely wife I saw in
the library as we were departing?

NEMO
Yes. With the General's grandson,
not that he noticed.

GOVERNOR GENERAL
(going deadly cold)
You have five minutes to convince
me I shouldn't have you clapped in
irons.

NEMO
I'll need only two.

Nemo strides over to the Jules Verne contraption he has
mounted on the flatcar and begins:

NEMO (cont'd)
This diving bell has been modified
to demonstrate a new source of
natural power, unlike anything
heretofore discovered by Man.
You'll note that it was originally
designed to withstand terrific
exterior pressure, but I have --

GOVERNOR GENERAL
Yes-yes, just get on with it.

Nemo fixes him with a stare. Without another word, he circles
the bell and begins to pull a series of DAMPING RODS out of
the sphere, one at a time. As he does:

AN ETHEREAL GLOW rises in the bell's thick pressure windows.
BOILING SEAWATER begins to bubble against the glass,
simmering thunderously in the giant cauldron.

STEAM BEGINS TO ESCAPE from the bell's air intakes in a high
whine. Nemo leaps to the ground as WATER SHOOTS OUT from the
hose joints above the bell, bursting them open.

The General and Bonneville begin to back away. THE INTAKE
HOSE BURSTS and is thrown clear. Moments later the BELL'S
WINDOWS SHATTER, GUSHING STEAM like rocket exhaust.

Nemo joins his father and Bonneville as THE BELL BEGINS VIBRATING SO INTENSELY THAT THE ENTIRE RAIL CAR IS SHAKING. The chains around the bell creak with the strain -- the rail car's wheels spark against the chocks holding it in place -- THE SQUEAL OF ESCAPING STEAM IS DEAFENING as the bell threatens to shake itself apart --

THE ENTIRE BELL BEGINS TO GLOW, FIRST RED HOT, THEN WHITE HOT. The gushers of steam intensify, BECOMING GIANT COMET TAILS. Even Nemo recoils, pulling his father and Bonneville back -- all three men turn tail and run up the hill --

A SHRIEK OF RENDING METAL. They turn -- and THE ENTIRE RAIL CAR JUMPS ITS CHOCKS AND GOES ROCKETING DOWN THE TRACKS LIKE A METEOR. It flies toward a bend, gaining speed -- the three men run along the hillside to keep it in sight -- until it JUMPS THE RAILS, SAILS HIGH INTO THE AIR, and PLUNGES INTO THE LAKE WITH AN EXPLOSIVE HISS.

Nemo, his father and Bonneville all stand gaping. THE BELL SINKS IN A ROLLING BOIL, a melting jack-o'-lantern obscured by columns of hissing steam. As they watch, the BOIL WIDENS, bubbling violently: THE ENTIRE LAKE IS BOILING AWAY.

The General and Bonneville stare, stunned. They turn to Nemo.

NEMO

It is my intention to share this discovery with the world. Unlimited free power, to all the peoples of the earth.

GOVERNOR GENERAL

Share it? It's not yours to share. It belongs to Royal Academy, subject to Her Majesty the Queen, and thus to England alone.

Nemo glares in cold fury. He faces his father squarely:

NEMO

Either all the world shall have this, or none shall. As soon as possible, I intend to demonstrate my discovery to agents of the Raja Saraladevi --

BONNEVILLE

(behind the General)
You already have.

Nemo turns. Bonneville calmly steps up behind the General, pulls out a bayonet knife and stabs him in the back.

Nemo shouts in horror -- the General's eyes go wide -- and he falls dead into Nemo's arms, collapsing to the ground.

Nemo holds him as he falls, sinking with him. Bonneville lifts a whistle to his lips and blows --

A DOZEN MOUNTED SEPOYS ride over the hill, followed by A DOZEN MORE on foot, heading towards Nemo.

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)
Take the Captain into custody!
He's just murdered the General!

The sepoy advance. Nemo glares at Bonneville in disbelief...

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)
You still don't understand the
nature of power.

Nemo's eyes fill with hatred. The sepoy are about to surround him -- when suddenly A THICK CLOUD OF STEAM billows in from the lake, engulfing the hill, blinding everyone --

Nemo runs. Behind him, SHOUTS AND GUNFIRE -- he races to his father's horse, leaps onto it and takes off, disappearing through the thick steam...

EXT. SADHANNA PASS - NIGHT

Nemo rides like the wind. Ahead of him is the skyline, with THE PALACE CANTONMENT silhouetted against moonlit clouds. His eyes are wild, his mind racing:

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)
What of the General?

DAKKAR (V.O.)
He lives, but is badly wounded.

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)
Damn! ...

Nemo spurs the horse on, as it comes together in his mind:

BONNEVILLE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I've put in for a three-fold
increase... After today's attack,
they'll have to approve it... We've
enough troops to fight half of
India now...

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Guards call down as Nemo gallops through the open gates;
VISIBLE in the distance behind him are the pursuing sepoy.

Nemo ignores the shouts, charges to the side of the palace --

INT. PALACE MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

Rani is seated at a PIPE ORGAN with her son, PLAYING AN
ELABORATE FUGUE, when NEMO bursts into the room gasping.

RANI

My love! What has happened?

NEMO

We've been betrayed! Bonneville --
he's in league with your father!
Both of them behind the attacks --
Come with me! Quickly! --

Nemo lifts his son in one arm and grabs Rani's hand, bringing
her OUT OF THE ROOM AND ACROSS THE CORRIDOR, THROUGH:

INT. PALACE LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

NEMO

You must go! Flee -- take our son
to the Durga Dals and hide! If they
catch you, they'll stop at nothing
to learn our secrets! --

Nemo brings Rani to the back of the library, pulls open a
curtain to reveal a HIDDEN SERVANTS' DOOR.

RANI

You're not coming with us?

NEMO

I'll join you later! But you must
go! Now!

Nemo kisses his little boy, then meets Rani's eyes. They
embrace, a painful and panicked goodbye. Then:

NEMO (cont'd)

God keep you both! Now go!

Rani flees with their child. Nemo pulls the door shut and
runs across the library to the windows -- where he can see
RANI galloping away on his horse, their son over her back.

Nemo is racing past the aquarium when Dakkar enters --

DAKKAR

Sahib!

NEMO

Dakkar! I'm being pursued -- get a message to British High Command --

Nemo falls silent as Dakkar draws a pistol and coldly aims it at Nemo's heart. Nemo glares at him in bewilderment.

NEMO (cont'd)

Dakkar?

DAKKAR SHOOTS NEMO THROUGH THE CHEST. Nemo is blown back against the aquarium wall, the glass cracking behind him. He looks at Dakkar, eyes wide in horror and astonishment.

Nemo falls to the floor with a crash, rolling onto his back. Gasping for breath, eyelids fluttering, he looks up:

THE AQUARIUM WALL IS A SPIDERWEB OF CRACKED GLASS surrounding A GUSHING BULLET HOLE splattered with Nemo's blood. Nemo glares, unable to move... as THE CRACKS EXPAND ACROSS THE GLASS... WATER SEEPING THROUGH...

Nemo stares, gasping, helpless. The last thing he sees is a beautiful nautilus, floating behind the splintering glass.

Then THE ENTIRE AQUARIUM EXPLODES, CASCADING OVER HIM in a rush of water. All becomes BLACKNESS.

INT. INTERROGATION CELL

BLACKNESS... then a metal grate swings open, spilling light into a dark cell. Revealed in that light is Nemo, bandaged, hanging from his wrists by chains in the center of the room --

-- and Bonneville, the grim interrogator, circling him. THE MOMENTS THAT FOLLOW ARE DISJOINTED BLURS, MARKING THE PASSAGE OF SEVERAL HOURS as Bonneville grills his captive:

BONNEVILLE

You see, Captain, I too believe in a world united by power. But power must be wielded responsibly, tempered by wisdom and higher order. What you intend would sooner destroy the world than save it....

NEMO draws a ragged breath, but says nothing....

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

We're quite alike, you and I. You have no interest or loyalty to England but that she funds your private interests. As she does mine. The difference is that what you would give away, I will sell to the highest bidder....

Nemo's chains tighten, lifting him by the arms as DAKKAR looks on. Nemo groans. Bonneville paces around him....

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

The Raja and I despise one another, but we recognize that each possesses a power that the other lacks. I am able to provide troops and arms -- he in his wealth is able to provide vital sea power, with secret mines and shipyards hidden throughout the Arabian Sea.

Nemo's eyes register the significance of that --

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

Thus, an accord -- and soon, a new empire under a new nation.

NEMO hangs silent... the chains tighten again. Bonneville turns to face him:

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

You called this new power source a discovery, not an invention. Something found in nature. I mean to know where you found it, and how you came to harness its energies.

Nemo meets Bonneville's gaze, but his eyes betray nothing...

LATER - Carstairs has entered to make his report:

CARSTAIRS

The lake has completely boiled away, sir. We attempted to retrieve the bell, but it seems to have melted the lake bed and sunk into the earth -- the lava above it then cooled, creating an impenetrable layer. We may never recover it.

BONNEVILLE

And the ship that brought him here?

CARSTAIRS

Halfway across the ocean by now.

Bonneville nods, considering. He turns to Nemo.

BONNEVILLE

My fleet is still under
construction, Captain. I have time.
(he turns to Dakkar)
The objective is to break him down,
not to kill him. Break his soul,
break his will...

WE CONTINUE TO HEAR BONNEVILLE over the following:

EXT. COAST ROAD AND DOCKYARDS - NIGHT

Nemo is one of A DOZEN WHITE PRISONERS chained in tandem, on
a forced march to Mumbai Harbor surrounded by MOUNTED GUARDS:

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

(an overheard whisper)
Tortures of the body will not work
on this man...

EXT. SLAVE SHIP - NIGHT

Nemo is loaded up a gangplank onto the deck of a slave ship.
BURLY WHITE SLAVERS force Nemo and the other prisoners below:

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

But rob him of his intellect, of
his dignity... starve his mind...

INT. SLAVE SHIP HOLD - NIGHT

Nemo lies stripped to the waist and chained to a SLAVE PALLET
below decks, with barely two feet of headroom between his
shelf and the one above him.

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

Take away all that he loves...

EXT. SLAVE SHIP - DAY

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

Find his wife and child, Dakkar...
That will work.

Bearded and weakened, Nemo is pushed out onto the deck and
into a blinding sun. Squinting, he looks out and sees:

EXT. RORAPANDI SLAVE CAMP - ESTABLISHING

The slave ship is now docked at a wharf along the sea wall of a rocky desert island. Further along the coast, TWO CARGO VESSELS are being loaded by twin processions of WHITE SLAVES, prisoners carrying heavy sacks up the planks in two columns.

Nemo is shoved down the gangplank. He limps down the ramp, still watching the cargo procession from the corner of his eye. The slaves are taking their sacks from a line of MINE CARS identical to those at Vulcania; behind them are RAILS running over the rocky terrain and back into the mines.

EXT. RORAPANDI SLAVE CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Nemo and the other new arrivals are brought into the middle of the camp, past A LONG LINE OF WRETCHED MEN AT HARD LABOR. Their work is overseen by GUARDS IN WHITE SUDAN HELMETS, carrying rifles, cracking bullwhips.

A tall Portuguese overseer, FRANCISCO, stands atop a rise as the prisoners line up before him. Shirtless and grinning, with a gold tooth and a long bullwhip, clearly this is a man who relishes cruelty. He walks along the ridge:

FRANCISCO

(thick Portuguese accent)

Welcome to Rorapandi! The white man's grave. *Laborare est supersto:* Work, you live -- not work, you die. Disobey...

Francisco has reached A RAGGED TIN SWEATBOX jutting out of the rise -- he kicks it and nods to the guards there --

FRANCISCO (cont'd)

... Suffer!

The guards throw open the tin door and drag out A GAUNT HORROR FIGURE drenched in sweat and blood. His eyes have whited-over, fingers and arms shredded from self-inflicted bite marks, babbling incoherently. A man driven insane by countless weeks in solitary confinement.

Francisco cackles. He calls out to the hills and the slaves working all around him:

FRANCISCO (cont'd)

See the bravest man at Rorapandi!
Any orders, Captain?!

Nemo watches as the half-dead prisoner is dragged across the sand toward A ROW OF BARRACKS behind the ridge.

As Nemo's gaze follows, he locks eyes with a short, bespectacled American (DR. CAHILL) who has also been watching.

They exchange a glance, marking each other. Then a guard whips the man's neck, startling him back to work...

EXT. RORAPANDI MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

High sun, hard labor. Nemo struggles to push A MINE CART LADEN WITH BRICKS up the barren slope, sweating in sheets as he and the other prisoners are whipped like mules.

The cart begins to slip backwards down the hill. Nemo grits his teeth and leans into it, trembling with the effort, his feet sliding in the hot sand --

--- until a tall, muscular prisoner (REDMOND) comes to his aid, shouldering the load with him. Together they get the cart moving uphill again --

INT. RORAPANDI BARRACKS - NIGHT

A low ramshackle bunker, straw mats on dirt as beds, all currently occupied by sleeping prisoners. A SHIFT WHISTLE BLOWS outside -- the men rise, staggering awake.

They all file out as NEMO'S SHIFT shuffles in, dead on their feet, collapsing onto mats, each with a bowl of thin gruel. One of the last to enter, Nemo walks the aisle looking for a mat -- Cahill points to an empty one near his own.

Nemo goes to sit there and freezes -- in the middle of the floor lies the body of the insane prisoner, mouth open in rictus, flies crawling over his teeth. An example to the other men....

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY

Another LANCER REGIMENT parades down the street of an Indian village -- and again DAKKAR is there, weaving through the crowd. He spots a veiled woman in a colorful sari, grins.

He approaches her, about to draw his dagger, when she turns and gasps -- it's not Rani. Dakkar withdraws and allows her to pass, scanning the crowd in frustration...

EXT. RORAPANDI MINES - DAY

More sun, more labor. Nemo, Cahill and others load HEAVY SACKS from the mouth of an open mine into a cart. Cahill seems particularly unsuited, struggling to keep his footing as he sways under his burden. He slips and stumbles --

Cahill collapses to his knees, breaking his sack open and scattering black dust all over his fellow prisoners. Nemo brushes the dust out of his face, then notices something, touches his finger to his tongue to taste it --

The guards are on Cahill instantly, whipping him to the ground and screaming at him as he feebly tries to dodge their blows. They beat at him mercilessly as Nemo watches, until it becomes clear that they're not going to stop...

Cahill cries out, waving his arms and being whipped to death. He looks for all the world like that Indian boy outside the General's office... Nemo turns back to his labor, ignoring Cahill's cries, until finally he can take no more...

Nemo suddenly marches to one of the guards and savagely pushes him to the ground. Another guard tries to whip him -- Nemo grabs the whip and backhands the guard across the face.

It quickly becomes a melee. More guards pile onto Nemo, six against one, Nemo raining blows as they bring him down...

EXT. RORAPANDI SLAVE CAMP - DAY

Nemo is flogged in full view of the entire camp. Redmond, Cahill and the others look on in pity as Francisco lays on the whip... the blows CRACK AND ECHO across the canyon...

EXT. SWEATBOX - DAY

Nemo stands beaten, staring down into the tiny tin sweatbox. Francisco looks on, grinning as the guards strip Nemo down. Then Francisco himself shoves Nemo into the box headfirst --

INT. SWEATBOX - CONTINUOUS

Nemo lands in a fetal curl, trying to avoid the hot walls of the tiny prison. The door slams shut behind him, cutting off all but a thin sliver of light.

Nemo hugs his legs, glassy-eyed, barely able to breathe. Francisco taunts him from outside:

FRANCISCO (O.S.)
You? Brave man? YOU?! ...

Nemo lies curled in the smothering darkness, shaking...

FRANCISCO (O.S.) (cont'd)
 You are No-One! NO-ONE!
 (slipping into low Latin)
 Ne-MO! Vos es... NE-MO! ... NEMO!!!

The name rings off the walls of the box...

MONTAGE - NEMO IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Nemo lies curled, open-mouthed, vacant, as days become weeks.

RAIN splashes through airholes in the roof above -- he cups his hands desperately, gathering as much of it as he can...

Stripped of everything, fighting to keep his sanity, Nemo clasps his shaking hands to his forehead, eyes shut tight, praying...

EXT. VINDHYA RANGE - DAY

TWO BRITISH CAVALRY REGIMENTS (half of them sepoy) charge through the mountain pass at full gallop.

Hidden in the hills above them, TWO DURGA DAL SENTRY WOMEN stand at their passing, then race to their horses.

EXT. JHANSI PROVINCE - VILLAGE STREETS AND SQUARE - DAY

The regiments descend upon an innocent village, charging through the streets like invading Huns.

They overrun the square at the height of the market, horses rearing -- VILLAGERS scatter in their path, baskets spill, carts are overturned --

BRITISH LIEUTENANT

Search the houses! Bring everyone
out into the square!

The soldiers dismount and fan out, rifles drawn, kicking-in doors. They begin dragging people from their homes, screaming women, crying children --

Suddenly AN AVENGING ARMY OF DURGA DALs comes charging down from the hills -- with Rani at the lead. Battle is joined in the square and across the village as Rani's women warriors clash steel with the invading British forces.

Rani spins on her horse, sword high, about to charge again when she hears a cry --

DAKKAR (O.S.)

Help me! Rani, help me!!

Rani whirls -- and sees DAKKAR, grappling in the dirt with a British soldier who is trying to stab him.

Rani draws her pistol and shoots, the soldier falls away -- she jumps down from her horse and rushes to Dakkar's side --

RANI

Dakkar! Are you injured?

DAKKAR

(wincing)

I will heal! I have been trying to find you -- I bring a message from your Captain -- ahhnnnggh!

Dakkar grabs his side, doubling in feigned agony. Rani pulls him further away from the fighting, kneels at his side --

RANI

My husband lives?!

DAKKAR

Yes! But before I say more, I must know -- his son! Is the child safe?

RANI

Yes! He is back at our camp, in the woods above Vindhya Pass!

At that Dakkar tears a pouch from his belt, and pelts Rani across the neck and chest with bright yellow powder. Rani recoils coughing -- Dakkar stands and blows a whistle --

-- AND THE ENTIRE BRITISH REGIMENT STOPS DEAD IN ITS TRACKS, SPINS, AND COMES RUSHING AFTER RANI. It's a trap! Rani meets the first of them with her sword, slashing -- she leaps onto her horse trailing yellow dust, and kicks away galloping --

SOLDIERS HEAD HER OFF at each turn as she desperately tries to escape the village, finally galloping into the middle of the square, where the troops surround her, converging upon her, pulling her down from her horse and OVERWHELMING HER...

DAKKAR (O.S.)

Stop! We need her alive! Stop!!
STOPPP...!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SWEATBOX - DAY

Nemo lies curled, matted in sweat, barely conscious. Staring, glassy, his breath a dry wheeze...

FOOTSTEPS crunch on gravel outside. Francisco's boot kicks the tin roof of Nemo's prison several times to rouse him; Nemo's eyes flutter open.

A slot opens in the roof above -- and a single tress of long black hair drops onto Nemo's face. Nemo blinks, pulls it off to look at it...

FRANCISCO (O.S.)
 (a sinister hiss)
 Vindhya Village, taken. Durga
 Dals... fallen!

Nemo's eyes focus, as he starts to realize. He lifts the tress of Rani's hair to his nose, and the scent makes him gasp... no... no-no-no...

FRANCISCO (O.S.) (cont'd)
 You wife... you son... DEAD!
 (his taunts ring out)
 DEADDD!!!

NEMO BREAKS DOWN. Clutching his wife's hair, his face a mask of pain, Nemo weeps so violently that he can barely breathe.

Then something starts to happen. Nemo's breath grows steadier, his face more serene. The trembling subsides, becomes a quiet calm.

Nemo slips away into his mind...

HALLUCINATORY SEQUENCE - EXT. UNDERWATER - THE OCEAN DEPTHS

His eyes are closed as he floats in a state of bliss, tastefully naked... TENS OF THOUSANDS OF TROPICAL FISH spiraling around him in a giant flock.

He is breathing in the sea and it does not harm him, his face vivid and alive. The ocean and all within it swirl around him, comforting him, bringing him peace again...

He opens his eyes: RANI IS THERE, a vision, floating in the water with him, her hair a beguiling swirl behind her.

Nemo gazes at her. She smiles and looks down to her belly, cradling it like a new mother -- Her belly is glowing, with the same ethereal light that Nemo found in the mine.

Nemo looks on in rapture. Rani brings her hands away, holding out A GLOWING BALL OF ENERGY, offering it up to her beloved with a sad smile: her last gift to him. She releases it...

It floats between them, swirling as if alive. Rani floats away into the distance, a fading ghost, as THE GLOWING BALL GROWS BRIGHTER, filling Nemo's vision... and he begins to imagine A VESSEL BEING DEvised AND CONSTRUCTED AROUND IT.

Formulae and mathematical symbols appear, part of the swirling maelstrom. Line drawings take shape around the glowing mass, becoming iron and rivets, nuclear wonder.

VOICES whisper, sound and image, surrounding Nemo in a hurricane of his own imagination...

EDINBURGH PROFESSOR (V.O.)
... iron deck plates with a
relative density seven-point-eight
times that of water, displacing...

LONDON PROFESSOR (V.O.)
... the luciferin then oxidizes,
creating bioluminescence...

VISIONS OF SEA LIFE, dissolving into biological drawings, blueprints... THE RIBCAGE OF A WHALE, expanding and contracting, becoming the skeletal substructure of a great undersea craft. GILLS becoming ballast vents. An alligator head becoming A WHEELHOUSE WITH TWO GLOWING EYE WINDOWS...

RANI (V.O.)
Beloved!

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)
... take away all that he loves...

RANI (V.O.)
When the world is ready...

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)
... vital sea power...

THE VISIONS INCREASE AND INTENSIFY, THE VOICES GROWING LOUDER WITH THEM, until everything reaches a crescendo with:

FRANCISCO (V.O.)
NE-MO! You are... NEMO! NEMO!!!

NEMO'S WIDE EYES FILL THE SCREEN UNTIL THE GLOW DISSOLVES TO:

INT. SWEATBOX - DAY

Blackness. Silence. Then FOOTSTEPS outside.

The sweatbox door is wrenched open. TWO GUARDS reach in...

EXT. RORAPANDI SLAVE CAMP - CONTINUOUS

They haul Nemo out by the arms, a catatonic wretch. He hangs between them, head lolling, open-mouthed, eyes empty glass.

They drag Nemo's body over to Francisco, who stands leering. Francisco draws his dagger, sticks Nemo in the side -- no reaction at all. Nemo's mind is gone. Francisco nods easily.

They drag Nemo away across the dirt. His legs make weak furrows in the earth as he is dragged past the OTHER SLAVES, who look up from their labor in mute sympathy.

He seems near death. But then, as the guards drag his body over the ridge and through the compound -- NEMO'S EYES MOVE.

He steals a glance to his left. Over there: the mine rails, running down to the docks where A TALL FRIGATE lies waiting.

Nemo's eyes register that, then fall slack again as he's dragged through the camp. Then they flash lucid again --

To Nemo's right: THE GUARDS' QUARTERS and ARMORY, where several guards are unloading fresh rifles from crates, mounting new swords in racks.

Nemo's eyes go slack again. He has a plan. The guards drag him toward the barracks, past a SUPPLY SHACK...

INT. RORAPANDI BARRACKS - DAY

Cahill, Redmond and the others sit up as NEMO is dragged down the aisle between the mats, a gauntlet of despair.

The guards dump his body onto the floor, an example for all to see. The prisoners look on from a distance, gazing at him in pity, then turn away. The guards laugh at them and leave.

Cahill still watches Nemo, terribly moved. He rises, crawls over the floor to comfort him, much to Redmond's consternation, when suddenly...

Nemo begins to move. Cahill gasps. The prisoners turn, amazed, nudging each other, craning their necks to see:

Nemo slowly unfolds his limbs, straightens, lifts his head. He draws a deep, long breath, strength gathering in his body.

The prisoners look on in fascination, apostles at a resurrection. Then as the men look on, Nemo does something impossible... he stands. Straightens. Looks into their eyes.

Finally, he speaks...

NEMO

Listen to me, and live.

INT. RORAPANDI BARRACKS - NIGHT

Hours later -- The men suddenly hurry back to their mats, laying down quickly as if asleep. Moments later, the SHIFT WHISTLE sounds and the GUARDS enter to rouse everyone.

The men rise and shuffle out, some of them casting glances back at Nemo as the new shift enters and takes their bunks. Two guards walk over to Nemo, who lies face-up in the middle of the floor exactly as they left him. A fly crawls over his open eye -- obviously he's dead.

The guards sneer and exit. The new group of prisoners look upon Nemo in the dark, begin to turn away. Then one of them GASPS...

EXT. RORAPANDI BARRACKS - NIGHT

Torches lit throughout the camp as the slave labor continues into the night. WHIPS CRACK in the distance.

A LONE GUARD at the barracks door turns, hearing something within -- a faint scuffling at the door. He draws his pistol and faces it, ready -- when someone drops onto him from the roof above, wraps an arm around his neck and pulls him away --

Two other men drop from the roof, one of whom removes the bar to the barracks door -- NEMO emerges (fully clothed now) and leads the rest of the men out, keeping to shadow --

EXT. RORAPANDI MINES - NIGHT

Cahill and several other prisoners are once again working the mines, loading mine cars with sacks of powder. Two of them cast furtive glances, then nod at Cahill, coast is clear --

Cahill pulls torn strips of cloth from his shirt and pours black powder into them. He begins rolling them into fuses --

EXT. RORAPANDI SUPPLY SHACK - NIGHT

Another sentry stands guard at a padlocked wood door -- he looks up just as TWO PRISONERS duck out of view, just beyond the rise. He brings up his rifle, drawing a bead on them --

-- and a shirt comes down over his mouth, pulling him off his feet and back into the shadows.

NEMO emerges with the guard's rifle and a keyring. He unlocks the supply shack, waves towards the ridge -- TEN MORE MEN run out to him, crouching and keeping low --

EXT. RORAPANDI WHARF AND DOCKSIDE - NIGHT

Redmond and his group are drawing sacks from mine cars and loading them onto the CARGO VESSEL docked there. Its escort, the TALL FRIGATE, lies docked nearby.

Redmond steals a glance up the hillside, dotted with torch lights -- as one of the torches waves back and forth twice.

He and another prisoner exchange nods. Then A WHIP CRACK startles them back to labor --

EXT. RORAPANDI SUPPLY SHACK - NIGHT

Nemo waves the men out of the shack -- they run for cover carrying ropes, pickaxes, small casks of whale oil. Nemo has an open cask himself and pours out a trail out from the open door, across the dark sand --

INT. FRANCISCO'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Francisco suddenly sits up in his bed with a start. He rolls to his feet, grabs his sword belt and pistol --

EXT. RORAPANDI GUARDS' QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Francisco wrenches his door open, marches out onto the sand and stops. He stands listening, motionless, his eyes scanning the length and breadth of the camp...

All is quiet save for the sound of guards spurring the slaves on to further work. Not a thing out of the ordinary.

Francisco turns, reluctantly, striding back toward his bungalow when A DISTANT SHOUT spins him around --

EXT. RORAPANDI MINES - CONTINUOUS

CAHILL

Look out! Run! --

Cahill's group runs from the mouth of the mine shouting as

A MASSIVE EXPLOSION shakes the cavern. HUGE SHEETS OF ROCK sheer off the roof of the open mine, causing a cave-in -- DUST AND RUBBLE scatter in thick brown clouds --

EXT. RORAPANDI ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

-- covering the SHOUTS OF THE ARMORY GUARDS as they are overcome by Nemo's group, taken down and hauled out of sight.

EXT. RORAPANDI SLAVE CAMP - WIDE - CONTINUOUS

THROUGHOUT THE CAMP, guards are running toward the scene of the cave-in, shouting as the dust overcomes them -- the prisoners scatter in apparent panic --

INT. RORAPANDI ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

Nemo and his men raid the weapon racks, handing out carbines and ammunition. Nemo takes a pistol and sword and runs out -- across the camp AN ALARM BELL SOUNDS --

EXT. RORAPANDI GUARDS' QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Sleepy guards stream out of their quarters and onto the sand -- Francisco calls out from the ridge:

FRANCISCO

To the armory, fools! Quickly!

The guards start off that way when suddenly THE SUPPLY SHACK NEXT DOOR EXPLODES, raining embers onto them and IGNITING A WALL OF FLAME. The flames surround them, pinning them in --

EXT. RORAPANDI WHARF AND DOCKSIDE - CONTINUOUS

The dock guards have surrounded Redmond's men and are herding them together when a RUNAWAY MINE CART comes careening down the mountainside into their midst. The guards jump back --

-- as the cart hits the bottom of its track and derails, spilling pickaxes, swords and rifles at the prisoners' feet. Redmond and his men grab them up and immediately join the battle, attacking their captors --

EXT. RORAPANDI MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

THE CAMP HAS ERUPTED INTO FULL SCALE REVOLT. Nemo leads the charge, sword in hand as DOZENS OF ARMED PRISONERS swarm the mountainside, firing rifles, clashing steel --

NEMO

(calling out)

To the ship! Everyone to the wharf!

MORE MINE CARS roll down the hillside. Guards intercept one of them, dragging it to a stop just as it EXPLODES, blasting them backwards through the air.

MORE PRISONERS run through the smoke and gunfire, many falling, many fighting, RIOT AND CHAOS --

EXT. RORAPANDI GUARDS' QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Francisco kicks away the struts beneath a WATER TOWER, toppling it -- it hits the dirt with a TORRENTIAL GUSH, washing downhill and completely dousing the WALL OF FLAME. The guards are freed --

FRANCISCO

Now! After them! *Apresse-se! Corra!*

He leaps from the ridge and charges into the battle himself --

EXT. RORAPANDI MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo runs past ANOTHER EXPLODING MINE CART, looks back up the hill and calls out to his men --

NEMO

This way!

EXT. RORAPANDI MINES - CONTINUOUS

A LINE OF ENEMY GUARDS have surrounded the mouth of the cave, pinning Cahill in with concentrated fire. Cahill crouches behind what's left of the rock wall and shoots back, surrounded by the bodies of the rest of his group, trapped --

Suddenly VOLLEYS OF GUNFIRE erupt behind the guards as Nemo's men arrive to draw their fire. Nemo charges through the fray, firing his pistol, weaving toward Cahill's position --

Cahill grabs the last remaining mine cart and wheels it out of the mine, crouching behind it for cover. BULLETS SPANG off of it as he reaches Nemo's side:

CAHILL

Get in!

Both men dive headlong into the mine cart and go rolling downhill with it, full speed with no brakes --

WITH THE MINE CART - MOVING

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF UTTER BEDLAM as Cahill and Nemo careen through the camp. They pass waves of enemy guards who are running down toward the wharf -- Nemo and Cahill are firing over the edge, as SHOTS RING off the cart's metal sides --

They're more than halfway down when they see FRANCISCO up ahead, running a man through. Nemo's eyes set in hatred. He stands in the rolling cart, presenting a clear target --

CAHILL (cont'd)

Sir, no! --

Nemo rises like an avenging demon, glaring at Francisco, scenery streaking behind him. Francisco drops his victim, turns -- and his grin melts at the sight of Nemo, eyes wide with disbelief. How can this be?

Nemo raises his pistol, aims directly between Francisco's eyes, and FIRES. Francisco's head snaps back as he falls away dead.

Nemo stares at the body retreating in the distance, as the mine cart races on. Cahill stares up at Nemo, appalled.

Nemo turns forward, and snaps alert instantly as --

NEMO

Out! Now!

He and Cahill dive from the cart as it RAMS INTO A BARRIER sprawled across the track. They tumble onto the dirt, BULLETS TEARING into the earth beside them -- they roll to their feet running --

EXT. RORAPANDI WHARF AND DOCKSIDE - NIGHT

Nemo and Cahill run as fast as they can, WAVES OF ENEMY GUARDS charging down the mountainside behind them. They join the human tide of prisoners surging onto the wharf --

Nemo comes to the forefront just as they all reach the base of the frigate --

-- and suddenly twin rows of rifles appear over its side.

The ship's gunports kick open, cannon ready behind them. Nemo and his crew freeze...

The cannon open fire, OBLITERATING THE INCOMING WAVE OF PRISON GUARDS. Redmond and his men appear over the gunwales, peering down at Nemo and the other men:

REDMOND

Any orders, Captain?

The prisoners erupt into cheers. They swarm onto the frigate, pounding up the gangplank, climbing onto boarding nets...

EXT. RORAPANDI BAY - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

The frigate is underway now, exchanging fire with what's left of the camp's shore batteries. As it comes around, it fires a volley of SMOLDERING FIRESHOT into the spars of the neighboring cargo vessel, setting it aflame.

As the frigate fills its sails, gaining distance, THE CARGO SHIP EXPLODES INTO FRAGMENTS, spattering the island bay.

INT. FRIGATE CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

A plushly appointed cabin, dark woods, red velvet upholstery.

Nemo stands at a small basin, splashing water onto his face. He looks up at himself in the mirror, touches his beard in an odd mix of self-admiration and astonishment.

He has changed into a borrowed captain's uniform -- he pulls the jacket on and straightens himself. A KNOCK at the door:

NEMO

Yes?

REDMOND (O.S.)

Ready for you, sir.

Nemo draws a deep breath, goes to the door.

EXT. FRIGATE DECK - NIGHT

Nemo emerges onto the quarterdeck. The men are all gathered on the main deck below, looking up at him, waiting.

He looks out over their faces. Finally he speaks.

NEMO

I am Captain Nemo.

The men stand listening.

NEMO (cont'd)

I've gathered, in my brief time among you, that many of you have served together in one navy or another, but without common bond. Now you have one: that hated nation that would enslave us and use the fruits of our labor to make war upon our fellows; that has taken from us our homes, our liberties... our wives and our children.

There's an edge to that. Cahill listens, intrigued.

NEMO (cont'd)
 Tonight, through Divine Providence,
 we are free men. We have a ship, an
 enemy, and the means to fight.
 (he meets their eyes)
 I mean to fight.

The men react to that. Subdued murmurs among the crew.

NEMO (cont'd)
 I would make a widow of no one, nor
 an orphan of any child. Those of
 you with families will be free to
 go, but take care -- those who
 imprisoned us would gladly do so
 again, or do far worse to those who
 love us most. Our best course may
 be to remain at large until the
 evil that oppresses us has been
 vanquished.

Redmond listens, steadfast.

NEMO (cont'd)
 To those who stay, I offer this
 promise: you will no longer be
 subject to the whims of petty
 tyrants. No more will you languish,
 wretched, forgotten, your toil
 serving naught but the interests of
 empire. Where I shall take you, no
 nation holds dominion, and no
 chains shall ever bind you again.

The men consider that. Nemo concludes:

NEMO (cont'd)
 We will sink their supply ships,
 rob them of the black powder that
 fuels their oppression...
 (concluding)
 We will make war upon War itself.

The men stand engrossed. Nemo turns:

NEMO (cont'd)
 Mr. Redmond, keep us before the
 wind until we're clear of the
 island. Then would you and Dr.
 Cahill join me in my cabin, please.

With that, Nemo leaves the deck. The crew stands blinking. Redmond and Cahill exchange glances.

REDMOND

Dismissed!

The crew disperse. Cahill alone looks doubtful...

INT. FRIGATE CAPTAIN'S CABIN - LATER

Cahill still looks doubtful as he stands over a table in the captain's cabin, smoking cigars with Nemo and Redmond as they pore over A CAPTURED LOGBOOK AND MAPS:

NEMO

You see, here -- and here --

ON THE MAP (which prominently features "Crespo Island"), Nemo's finger traces a line for us to follow:

NEMO (cont'd)

Nearly a dozen bases hidden throughout the Andamans and the Maldives, from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea.

CAHILL

And you discovered one of these?

NEMO

These logs confirm it, Doctor. Vulcania, as I have named it, was one of many secret bases where Bonneville and the Raja have been building a fleet of warships, funded by black market trade in arms and munitions.

(turns a page of the log)

It was written off as a plague colony and its inhabitants left for dead...

(brightly)

But it was not a plague colony! Those poor miners unwittingly discovered a vast trove of radiatic ore -- with enough power to fuel a thousand ships for decades.

(he closes the logbook)

Everything we'll need is there.

REDMOND

Need for what, sir?

NEMO

To build a ship of our own, Mr.
Redmond. Not of wood and canvas,
but of iron -- driven not by coal,
but by the atom --

Cahill looks at Nemo in growing awe -- can he be serious?
Nemo turns to him with a grin:

NEMO (cont'd)

And not to sail atop the seas...
but beneath them.

REDMOND

Beneath?

Cahill's look grows from confusion to comprehension.

CAHILL

A submarine boat?

NEMO

Yes. We're no match for Bonneville
on land -- the only way to defeat
him is with sea power and stealth.

CAHILL

But how...?

A KNOCK at the door:

CREWMAN (O.S.)

Pilot asking for a course, sir.

NEMO

(to Redmond, with a map)
Follow this heading, but say
nothing of our destination.

REDMOND

Aye, sir.

Redmond leaves the cabin. To Cahill:

NEMO

Doctor, I've reviewed the roster
that you prepared, and I'm
satisfied we'll have enough hands.

CAHILL

Yes, Captain. But if I may...
(then)

(MORE)

CAHILL (cont'd)

The greatest gift we can give these men is to restore their dignity. Uniforms, humane living quarters, good food. I'd like to be in charge of that.

NEMO

Yes. The discipline of the service... See to it, Doctor.

Cahill nods in thanks, goes to leave. He stops at the door:

CAHILL

Captain... what's waiting for us at Vulcania?

NEMO

If Bonneville discovers it?
The death of all the World....

EXT. SECRET ENEMY SHIPYARD, CRESPO ISLAND - DAY

Dakkar sports a fresh saber scar across one cheek as he and Bonneville march past A HUGE IRONCLAD SUPERSHIP (the "Virago") UNDER CONSTRUCTION. Rivets and sparks, huge sections of hull being hoisted on chains, 15-inch longbore Dahlgren guns being lowered onto its deck.

We get a good look at it (and at the VOLCANO looming beyond) as they stride across the shipyard in heated discussion:

BONNEVILLE

Damned Francisco! If he hadn't died in the revolt, I would murder him myself --

DAKKAR

The Raja is extremely displeased at the loss of two of his ships, Major! And the Captain's escape --

BONNEVILLE

The Captain's escape would be immaterial if you had carried out my orders! And had I given the Captain over as was first demanded, your Raja would most certainly have tortured him to death and fed his body to tigers!

DAKKAR

His family has been dishonored! It is his right to seek vengeance...

BONNEVILLE

Your Raja's "vengeance" has already cost us our only link to an inconceivable source of power! You were to bring his wife and child to me, alive! Without that leverage, we have nothing to compel our enemy to give up his secrets!

DAKKAR

He may not know that they are dead. Perhaps we could convince him otherwise.

BONNEVILLE

A bluff? We'd have to find him first...

Carstairs has approached under this -- Bonneville turns:

CARSTAIRS

No trace of them, sir. We've sent word to every available port, but they're weeks ahead of us by now --

BONNEVILLE

Put out word to the privateers. Double shares, but make it clear -- I want the Captain alive.

EXT. VULCANIA SHORE - DAY

Nemo, Cahill and Redmond lead a shore party as the stolen frigate lies at anchor off the coast behind them.

EXT. VULCANIA SUMMIT - DAY

Nemo and Cahill top the rise and gaze down into the mouth of the crater -- where the MINING/INDUSTRIAL COMPOUND still waits by the LAGOON, undisturbed.

Nemo enjoys Cahill's reaction at the sight of it, then begins to lead the men down...

EXT. VULCANIA LAGOON SHORE AND GRAVEYARD - DAY

Nemo and his party round a bend in the shoreline near the makeshift graveyard, and once again, Nemo stops short --

NEMO

Hold.

Cahill, Redmond and the others freeze. Nemo steps forward --

THE GRAVES HAVE BEEN TORN APART, as if by some savage monster in a feeding frenzy. Wooden crosses and shreds of clothing are strewn about, the empty graves gouged out of the earth like open wounds surrounded by ugly clots of brown sod.

Nemo looks over the desecrated grounds, then notices something at his feet. He crouches to touch the edge of a grave -- where a pair of deep furrows have been dragged into the earth. Cahill and Redmond watch him, curious.

Nemo stands, his gaze following the furrows down the slope of the shoreline, back to their source...

The furrows disappear into the water. Nemo squints, then waves at his men to follow him on...

VULCANIA SEQUENCE: NEMO AND HIS CREW BUILD THE NAUTILUS

A RAPID SERIES OF BRIEF SCENES follow, again UNDER MUSIC, depicting the passage of what must be several months:

EXT. VULCANIA SHORE - LATER

More men on the beach now, with more longboats rowing in from the frigate. Redmond directs as they unload provisions...

EXT. VULCANIA BASE - DAY

A LONG TRAIN OF CREWMEN winds its way down the inner slope of the crater now, bearing supplies from the frigate's stores.

As they do, Nemo, Cahill, KELL and BURROUGHS survey the facility -- Nemo walking them through, pointing as they discuss what's to be done...

INT. NEMO'S VULCANIA OFFICE - EVENING

BLUEPRINTS are laid across a table, bearing the unmistakable likeness of the famous Disney submarine. Nemo rolls them out for his DEPARTMENT HEADS, outlining the schematics...

INT. VULCANIA MESS HALL - EVENING

Cahill and the crew's delegated cook, LUBERTI, serve a hot meal to the men at long tables. The men seem tired but in high spirits, much talk, easy laughter...

INT. NEMO'S VULCANIA OFFICE - NIGHT

In contrast, Nemo works alone at his table by lantern light, drawing more blueprints, in a white heat of genius...

EXT. FRIGATE DECK - DAY

Larger pallets are being lowered from the ship by hoist onto MAKESHIFT BARREL RAFTS as the frigate is cannibalized...

INT. FRIGATE HOLD - DAY

Redmond brings Nemo down into the open hold, where crewmen are loading the next pallet. Redmond points dubiously -- across the hold rests a GIANT PIPE ORGAN, dismantled for shipping, its pipes bound and resting across its top.

Nemo grins...

INT. CAHILL'S VULCANIA OFFICE - DAY

Cahill cracks open a crate -- dozens of BLUE WOOLEN BLANKETS spill out. He lifts one of them, and a handful of RED CORD, and stares at them in satisfaction...

INT. VULCANIA FOUNDRY - DAY

The furnace flares to life. KELL oversees the firing line as molten iron is poured into slabs, wheeled through rolling mills and soaking pits, then molded into DECK PLATES...

EXT. CRESPO ISLAND SHIPYARD - DAY

Bonneville's Virago nears completion -- we see tantalizing glimpses of the black gunmetal supership.

TWO SMALLER WARSHIPS are under construction beside it, hundreds of men working upon them with speed and efficiency, much farther along than Nemo's crew...

EXT. VULCANIA DRYDOCK - DAY

Construction and assembly on a slipway near the water -- THE NAUTILUS IS TAKING SHAPE! Though less than half-complete, even now the sight of the metal sea-monster is spectacular...

A HUGE ACCIDENT as Burroughs' men leap from collapsing scaffolds around the submarine's skeletal hull. Hull plates fall like shingles, men scatter, Burroughs shouts --

INT. NEMO'S VULCANIA OFFICE - EVENING

Nemo slaps his blueprints onto the desk in anger.

NEMO

These delays will not be tolerated,
Mister Burroughs!

(MORE)

NEMO (cont'd)
 Every day lost is another day that
 our enemies may hunt us down --
 another day to spread their evil
 across the earth and sea!

Cahill, Redmond, Kell and Burroughs stand silent as Nemo continues:

NEMO (cont'd)
 And I'm to hear no more about the
 frigate's cannon, gentlemen! There
 will be no gunpowder aboard this
 vessel, is that understood?

His chiefs nod. Only Cahill meets Nemo's gaze, regarding him with new reserve...

MONTAGE - EXT. MALDIVES SECRET BASES - OFF-SHORE - DAY

Brief, various shots as SEVERAL OF BONNEVILLE'S NEW WARSHIPS EMERGE FROM THEIR HIDDEN HARBORS and put to sea -- all of them steamships, all of them armed to the teeth...

EXT. VULCANIA DRYDOCK - MORNING

The Nautilus is further along, the lower half of its hull complete, huge sections of its inner decks visible through open gaps in the upper plating.

The crew is lined up under it for morning inspection -- all of them now wearing blue wool uniforms with red cord piping.

Nemo walks down the line looking them over, impressed despite himself. Pleased, he turns to Cahill -- who only nods coldly.

Suddenly A HORN BLOWS from high up on the crater ridge. Nemo and the men all look up to see A LOOKOUT calling down to them from the summit, waving frantically and pointing out to sea.

EXT. VULCANIA SHORE - DAY

Nemo, Redmond, Cahill and several other men run downhill to the shoreline. They halt suddenly as they look out to sea --

CAHILL
 Good lord!

Out on the water: THE FRIGATE IS IN RUINS, surrounded by floating wreckage, disappearing beneath the waves. Cahill stands with Nemo and Redmond, staring out in awe.

CAHILL (cont'd)
 What sank her...?

Nemo stares out at the wreck, grim.

EXT. LAGOON - DAY

The far side of the lagoon, deeply in shadow at this time of the day -- Nemo is in his famed DIVING SUIT, helmet under his arm, as Cahill approaches with Redmond. Two other crewman are helping him, with winches and cables nearby.

CAHILL

You asked to see me, Captain?

NEMO

Dr. Cahill! Perhaps it has occurred to you that the inside of a volcano is not the most strategic place in which to construct a sea vessel.

CAHILL

The thought had crossed my mind, Captain.

NEMO

Yet you said nothing! Either you trust me implicitly or you fear that I'm quite mad.

CAHILL

Again, Captain...

They grin wanly.

CAHILL (cont'd)

I did notice that this lagoon has regular tides, which would indicate a fairly wide underwater passage to the sea. The question is, is it wide enough?

NEMO

Would you like to see for yourself, Doctor?

Cahill blinks at that...

EXT. LAGOON - UNDERWATER - DAY

Nemo and Cahill drop to the sandy bottom of the lagoon in heavy diving suits. Cahill stumbles comically, kicking swirls of silt -- Nemo takes his arm and steadies him.

They stand and take in the sight: THE LAGOON FLOOR IS AN EXPLOSION OF MUTATED SEA LIFE.

Bizarre, mushroom-headed tubers rise from thick stands of seagrass, blooms of jewel algae, swaths of orange and lavender jewel urchins.

Nemo motions to Cahill and points: this way. The two of them begin their march across the watery alien landscape.

As they approach the massive crater wall, Nemo points to a bed of seaweed -- its tendrils are being pulled toward the dark wall ahead of them under an obviously strong current.

Cahill leans down to pull a sample free -- and uncovers A HUMAN BODY, ravaged by time and tide, more bone than flesh. Cahill recoils in fright, grabs Nemo's arm and points.

They look down at the body, and at the wide furrows that cut a swath through the seagrass, toward the crater wall...

VERY WIDE - The two men stand facing A CAVERNOUS BLACK HOLE FRAMED IN VOLCANIC ROCK, easily 100 feet high, dwarfing them. Floating bits of detritus are sucked past them and into the yawning abyss... almost as if it's breathing.

As they watch, A BRILLIANT SWATH OF SUNLIGHT descends across the watery chasm, as the sun rises over the summit of the volcano above, until it crosses the mouth of the abyss...

... ILLUMINATING A VAST UNDERWATER GROTTA, retreating all the way through the mountain like an aquatic Grand Canyon.

Cahill's eyes go wide in his helmet, utterly fascinated, and more than a little terrified...

EXT. VULCANIA DRYDOCK - DAY

The entire crew stands at attention in proper uniform. Redmond stands near the head of the formation, wearing the white turtleneck sweater that will become his trademark. Cahill stands with him, waiting.

Captain Nemo steps out onto the drydock, a bottle under one arm, as a BOSUN pipes his arrival. He marches past the men... to the completed Nautilus, in all its riveted majesty, resting above the slipway in its cradle.

He walks the length of the boat, past the men, until he reaches Redmond at the prow. Redmond nods and stands aside, as if giving away a bride.

Nemo turns to face the crew. He lifts the bottle:

NEMO

This bottle of wedding wine, was to
be a gift to my wife upon our
anniversary last year.

He grows silent for a moment. Then he looks up at the sub:

NEMO (cont'd)

She would have liked this gift
better!

The men laugh, relieved. Nemo hefts the bottle:

NEMO (cont'd)

I christen this submarine boat...
Nautilus!

With that he smashes the bottle against the submarine's
belly, to AN ERUPTION OF CHEERS from the men. He stands back
as it slowly glides down its rails and into the water for the
first time.

The men hoot and whistle, all decorum lost as THE NAUTILUS
CUTS INTO THE WATER, GLIDES OUT INTO THE LAGOON...

... AND KEEPS ON SINKING, until it disappears completely. The
waters swirl and close on the surface above it, rippling to
stillness. The entire crew falls silent.

Nemo stands next to Cahill, dumbstruck.

CAHILL

How hard was that bottle...?

Then the waters part again as THE NAUTILUS FLOATS BACK UP TO
THE SURFACE, greeted by triumphant cheering from Nemo's crew.

Nemo steps into the famed Nautilus skiff, where an OARSMAN
waits. They row out to the Nautilus and glide into the
skiff's berth near the ship's tail.

Nemo steps onto the deck, then turns and calls out to shore:

NEMO

All aboard!

The men throw their hats in the air with a cheer that echoes
throughout the crater...

MONTAGE - THE NAUTILUS PREPARES TO SAIL

A RAPID SERIES OF SHOTS sets the stage for the maiden voyage
of the Nautilus:

INT. REACTOR ROOM

The ship's nuclear reactor blooms to life, its ethereal glow accompanied by the low musical hum of unworldly power.

INT. ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Systems come on, one after the other, gauges climbing, turbines beginning to move. Crewmen move along catwalks, closing hatches, opening valves.

INT. NAUTILUS CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

The lights grow brighter, fans turning as VARIOUS CREWMEN pass each other in the narrow ducted corridors, racing to their stations --

INT. CHART ROOM - DAY

Cahill stands by the chart table, trying not to get in anyone's way as the ship swirls with activity. Nemo enters and walks past him, climbing the spiral steps to --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo takes the wheel, looking out at the lagoon through the ship's wide forward bubble ports. Redmond stands behind him, with another crewman at the throttle levers as:

NEMO

(into the horn)

All stations ready, prepare for diving!

REDMOND

All stations! Prepare for diving!

BELLS ring the order, HYDRAULICS thrum in answer. Nemo grips the handles, nearly breathless but hiding it well.

NEMO

Half ahead. Four degrees down...

A beat, then he remembers to pull down the wide wedge-lever above him...

EXT. LAGOON - DAY

The Nautilus cuts the surface like a prowling sea beast as it picks up speed, heading for the crater wall, descending into dark green water.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo glances up and around at the bubble ports as the water rises above them, his eyes darting as if to look for leaks...

INT. CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Downstairs behind him, Cahill is staring up at the wheelhouse trying to get a good view, backing up to the rear wall...

EXT. LAGOON - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus is completely submerged, trailing bubbles as it glides smoothly toward the mouth of the undersea grotto. Shadows overwhelm it as it enters...

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

JAGGED FINGERS OF VOLCANIC ROCK loom in the bubble ports, jabbing out at the ship from above and below. Nemo's jaw sets as he spins the wheel, navigating the deadly gauntlet:

NEMO

Prow lights!

REDMOND

Aye, sir! Prow lights!

The light through the forward windows jumps in intensity --

EXT. UNDERWATER GROTTO - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus glides through the underwater canyon, coming perilously close to the COLOSSAL STALACTITES that surround it. It grazes one of them, crushing it to rubble --

INT. CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cahill lurches and falls as the ship rocks with the impact. He shoots a look up at the wheelhouse --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo spins the wheel hard again -- ANOTHER GRAZE SHAKES THE VESSEL --

REDMOND

Reduce speed, sir?

Nemo shakes his head no, his eyes never leaving the ports.

EXT. UNDERWATER GROTTTO - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus glides between the stalactites and through a forest of SEA GARLANDS, long weedy tendrils descending from the ceiling of puckerred black rock above.

As it passes through them, the long wavering tendrils curl around the submarine's scaly hull -- and suddenly come to life. The entire ship is pulled off its level, listing hard to port as the tendrils GRASP THE SUB AND LIFT IT --

INT. WHEELHOUSE AND CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nemo and Redmond are thrown off-balance as the deck tilts to one side -- Redmond tumbles down the steps and into the chart room, where Cahill grasps at a rail to keep his footing --

NEMO
Reverse full!

Redmond is dazed -- Cahill calls out:

CAHILL
REVERSE FULL!

INT. ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kell and his crew are rolling off of catwalks as the TURBINES SCREAM around them -- Kell pulls himself to the horn:

KELL
Reverse full, aye!

He pulls madly at the engine controls --

EXT. UNDERWATER GROTTTO - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus is pulled higher into the grotto's black ceiling of volcanic rock. The stalactites bend, becoming MASSIVE LEGS closing around the Nautilus's hull. Then the rock itself begins to move...

... revealing A GARGANTUAN SEA MONSTER, a black mutant spider crab camouflaged perfectly against the lava wall. Its tendrils are drawing the Nautilus toward the creature's cavernous mouth. Bivalve hinges part, revealing TWIN ROWS OF CRYSTAL TEETH. They close over the sub's nose --

INT. WHEELHOUSE AND CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CLANGING BELLS AND HYDRAULICS mix with THE SHRIEK OF RENDING METAL as Nemo struggles at the wheel, staring straight down the monster's clenching gullet.

The Nautilus pitches and sways but cannot break free --
Redmond reaches Nemo's side --

NEMO
Take the wheel!

Nemo runs past him down into the CHART ROOM, calls to Cahill:

NEMO (cont'd)
Over here! Lift this panel!

Cahill leaps to Nemo's aid -- together they pull a THICK ACCESS PANEL away from the inner hull of the sub's metal ribcage, revealing a wide gap to the outer hull beyond --

EXT. UNDERWATER GROTTO - CONTINUOUS

The Sea Monster pulls the Nautilus further into its gaping mouth, its armored legs tightening around the hull --

INT. CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nemo has donned thick gloves -- he pulls A LIVE ELECTRICAL CABLE from its socket, darkening most of the room --

NEMO
Stand aside, quickly!

Cahill jumps back as Nemo jams the live end of the cable directly against the ship's outer hull -- AN EXPLOSION OF SPARKS AND ANGRY ELECTRICAL HUMMING --

EXT. UNDERWATER GROTTO - CONTINUOUS

The Sea Monster is overwhelmed by A CASCADE OF ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE, its legs pounding and stabbing at the Nautilus's flanks as its tendrils sear away. It emits a hellish shriek, teeth sparking as it dies.

INT. WHEELHOUSE AND CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The ship lurches clear:

REDMOND
We're free!

NEMO
Ahead full! Can you steer us out?

REDMOND
Aye, sir! Ahead full!

Nemo replaces the cable to its socket, restoring power.
Cahill helps him lift the panel back into place --

NEMO

Thank you, Doctor. I should add
that feature, I think...

CAHILL

(winded)

Well, Captain... you've just
discovered a new species of sea
life! Care to give it a name?

NEMO

(a thought, then)

Let's call it a bonneville.

EXT. VULCANIA COAST - UNDERWATER - DAY

The Nautilus emerges from the outer mouth of the grotto and
glides out to open sea, several fathoms below the dappling
surface. From here, it appears none the worse for wear.

INT. SALON - LATER

Nemo steps through a doorway... and into the magnificent
salon of the Disney Nautilus. Appointed with rich woods and
plush red velvet... with a GIANT PIPE ORGAN adorning one
wall... many of its furnishings recognizably taken from his
original stores or from the captured frigate.

Nemo takes it all in, as if it's the first time he's seen it
himself. Then he goes to a couch by the salon's WIDE CIRCULAR
WINDOW (its metal sheath now closed), and collapses onto it.

He sits rubbing his face, clearly shaken -- this is his first
private moment since he nearly lost the sub. He takes a deep
breath, tries to gather himself.

Then he looks to the tiny brass lever on a swivel arm next to
the couch. He swings it over to him, pulls the lever...

... AND A NEW WORLD OPENS UP BEFORE HIM. The metal shield
irises open to REVEAL THE OCEAN FLOOR OUTSIDE, speeding past:

Wide blossoms of barrel sponges, yellow lichen and redweed
cover the seabed. Schools of fairy basslets swarm by, as the
Nautilus cruises past waving undergrowth, teeming forests of
coral. AN ASTONISHING KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIGHT AND COLOR.

Nemo breathes deeply, as if drawing it into his very body.
His anxiety melts... a peaceful calm returns to him. He
closes his eyes, then opens them:

Outside the window, A SCHOOL OF MANTA RAYS soars through AN UNDERSEA SNOWFALL OF TINY PLANKTON, a wondrous sight... and reflected in the glass of the window over it, RANI AND THEIR SON standing behind him, beautiful, happy...

NEMO spins sharply. CAHILL AND REDMOND have been waiting by the door, not wanting to disturb him.

NEMO

Yes?

They approach the couch, and are soon transfixed themselves by the display outside the window. After a moment:

REDMOND

Minimal damage, sir. We should make the Maldives before nightfall.

NEMO

Very good.

(he waits)

Dr. Cahill? You wanted something?

CAHILL

I forget...

Cahill is still staring out the window.

REDMOND

(awkward)

Captain... the crew's asked me to make a request, if I may.

Nemo looks up curiously...

EXT. UNDERWATER - INDIAN OCEAN - DAY

The Nautilus cruises majestically forty feet below the surface, a serene sentinel. OVER THIS, a sea hymn:

CREWMEN (V.O.)

(singing)

*Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the
restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep...*

INT. SALON - DAY

Dr. Cahill stands before the Nautilus's crew, officiating Sunday Services. Another crewman, ANGELO, sits at the pipe organ behind him, playing.

As the men sing, we get our first good look at many of them, a weathered crew of bearded, hopeful men joined in song:

CREWMEN

*From rock and tempest,
fire and foe,
Protect us wheresoever we go;
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise
from land and sea!*

The hymn ends and all bow. Cahill opens a Bible, reads:

CAHILL

(1 Kings 19)

*And, behold, the Lord passed by,
and a great and strong wind rent
the mountains and brake in pieces
the rocks before Him...*

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo stands alone at the ship's wheel, listening to Cahill's sermon as he pilots the vessel, watching the surface...

CAHILL

(continuing)

*But the Lord was not in the wind.
And after the wind, an earthquake,
but the Lord was not in the
earthquake...*

Nemo stares up through the forward windows, up at the shimmering curtain a mere forty feet above.

CAHILL (CONT'D) (cont'd)

*And after the earthquake, a Fire --
but the Lord was not in the fire...*

Nemo's gaze is obsessive, scanning the surface carefully from below... searching for any sign, any glimpse of a vessel...

CAHILL (CONT'D) (cont'd)

*And after the fire, a still small
voice came, and said unto him...
"What have you done?"*

Nemo sees a ship! A wide keel cutting the water off to starboard. Nemo brings the wheel around, calls into the horn:

NEMO

All hands to stations!

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

Redmond leaps to his feet:

REDMOND
Stations, all hands! Rig for action
and stand by!

The men flood past Cahill as they rush out of the salon...

EXT. MALDIVES COAST - SUNSET

The Nautilus surfaces like a prowling alligator, off the coast of a small green island. A THREE-MASTED CARGO SHIP lies off to starboard, headed toward the island under steam.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - SAME

Nemo lifts a spyglass to one eye, trains it on the cargo ship beyond as Cahill climbs into the wheelhouse behind him.

CAHILL
What flag are they flying?

NEMO
No flag...

He closes the spyglass, takes the wheel:

NEMO (cont'd)
Half ahead!

REDMOND
Aye, sir! Half ahead.

CAHILL
No flag? But then -- How can you be sure it's an enemy ship --

NEMO
The enemies we fight have no flag!
Nor do they politely fly a skull
and crossbones to announce their
intentions, Doctor!
(as bells ring behind him)
Look at that map again, the one we
captured. That shore has no port,
and that ship can be carrying only
one cargo. Stand aside!

Cahill retreats. Nemo grips the wheel, intent, watching the cargo ship as it comes before the Nautilus's prow:

NEMO (cont'd)
Collision speed! Full!

INT. ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kell works the levers:

KELL
Collision speed full!

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cahill looks around in shock -- they're going to ram it?!

Nemo sets his gaze on the ship ahead, cold fury rising in his eyes. THE NAUTILUS ACCELERATES, A RISING HYDRAULIC WHINE as its engines propel it closer and closer to its prey...

INTERCUT - EXT. MALDIVES COAST/INT. WHEELHOUSE

The Nautilus's bubble windows look like glowing eyes as the ship picks up speed, plowing through the waves. Seawater begins to wash over the viewports like a sinister mask...

NEMO
Raker lights!

The Nautilus's keel suddenly glows below the waterline, surrounded in an eerie green phosphorescence.

FROM THE WHEELHOUSE, the cargo ship's men can be seen pointing and screaming on deck, just before the onrushing sea covers the bubble windows and obscures them from view:

NEMO (cont'd)
Brace for impact!

EXT. MALDIVES COAST - UNDERWATER

THE NAUTILUS dips below the waterline, rakes the cargo steamer amidships, and TEARS ITS BELLY APART. The steamer's keel is rent to splinters as the Nautilus plows through it and continues on --

Moments later, THE CARGO SHIP EXPLODES, completely destroyed. A SLOW-MOTION RAIN OF SINKING DEBRIS descends past the Nautilus as it comes about in a slow circle.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo stares out at the foundering wreck as he brings the ship around:

NEMO
Decrease speed to slow! Surface and
stand by!

KELL (V.O.)
(over horn)
Aye! Decrease speed to slow --

BELLS RING as the bubble windows break the surface --

EXT. MALDIVES COAST - SUNSET

THE CARGO VESSEL IS IN FLAMES, its masts broken and sinking rapidly. Flaming spars and planking litter the water as the Nautilus circles it like a proud shark.

INT. WHEELHOUSE AND CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cahill comes to Nemo's side, looking out in horror. Nemo turns over the wheel to Redmond:

NEMO
Circle the wreck for another twenty
minutes -- keep a weather eye for
any warships coming out to pursue.
I'll be in my cabin.

REDMOND
Aye, sir.

Nemo strides past Cahill down the spiral stairs.

CAHILL
What about the survivors?

Nemo ignores him, continues through the CHART ROOM into --

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

Nemo walks through, Cahill following:

CAHILL
Captain, what about the survivors?

NEMO
Dr. Cahill, I'm sure you have other
duties, please attend to them --

CAHILL
Other duties? Look out there!

He's reached the salon window, beyond which the inky belly of the sinking cargo ship can be seen slipping into the depths.

Nemo obliges him, looking out with him at the falling debris... at the DROWNED AND DRIFTING BODIES floating down with the bleeding wreck. A nightmare.

CAHILL (cont'd)

When you forbade any guns aboard,
I thought, 'At last! He means to
defeat them without violence!' I
never dreamed you'd be capable of
such slaughter --

Nemo spins, in a burst of what could be guilt or anger:

NEMO

What would you have me do? Am I to
slap them with a kerchief and
challenge them to a fair fight?
(he tries reason)
We are one ship, pitted against the
World. Outnumbered, outgunned...
fighting a shadow empire that obeys
no laws but those of its own
avarice. This is not a parlor game,
Doctor, this is War!

Nemo marches through to his cabin:

INT. NEMO'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A NAUTICAL MAP OF THE REGION covers one wall, with a circle-arm compass mounted above. Nemo takes a STOLEN LOGBOOK and brings it over to the map, begins to plot his next attack.

Cahill enters, is silent for a moment. Then:

CAHILL

You don't merely want to sink these
ships -- you want them to see you
coming before you strike. You want
them to feel terror, knowing that
they're about to die.

Nemo pauses at that. Cahill chooses his next words carefully:

CAHILL (cont'd)

I'm no soldier, and I owe you my
life. But I must tell you that you
are leading us down a very dark
path, my friend...

Nemo becomes still. Cahill watches him, then turns and exits.

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN (UNDERWATER) - GYRE WALL - DAY

The Nautilus cruises at half-speed toward a GYRE, a shimmering wall of misty water hundreds of feet high, undulating like an undersea aurora.

As the Nautilus sails past the gyre, RANI'S ORGAN FUGUE begins to play on the salon's pipe organ. IT CONTINUES THROUGHOUT:

MONTAGE - THE NAUTILUS CREATES A ONE-SHIP BLOCKADE

A SEQUENCE OF THE NAUTILUS SINKING A VARIETY OF MUNITIONS SHIPS AND FREIGHTERS, punctuated by shots of Nemo meeting with Redmond and other crew chiefs to refine propulsion systems, leading diving crews to scavenge shipwrecks, etc.

SHOTS TO INCLUDE:

EXT. MALDIVES - SOUTHERN ISLAND RANGE - NIGHT

The Nautilus cruises low in the night water, silhouetted against ANOTHER FLAMING WRECK sinking behind it...

INT. PALACE GREAT ROOM - DAY

A shouting match as Bonneville is confronted by A HALF-DOZEN ANGRY INDIAN WARLORDS, all of them yelling at once. One of them leaps across the table and grabs Bonneville by the lapels, shouting into his face, spittle flying...

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - AFT KEEL - DAY

Nemo, Kell and Burroughs lead a repair party in diving suits, replacing one of the sub's aft dive planes. They work with impressive speed and efficiency.

As they do, Cahill, Luberti and several others drag nets across the seabed, scooping up A WIDE VARIETY OF SHELLFISH...

EXT. MALDIVES SECRET BASES - OFF-SHORE - DAY

THREE MORE WARSHIPS put out to sea from one of Bonneville's secret bases, well under steam...

INT. NEMO'S CABIN - MAP WALL

The circle-arm compass moves, its crosshairs slowly gliding across the map, tracing a line east out of the Maldives towards Indonesia and the Bay of Bengal...

INT. SALON - DAY

Nemo continues to play RANI'S FUGUE at the pipe organ, as we realize this is what we've been hearing all this time.

He finishes the fugue with a gasp, his forehead bathed in sweat. He bows in thought, then rises and goes to his great salon window, gazing out. A kind of remorse comes over him...

INT. SALON - LATER

Redmond, Kell, Burroughs and Cahill enter to find Nemo waiting for them at a well-appointed dining table. Luberti stands to one side, waiting to serve them.

NEMO

Gentlemen. Be seated.

(to Luberti)

You may serve us.

They all take their seats at the table as Luberti serves from a silver tray. Cahill glances down at his charger -- like all the others, it is embossed with a cursive letter "N."

NEMO (cont'd)

Thank you for joining me. I must admit that I have been remiss in expressing my admiration for your performance.

(passing a plate)

This vessel is a miracle of engineering, and without so much as a trial cruise, you have performed your tasks diligently and well.

Kell and Burroughs exchange pleasantly surprised glances; even Redmond seems startled by this.

NEMO (cont'd)

I want to speak to you about a plan that I've been forming, one that will test the endurance of this craft, and of the men who serve upon her.

(a beat)

After we have completed our current action, I mean to keep us at sea indefinitely.

The men react as the enormity of that proposal sinks in:

REDMOND

Indefinitely, sir?

NEMO

Yes. In Edinburgh, I studied with Forbes, whose azoic theory holds that life does not and cannot exist below 300 fathoms. I would like to prove him wrong. The Nautilus is capable of exploring the world at depths never before possible....

(a look to Cahill)

Its benefit to Mankind can far exceed its usefulness as a weapon.

Cahill nods at that, quietly impressed. A WHISTLE SOUNDS over the horn:

HELMSMAN (V.O.)

Warships approaching from the islands, Captain!

NEMO

Flags?

HELMSMAN (V.O.)

They fly no flag.

CAHILL

Nor do we...

Nemo shoots him a look, then drops his napkin and rises:

NEMO

Stations.

He marches out headed for the wheelhouse, the other five men exiting as well --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo enters and takes the wheel, gazing out ahead --

VISIBLE through the bubble glass: THREE WARSHIPS from Bonneville's fleet, approaching in wide formation from behind the islands and gaining fast --

NEMO

Battle stations! Ahead full!

Redmond and the other crewmen erupt into activity as --

EXT. ANDAMAN SEA - OFF THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS - DAY

The THREE WARSHIPS diverge as they approach, taking flanking positions to entrap the submarine --

EXT. WARSHIP TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

And now we're on the deck of one of the pursuing warships, as its bosuns call out orders and its crewmen scramble.

At the warship's stern, several men are unspooling THICK TRAWLING CABLE from a massive capstan -- the cable trails behind the warship and pays out deep into its wake --

WIDER -- The two flanking ships OPEN FIRE with their cannon. ALL THREE WARSHIPS are trailing vast lengths of trawling cable as they close on the Nautilus.

THE NAUTILUS comes around to meet them as cannonballs pound the water into geysers around it. It picks up speed, a demonic metal shark eager to run their gauntlet, ITS FAMILIAR HYDRAULIC HUM GROWING IN INTENSITY as it accelerates.

The Nautilus submerges, seawater billowing over its angry eyes. It goes completely under, becomes A GLOWING PREDATOR racing toward the ships just beneath the surface.

THE THREE WARSHIPS reach the full width of their trawling lines, their net fully deployed, their funnels belching smoke as rapidly close in on their prey...

THE NAUTILUS powers head-on towards the middle warship -- the warship's crew scrambles, bracing for the collision -- THE SUB'S BERIE GLOW REACHES THEIR KEEL IN AN ANGRY FROTH --

-- AND PASSES CLEAR UNDER IT, emerging into the warship's wake without so much as grazing it.

EXT. ANDAMAN SEA - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus zooms under the warship and beyond it -- to suddenly ram head-on into A MASSIVE IRON TRAWLING NET trailing behind the three ships.

The cables close around the sub's bow spike, tangling in the rakers --

EXT. WARSHIP TRAWLERS - CONTINUOUS

ALL THREE WARSHIPS shudder at the impact, their capstans squealing but holding tight. The crews erupt into cheers, waving their hats at each other across the water: we caught a big one!

Then something impossible happens...

ALL THREE SHIPS BEGIN TO GET DRAGGED BACKWARDS. The crews' glee turns to slow horror as the tow cables pull taut and their ships slip backwards, faster and faster, waves pounding their sterns as all three are pulled through the waves...

THE THREE WARSHIPS begin to drift together side-on as their unseen quarry drags them through the water like barrels on a shark's back. Their crews panic, shouting madly:

WARSHIP BOSUN
RELEASE THE CABLES! RELEASE THE --

The ships COLLIDE SIDE-TO-SIDE WITH A DULL THUD, deck rails splintering, crewmen staggering with the impact. Moments later, the middle ship manages to let fly its cable --

-- and the added pull on the other two ships WRENCHES THEIR CAPSTANS CLEAN OUT OF THE DECK, PULLING THEM AWAY in a crush of splinters. Before anyone can look over the side, the trawling cables are gone, vanished beneath the waves.

The crews look across their decks at each other, their hulls bumping side-by-side in the water, bobbing. Then they hear A LOW HYDRAULIC HUM, building in intensity... they rush to the side to look...

THE NAUTILUS is charging at full speed. The crews flee across their collapsing decks as the submarine tears through them all -- plowing through one keel after the other after the other -- DESTROYING ALL THREE WARSHIPS ON A SINGLE PASS.

The gutless hulks sink, spreading debris. The Nautilus sails on, heading out to sea, a swath of devastation in its wake.

EXT. VIRAGO DECK AND CRESPO ISLAND SHIPYARD - DAY

BONNEVILLE
It's him! It must be!

Bonneville marches down the deck of his now-completed ironclad, a supership nearly twice the length of the Nautilus. Carstairs walks with him as they speak, passing TURRET GUNS, a low CONNING TOWER, and TWIN BOILER FUNNELS billowing smoke.

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)
A submersible engine that burns no fuel? No one else could construct such weapon.

CARSTAIRS

But where would he have built it?
We've reconnoitered every shipyard
in Europe and the Asian rim --

BONNEVILLE

He has his own shipyard. And once
we've taken it, we'll build our own
fleet of such craft...

CARSTAIRS

Finding him will prove difficult,
sir. Once submerged, there's no way
to track him.

BONNEVILLE

I have a remedy for that...

EXT. CRESPO ISLAND DOCKSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Bonneville and Carstairs reach a gangplank and descend the
stairs to the dockside, as DAKKAR approaches with a CADRE OF
INDIAN WARLORDS. They glower as Bonneville meets them:

BONNEVILLE

Ah, Dakkar! You're here to threaten
my life, no doubt. And I see you've
brought several scary men to back
up your threat, very good, follow
me please...

Dakkar and the Warlords exchange angry glances, then follow --

INT. CRESPO ISLAND KEEP - CONTINUOUS

The Warlords are all shouting at once as Bonneville and
Carstairs lead them down damp stone stairs. Over the din:

DAKKAR

You say you've found his base? How?

BONNEVILLE

I decided after much consideration,
that your Raja's methods might not
be so inelegant after all, Dakkar.

They reach the floor of A DARK STONE DUNGEON. Bonneville
turns and shouts over the Warlords:

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

Gentlemen, gentlemen! The end is in
sight. We don't need to follow the
Captain to his base...

The Warlords fall silent as Bonneville leads them across the floor to an overlook -- where THE LECHEROUS FIRST MATE from Nemo's original party has been strapped to a rack, hanging out over the edge of a wide pit.

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)
 We need only to persuade someone
 who's already been there, to tell
 us where it is.

A ROAR OF TIGERS suddenly resounds through the chamber, reverberating from below. The Mate stares down in wide-eyed terror, bound at the wrists and ankles with leather straps.

FIRST MATE
 (a growing whimper)
 I don't know... I don't know...

Bonneville approaches the rack, grasps one of the release levers:

BONNEVILLE
 Take this man. He was with the good
 Captain when this elusive power
 source was discovered.

FIRST MATE
 I don't know, I don't know...!

BONNEVILLE
 Without ever having been there, I
 now know that they found a volcanic
 island somewhere in the Arabian
 Sea, though he claims that it
 appears on no map.

Bonneville throws the first release. The Mate's left leg suddenly drops free of the rack, dangling below him.

In the hold ten feet below, THREE TIGERS circle, pawing at the dangling limb just out of their reach.

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)
 He also claims that he never left
 the ship, by request of the good
 Captain's nubile young wife.

Bonneville throws a second lever, freeing the Mate's other leg. The Mate now dangles by his wrists over a straight drop into the tigers' midst:

FIRST MATE
 I don't know, I don't know!

BONNEVILLE

Yet through his generous witness -- again, without ever having been there -- I now know that the crew discovered an abandoned industrial complex, outfitted to manufacture deck plates and hatches.

THE TIGERS ROAR MORE LOUDLY, eager to feed. Bonneville throws the third lever --

FIRST MATE

Aaaaaaa!

The Mate's right arm falls free -- he hangs now by one wrist, kicking and spinning, a dangling shank of human meat. The tigers leap and paw at the hanging ankle straps --

FIRST MATE (cont'd)

I DON'T KNOW, I DON'T KNOW!

Carstairs looks on in mounting horror -- Dakkar grins, rubbing his saber-scarred cheek as the Warlords watch, fascinated. Bonneville grips the last lever with casual ease:

BONNEVILLE

And finally, I know that the island's inhabitants all died of a mysterious plague, and were left by their unseen sponsors to rot.

THE TIGERS ROAR WILDLY. The doomed First Mate gasps and sways...

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

All of which tell me, without ever having been there -- that I've been there.

He throws the lever and the First Mate drops away behind him. ON THE SUDDEN ROAR AND SCREAM, CUT TO --

EXT. CRESPO ISLAND DOCKSIDE - DAY

Carstairs is clearly shaken as he and Bonneville watch Dakkar, leading the Warlords out to their waiting ship.

BONNEVILLE

Assemble the fleet. We'll meet at the rendezvous point behind Palk Strait.

(then to himself)

Time to try your bluff, Dakkar...

EXT. LACCADIVE ISLANDS COAST - NIGHT

The Nautilus cruises slowly parallel to the isles as a strange display takes place:

A SINGLE SMALL VESSEL ventures out from each of the scattered isles, carrying BOW LANTERNS so brightly lit that it's impossible not to see them. They dot the water like fireflies, nearly a dozen of them sailing toward the Nautilus.

INT. WHEELHOUSE AND CHART ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nemo, Redmond and Cahill stare out the bubble windows at the strange water ballet.

CAHILL

What are they doing...?

NEMO

I don't know... but it's clear that they want to be seen.

(to Redmond)

Keep an eye seaward, this could be a distraction.

REDMOND

Aye, sir.

EXT. LACCADIVE ISLANDS COAST - NIGHT

The lead vessel drops a large "lantern buoy" into the water -- as it bobs, A WIDE PHOSPHORUS SLICK emanates from the base, casting a pool of yellow light into the water around it.

Moments later, the vessels shoot flares into the night sky, all of which explode in A BRIEF DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo looks out at them with his spyglass:

NEMO

They're retreating!
(panning the spyglass)
All of them.

CAHILL

What is that buoy for?

REDMOND

It must be some kind of trap...

NEMO
 (closing the spyglass)
 Mister Redmond, break out the
 skiff. Dr. Cahill, come with me,
 please.

EXT. NAUTILUS DECK - NIGHT

Waves lap at the submarine's sides as Redmond and two other crewmen pull the skiff cover away and set the oars in place. Nemo and Cahill approach:

REDMOND
 Sir, I still think it's a trap.

NEMO
 It may be, Mr. Redmond! I can think
 of no one better to pilot Nautilus
 home should you be proved correct.
 Stand ready.

REDMOND
 Aye, sir...

Nemo steps down into the skiff and takes the oars. Cahill joins him there, takes a seat --

REDMOND (cont'd)
 Shove off!

The crewmen push the skiff out of its berth with long pikes.

EXT. OPEN WATER - LANTERN BUOY - NIGHT

A LANTERN BUOY bobs, casting its light onto the skiff as Nemo and Cahill approach, rowing. Others dot the sea behind it.

Nemo puts the oars up and coasts, until the skiff comes alongside it:

NEMO
 Grab it there --

He and Cahill grab the buoy, which consists of nothing more than an iron tripod on a float with a lantern secured atop it. Nemo and Cahill look it over, a bit baffled by its simplicity. Then:

CAHILL
 Captain...

Cahill points. Hanging on a line within the open buoy is A WRAPPED VELLUM PACKET, featureless -- save for a single cursive "N" etched onto it.

Nemo reaches in and plucks it from the line, startling Cahill. Then he takes the lantern from the buoy's top --

CAHILL (cont'd)
(too late to stop him)
Sir I wouldn't --

Cahill reaches, withdraws, profoundly nervous. Any moment now, he expects a bomb to go off.

Nemo brings the lantern over to the packet and opens it, engrossed to the exclusion of all else. Cahill takes the oars and begins to row them away from the buoy.

Nemo finds a parchment within the packet, opens it -- IT'S A MAP OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, WITH A TINY VOLCANIC ISLAND CIRCLED IN RED, and handwritten longitude and latitude coordinates...

NEMO
Vulcania!

Nemo's eyes go wide as he reads on, the map falling over his fingers. Cahill watches him in the lantern light.

Nemo peers back down at the packet, reaches into it... and pulls out Rani's blue pearl hairclip. He lifts it into the light and gazes at it, his eyes filled with shock, then fury:

NEMO (cont'd)
My wife and son...!

INTERCUT - INT. VIRAGO CAPTAIN'S CABIN/EXT. NAUTILUS

AN ASSEMBLY OF SIX ENEMY CAPTAINS in the Virago's captain's cabin. Bonneville walks the row, addressing them:

BONNEVILLE
The seaborne menace that has
plagued our existence these many
months has been hiding in plain
sight all along!

IN THE SKIFF - Cahill rows hard for Nautilus, Nemo a grim statue before him in the stern sheets...

ON THE VIRAGO - Carstairs walks along the row of captains, handing out bound packets as:

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

Your orders are sealed, for your eyes only, and are not to be opened until your vessels are well underway.

IN THE SKIFF - Nemo and Cahill reach the Nautilus, are pulled up onto its deck, and make their way inside as:

BONNEVILLE (V.O.) (cont'd)

They contain the location of the submarine's secret base, and of the priceless ore that powers it!

INT. NAUTILUS - CHART ROOM HATCH AND STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Nemo and Cahill run down the steps into the Nautilus and into the CHART ROOM -- Cahill goes to the rack of rolled maps and raids it, pulling out several and bunching them under his arm as Nemo passes behind him...

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

There is a chance that the Captain might not surrender his vessel, despite our leverage over him...

EXT. LACCADIVE ISLANDS COAST - NIGHT

The Nautilus sails away from the islands at full speed, submerging beneath the angry foam...

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

No matter. We outnumber him six ships to one.

EXT. FLEET WARSHIPS - VARIOUS

The fleet CREWS prepare for battle, running out their guns, filling their magazines. As they do, we catch glimpses of some EXOTIC NEW WEAPONS being hoisted onto the decks --

-- one of which resembles a cross between a child's spinning top and a giant corkscrew made of copper.

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

Further, you've been armed with a number of measures specifically designed for this new manner of warfare.

EXT. BAY OF BENGAL - DAWN

THE SHIPS OF BONNEVILLE'S flotilla, including their flagship the Virago, steam out of the Bay in formation...

BONNEVILLE (V.O.)

(concluding)

We will proceed west through the narrow Palk Strait, to the Gulf of Mannar, where you will open your packets for further orders.

INT. SALON - DAY

Nemo, Cahill and Redmond lay out VARIOUS MAPS AND CHARTS, plotting their best course to intercept the fleet. Nemo takes a pair of calipers, sets the pointers to one of them as:

CAHILL

It's a bluff! He's trying to draw you out --

NEMO

Yes, I know.

REDMOND

I agree, sir. He wants you to surrender the Nautilus.

NEMO

Yes, and he'll bring every ship at his disposal to sink us if I don't. This may be our only chance to gather all his forces in one place and end this once and for all...

Cahill and Redmond exchange a look: that's insane.

Nemo points to a spot on his wall map, which features A LONG LINE OF ACTIVE VOLCANOES:

NEMO (cont'd)

There -- they'll be coming through the Palk Strait off Crespo Island. Just beyond the volcanic ridge...

INT. WHEELHOUSE AND CHART ROOM - DAY

Nemo, Redmond and Cahill enter and head up the stairs:

NEMO

If even one of those ships reaches Vulcania, all will be lost!

REDMOND

It'll be shallow, sir.

NEMO

Yes, and narrow. The strait may prevent the entire fleet from attacking us at once.

Nemo reaches the upper level, takes over the wheel:

NEMO (cont'd)

Ahead full!

KELL (V.O.)

(over horn)

Ahead full, aye!

EXT. UNDERWATER VOLCANIC RANGE - "CATHEDRAL CITY" - DAY

The Nautilus is a tiny shape as it sails through A BREATHTAKING LANDSCAPE OF UNDERSEA VOLCANOES, a spired "cathedral city" of hydrothermal chimneys (black smokers) billowing superheated seawater.

The Nautilus weaves between them, its course a thin thread through hundreds of lethal needles...

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

Nemo's face is a sheen of sweat as he pilots the vessel through the gauntlet of billowing spires. Cahill stands behind him, looking out at the panorama in a mixture of awe and terror.

NEMO

Trim forward ballast, down five degrees! Reduce to half speed!

REDMOND

Aye, sir! Down five degrees!

KELL (V.O.)

(over horn)

Half speed, aye!

Cahill breathes a sigh of relief as the Nautilus slows to a more manageable speed.

NEMO

Don't rest yet, Doctor. If we don't reach the strait before Bonneville does, I see no way to survive this--

Suddenly A BIZARRE MARINE GROAN resounds through the wheelhouse. Both men look out --

EXT. CATHEDRAL CITY - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus is sailing past a POD OF SPERM WHALES, each of them nearly half as long as the sub itself, spiraling down and through the maze of hydrothermal chimneys.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo and Cahill gaze out at them in awe.

NEMO

Depth?

REDMOND (O.S.)

Twelve hundred feet, sir!

Nemo and Cahill share a glance.

CAHILL

Take that, Forbes...

Suddenly the BIZARRE MARINE GROAN sounds again, much louder, as A MASSIVE SHADOW rushes past the wheelhouse windows --

-- and one of the whales is suddenly crushed in half by the jaws of A GIANT MEGALODON, an armored prehistoric monster shark twice as big and nearly as long as the Nautilus herself.

CAHILL (cont'd)

My God!

NEMO

Surface! Up five degrees!

EXT. CATHEDRAL CITY - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus glides away as the water behind it turns black with whale blood.

MORE MEGALODONS slice into view, tearing at the carcass in a blood frenzy, chasing the remaining whales.

EXT. GULF OF MANNAR - DAY

THE VIRAGO is at the center of the formation as SIX SHIPS emerge from the mouth of the straits.

In position ahead of them are THREE FAT TANKER SHIPS, spreading out ahead of the fleet in an open "V" formation.

EXT. TANKER SHIPS - VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

On the three tankers, STERN CREWS haul up cables draped over their transoms, pulling valve caps off the back of each ship:

HUGE GUSHERS OF REDDISH BROWN OIL begin flowing out of the tankers, spreading thickly across the surface of the water.

EXT. GULF OF MANNAR - DAY

A TALL VOLCANIC ISLAND (CRESPO) occupies half the horizon as the Nautilus surfaces two miles west of the Palk Strait, slicing the waves to froth.

Approaching from the horizon ahead -- BONNEVILLE'S FLEET, six warships and three tankers.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo sees them with his spyglass:

NEMO

We're too late. Battle stations!

REDMOND

Battle stations, all hands!

Nemo continues to scan the distant fleet --

NEMO'S POV: The oncoming ships are a formidable sight -- especially the Virago, an armored juggernaut twice the size of Nautilus occupying the center of the formation.

NEMO

Ironclads. They're all ironclads.
Except for the tankers...

Nemo closes the spyglass, thinking:

NEMO (cont'd)

He'll be on the dreadnought.

REDMOND

How do you know, sir?

NEMO

I've known Bonneville for decades.
When he goes into battle, he
protects himself with heavy armor.
(a desperate plan)
If we can capture him, and his
flagship, we might force the other
ships to yield.

INT. VIRAGO CONNING TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Bonneville, Carstairs and Dakkar stand in the ironclad's CONNING TOWER, a low command cylinder with thin slits cut fore and aft for visibility.

Bonneville is gazing out at the Nautilus with a spyglass of his own as the ships close the distance. He grins:

BONNEVILLE
His father was right. Preposterous!
(to Carstairs)
Signal the tankers to keep the oil
flowing. He'll have to surface!

Nemo's metal sea monster slips beneath the waves --

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - DAY

The Nautilus submerges and increases speed, heading for the fleet -- and for the reddish brown oil slick that has spread over half the gulf now.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo pilots the ship through the murky water, then frowns -- it's getting darker. He leans forward, looks up through the bubble windows -- he can't see the surface.

NEMO
He's blinding us. Prow lights!

The Nautilus's twin eye-beacons blaze to life above the viewports. Even so, Nemo must squint -- the sea ahead is becoming darker and darker, the surface above invisible.

NEMO (cont'd)
Slow to one-quarter!

KELL (V.O.)
(over horn)
Aye, sir! One-quarter...

The Nautilus glides through dark water, nearly blind. Up ahead, the blackness lightens slightly, to reveal:

A GIANT SHOAL COMPOSED OF THOUSANDS OF MACKEREL, swirling in a rapid underwater spiral.

Nemo stares out at it, entranced; the resemblance to his dream vision is unmistakable. As he watches, the shoal suddenly parts, darting out of the way...

... as a strange device floats down through it, spiraling as it falls, looking like a child's spinning top with a corkscrew fin. Nemo frowns as it drifts gently down in front of the Nautilus...

... AND EXPLODES, SHOOTING IRON SPIKES AND PHOSPHORESCENT PAINT IN EVERY DIRECTION. The shock wave throws Nemo back against the wheelhouse rail as the Nautilus yaws violently --

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - CONTINUOUS

MORE SPINNING DEPTH CHARGES descend around Nautilus, exploding as they fall. IRON SPIKES fly out like needle-darts, piercing the sub's flanks. CLOUDS OF GLOWING PAINT fill the water, clinging to Nautilus's metal skin --

INT. NAUTILUS CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

SPIKE TIPS punch through the hull, SPRAYING SEAWATER --

INT. NAUTILUS INFIRMARY - CONTINUOUS

Cahill rocks with the impact, glass specimen jars vibrating in the shelves behind him --

INT. VIRAGO CONNING TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Carstairs scans the fleet with a spyglass beside Bonneville and Dakkar:

CARSTAIRS

Flag from the Jeanne D'Arc, sir!
They've spotted him! Three points
off the larboard bow and running!

BONNEVILLE

Hard a-starboard! Signal to reply:
"Break formation and pursue!"
Signal the tankers, halt oil flow!

EXT. GULF OF MANNAR - WIDE - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus is plainly visible as a glowing apparition racing beneath the waves. CODE FLAGS fly up the fleet's masts as ALL SIX WARSHIPS come around, giving chase --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

The wheel spins in Nemo's hands as he brings Nautilus around for an attack pass, scanning the barely-visible surface above for a target.

NEMO
Mr. Redmond! Are you certain those
tankers aren't ironclads?

REDMOND
Aye, sir...

NEMO
(gripping the wheel)
Collision speed!

The ship erupts into activity behind him as Nemo brings the wheel around hard --

EXT. NAUTILUS - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus builds speed, a glowing ghost racing just below the surface, AS IT CLOSES ON ONE OF THE TANKERS, intersecting it directly amidships... AND CARVES ITS BELLY WIDE OPEN.

Several hundred tons of thick brown oil gush from the tanker's gutted hold, spilling widely as it sinks.

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - CONTINUOUS

Bonneville storms out of the tower with his spyglass and joins Dakkar at the bow rail to look for himself:

BONNEVILLE
I don't believe it. He's actually
fighting us!

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - DAY

MORE DEPTH CHARGES plunge into the water, spiraling down around Nautilus and exploding in her path as she slips through the gauntlet beneath the fleet's keels, DESCENDING.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

NEMO
Five degrees down!

REDMOND
Five degrees down, aye!

Redmond works the levers as the Nautilus steepens its dive.

NEMO
Mustering a boarding party, Mr.
Redmond! Sabers and belts -- have
Dr. Cahill help you!

REDMOND

Aye, sir!

NEMO

If we can't seize her, we must try
to disable her!

(calling into horn)

Mr. Kell! Stand by for emergency
speed!

(toggles the horn, then)

All hands! Rig for breach!

REDMOND

All hands, rig for breach!!

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - WIDE - DAY

The oil slick is gigantic, spreading to surround Bonneville's remaining ships...

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - DAY

Bonneville and his crew stand ready on deck, Bonneville at the fore, crews at their Dahlgrens. Dakkar marches the deck, staring out at the blackening sea, searching.

INT. NAUTILUS GALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Racks of dishes and flatware begin to slide across the galley counters as the Nautilus rears at a formidable angle --

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

Books begin to topple from their shelves, vases and bric-a-brac slide to the floor and shatter --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

Nemo grips the wheel, teeth gritted as the Nautilus TILTS UPWARDS at an ever-increasing angle. BELLS CLANG MADLY -- the ENGINES' HYDRAULIC WHINE BECOMES DEAFENING --

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - DAY

Silence. A tranquil calm. Bonneville scans the placid surface of the water, waiting. Behind him, standing amidships, Dakkar looks nervous.

The TURRET GUNS swivel in their mounts, seeking a target.

Bonneville's eyes make a slow pan of the water. Where is he?

BONNEVILLE

Dakkar...

Suddenly there is a TREMENDOUS ERUPTION off to port --

-- as THE NAUTILUS BREACHES THE SURFACE LIKE A LEAPING WHALE. Its bow spike and half its hull fly out of the water at a near-vertical attitude, towering over the Virago, and falling onto Dakkar like a collapsing church --

DAKKAR

(shrieking)

Aaaaaaaaaa--!!!

THE NAUTILUS TOPPLES ONTO ITS KEEL HALFWAY ACROSS THE VIRAGO'S DECK, crushing it amidships and completely obliterating Dakkar.

The impact reverberates through the ironclad like the Hammer of God, throwing everyone to the deck. Bonneville falls back against the conning tower, rolls onto his chest. He looks up in shock:

THE NAUTILUS IS LYING AT AN ANGLE HALFWAY OUT OF THE WATER ATOP THE VIRAGO'S BACK. Half the deck is underwater.

The Nautilus's nose hatch suddenly kicks open. Nemo, Redmond and Cahill stream out, sliding down the sub's tilted hull and leaping onto Bonneville's deck with swords.

BONNEVILLE

(an order)

Marines!!!

BELLS CLANG throughout the Virago. More Nautilus crewmen climb out and drop onto the deck as DOZENS OF ROYAL MARINES emerge from Virago to fight them, swords drawn, rifles raised...

A MASSIVE SHIPBOUND BATTLE SCENE. Bullets flying, clashing swords, crew against crew as the men of the Nautilus fight the men of the Virago in close quarters.

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

(slashing with his sword)

Back here! Defend the conn!

A SQUAD OF MARINES runs across the deck to form a bayonet line, and are met by the Nautilus crew in the heat of battle.

INT. VIRAGO CONNING TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Bonneville bellows through the visor to Carstairs:

BONNEVILLE

Order the turrets to fire into her sides! What are they waiting for?!

CARSTAIRS

The turrets won't come that far around! We'd blast our own backs --

BONNEVILLE

Cut the bolts loose then! I WANT THAT TURRET FIRE, Lieutenant!

CARSTAIRS

Yes, sir!

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - CONTINUOUS

NEMO, REDMOND, CAHILL and BURROUGHS forge their way across the listing deck, parrying and thrusting as Bonneville's marines rise to meet them. They crouch behind a bunker:

NEMO

They'll try to fire into Nautilus!
Lead a party below and disable their guns!

BURROUGHS

Aye, sir!

Burroughs runs back toward the waist as Nemo's eyes set on Bonneville in fury. Behind him, Cahill coughs and gags:

CAHILL

What is that smell?!

NEMO

Whale oil! Cover me, gentlemen --

Nemo runs out fighting, Cahill and Redmond flanking him as they run together toward the conning tower.

Men fall around them, shots ringing, as Bonneville turns easily and suddenly locks eyes with Nemo, half a warship and dozens of armed troops separating them...

INT. VIRAGO COAL BINS AND BOILER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs kicks open the coal bin door, startling the BOILER CREW. He tumbles onto the floor and has his pistol up before they can react -- MORE MEN drop into view behind him --

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - CONTINUOUS

Nemo pulls away from his friends, his sword drawn, his face set in fury. He marches out into the middle of the fight, sword slashing -- Cahill and Redmond run after him but are cut off by more Marines --

Nemo and Bonneville lock eyes... Bonneville draws his sword... Nemo charges at him through the fray in cold vengeance, without a word, and suddenly steel meets steel:

NEMO AND BONNEVILLE DUEL

The fight is silent at first, a blistering flurry of slash-and-parry, Nemo clearly on the offensive but Bonneville never missing a move. The fight takes them across the deck and through the combat, their backdrop an oily sea, surrounded by warships closing in...

BONNEVILLE

I see you got my message.

NEMO

Surrender your vessel! Call off the other ships!

BONNEVILLE

Though perhaps you misread it --

The fight takes them around the ship's TURRET GUN, its RATCHETS STRIPPING as it tries to turn far enough to fire on the Nautilus. Bonneville leaps onto it, Nemo follows -- they fight atop the pivot --

INT. VIRAGO - TURRET TRAVERSE MECHANISM - CONTINUOUS

Tight quarters below decks as Bonneville's Marines fire on Burroughs and his men outside the turret room --

THE TURRET CREW works at the forward turret undercarriage with long-arm bolt cutters, slicing the governor-bolts away from its massive gearwheels and motors --

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - CONTINUOUS

Redmond is about to drop into the coal chute when he looks out over the side to see:

TWO DOZEN LONGBOATS FULL OF MARINES approaching the Virago from neighboring warships. Redmond's eyes go wide --

EXT. VIRAGO TURRET - CONTINUOUS

Nemo sees them coming, paddles churning oily water.
Bonnevillie grins.

BONNEVILLE

They're not going to stop no matter
which of us wins, don't you see?
(their swords lock)
You still don't understand the
nature of power!

At that, a MONSTROUS, UNEARTHLY GROAN bellows out over the
water, completely overwhelming the sounds of the combat. The
men on deck freeze momentarily, startled to silence.

Nemo grins over his sword at Bonneville:

NEMO

And you don't understand... the
power of nature!

A SUDDEN ERUPTION in the water behind them --

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - WIDE

-- as a MASSIVE SCHOOL OF MEGALODONS breaches under the
longboats, giant monster fish in a feeding frenzy, their jaws
crushing the boats to shards and kindling. Marines spill over-
board and disappear in the churning froth, PANIC, SCREAMING --

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - CONTINUOUS

Cahill and Redmond are stunned rigid, watching in horror. In
the distance, THE OTHER WARSHIPS ARE ALSO UNDER ATTACK,
megalodons ramming them in a blood frenzy. Cahill blinks in
realization:

CAHILL

Whale oil!

EXT. VIRAGO CONNING TOWER - CONTINUOUS

A LIEUTENANT calls out to Bonneville:

LIEUTENANT

Forward turret gun is free to fire!

CARSTAIRS

Forward turret! Come around and
fire down into her back!

TURRET GUNNER

Aye, sir!

A CLANKING OF GEARS as the forward turret spins its longbore to fire down into Nautilus...

EXT. VIRAGO TURRET - CONTINUOUS

The turret beneath Nemo and Bonneville suddenly lurches on its pivot, throwing Nemo off-balance -- Bonneville takes advantage of the moment to tear Nemo's dagger from his belt and stab him below the ribs.

Nemo falls backward, the dagger pulling free, his sword clattering to the deck. He staggers on his feet as the turret pivots below him, its long cannon turning toward Nautilus...

EXT. VIRAGO DECK - CONTINUOUS

Redmond turns away from the frenzied carnage in the water, sees that the turret gun is moving again --

REDMOND

(command decision)

Back to the ship! Everyone, back
aboard Nautilus!!

EXT. VIRAGO MID-DECK - CONTINUOUS

The Virago's waist is beginning to collapse and fill with water under the Nautilus's crushing weight.

The Nautilus's crew is in retreat, men scrambling over her bow and up into her forward hatch as the sub begins to slip from Virago's deck and back into the waves --

EXT. VIRAGO TURRET - CONTINUOUS

Nemo falls to his knees, backing away. Bonneville advances, grinning:

BONNEVILLE

Don't you want to know what
happened to your wife and child?

NEMO

My wife and child are dead...

BONNEVILLE

Francisco told you they died at
Vindhya? No.

Nemo backs away on his elbows, to the edge of the turret --

BONNEVILLE (cont'd)

They were captured alive... and
Dakkar gave them over to his Raja!

Nemo blinks, then his eyes go wide in horror and grief... as
A CACOPHONOUS BOOM FROM THE TURRET GUN obliterates everything
in THUNDER AND SMOKE --

AND SUDDENLY EVERYTHING GOES SILENT.

NEMO AND BONNEVILLE go tumbling from the turret in opposite
directions, falling to the deck in slow-motion, the raging
sounds of the battle becoming DISTANT RUMBLING ECHOES.

THE NAUTILUS IS HIT. A gaping cannon wound in her upper flank
beneath the dorsal fin. The submarine begins to shear off,
slipping off the Virago's deck and back into the waves.

CAHILL stands on the Nautilus's prow, helping wounded men
down into the hatch -- he sees Nemo fall:

CAHILL

(calling down to Nemo,
slow-motion echo)

Captain! You must get aboard!

NEMO comes to his feet and staggers, teeth grit in pain and
rage, as HIS WIFE'S DEATH COMES TO HIM IN FLASHES:

INTERCUT FLASHBACKS - EXT. VIRAGO/INT. RAJA PALACE

FEVERISH DREAM GLIMPSES, as Nemo lurches across the deck:

A marble palace, Rani in tears, being led to the side of a
ceremonial TIGER PIT. DAKKAR watching in satisfaction, the
Raja at his throne obscured by shadows, fat and smiling...

NEMO limps under the shadow of the Nautilus as the last of
his men climb its hull... some are shot and fall away as he
staggers toward it, gasping...

RANI is weeping, gazing down in horror, her little boy in the
center of the pit below... TIGERS ROAR behind cage doors
beginning to rise...

CAHILL (V.O.)

Captain!!!

Rani shrieks, tears a saber away from one of her captors and
kills him, then slashes Dakkar's face.

She leaps into pit screaming, sword up, her son at her back... TIGERS padding toward her, Rani screaming, as they leap...

Nemo's face is a grimace of agony... growling screaming tearing shrieking... the Nautilus pulling away without him...

Nemo runs across the deck through the smoke, leaps out and dives onto Nautilus's prow spike just as the ship slips free.

EXT. NAUTILUS (ON THE SURFACE) - CONTINUOUS

SOUND RETURNS, the shriek of battle. Nemo climbs onto the sub's sloping nose, gripping its rakers to haul himself along as Nautilus comes completely clear of the sinking ironclad.

REDMOND appears in the wheelhouse bubble, calling out commands behind the glass ("Astern full!") --

The Nautilus pulls away in reverse under high power, smoke billowing out of her back. CANNONFIRE pelts the water all around her as Nemo climbs her nose to the open hatch --

-- and THE OCEAN AROUND HER BURSTS INTO FLAMES as the whale oil ignites. THE MEGALODONS BELLOW THUNDEROUSLY AS THE FIRE OVERWHELMS THEM, their massive bodies slipping below the surface to escape the inferno.

NEMO slips halfway down the bow, struggling to hold on. Cahill emerges from the hatch, reaches out to him --

CAHILL

Captain! Here!

They lock arms. Nemo climbs, Cahill pulls him to the hatch --

INT. NAUTILUS FORWARD COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Cahill climbs to the floor as Nemo pulls the hatch closed and dogs it shut. Nemo comes down --

NEMO

Thank you, Doctor.

CAHILL

Captain, are you all right?

NEMO

I am injured, but not seriously.
Report to your surgery...

He exits without another look. Cahill wipes water from his face, concerned.

EXT. GULF OF MANNAR - WIDE

The Nautilus comes away from the thick of the flaming oil spill and comes about, moving forward again and charging away. Behind her, the Virago emerges from the flames and smoke with THREE SURVIVING WARSHIPS to pursue --

EXT. VIRAGO CONNING TOWER - DAY

Bonneville stands on his deck bathed in sweat as the Virago gives chase --

CARSTAIRS

Full buoyancy restored, sir!

BONNEVILLE

He can't submerge with a hole in his back! Increase speed to flank!

VIRAGO PILOT

Aye, sir!

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

Nemo and Cahill climb in from the spiral stairs -- Nemo takes the wheel, his command is coming back to him:

NEMO

Damage?

REDMOND

Four foot hole above the waterline, sir! Shell went through two compartments -- we can't submerge until they're patched --

NEMO

Blast the patches! Evacuate both compartments and close watertight doors --

REDMOND

If we do that, then one more hit will send us to the bottom!

(he blinks)

Sir.

Nemo stares Redmond down, then his gaze softens.

NEMO

Very well. Best speed then. And double the repair detail...

(gripping the wheel)

(MORE)

NEMO (cont'd)
 Until we can submerge, there's
 nothing left to do but run.

Nemo's eyes narrow at the wheel... BELLS clang...

EXT. GULF OF MANNAR - OFF VOLCANIC RIDGE - WIDE

The chase is on as the Nautilus is pursued across the surface of the ocean by eleven warships under full steam.

The fleet ships KEEP FIRING THEIR LONGBORES, SENDING UP FOUNTAINS OF SPRAY around the fleeing Nautilus. Their shots come closer, the gunners getting their range as the damaged submarine races to outrun them.

Looming up ahead of them all, a tall volcanic island...

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

Nemo calls into the horn:

NEMO
 Repair party, status!

INT. PORT AFT UPPER BALLAST - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs leads the repair crew, who have been riveting new iron plates behind the gaping hole in the inner hull. He goes to the horn:

BURROUGHS
 Outer breach repaired, but not
 backed and sealed! It may not hold
 below five hundred feet!

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

NEMO
 (into horn)
 Evacuate that compartment and seal
 watertight doors! Repair the second
 breach from the opposite side!

BURROUGHS (V.O.)
 Aye, sir!

Suddenly an EXPLOSIVE NEAR-MISS sprays the wheelhouse windows, much larger than the others. Nemo looks out --

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - OFF CEYLON (SRI LANKA)

SHORE BATTERIES are firing now upon the Nautilus, their seacoast mortars capable of blasting hundred-pound shells into her from two miles away. Nautilus turns to evade --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo spins the wheel hard:

NEMO
(back into horn)
Engine room! We are still barely at
half-speed!

INT. ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kell and his crews are hard at work making repairs --

KELL
Port cooling system's at one-
quarter pressure, sir --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

NEMO
Then run her hot, Mister Kell!
We're being shelled by their shore
batteries now! Increase to flank!

KELL (V.O.)
Aye, sir!

NEMO
All hands! Prepare to submerge!

INT. NAUTILUS GALLEY - CONTINUOUS

A makeshift triage: Cahill and Angelo have been binding wounds as ANOTHER POUNDING NEAR-MISS from the shore batteries resounds through the ship. Cahill looks up --

CAHILL
Can you finish here?

ANGELO
Aye, sir!

Cahill runs out the door --

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - OFF CEYLON (SRI LANKA)

THE FLEET spreads behind Nautilus, fanning out to drive the sub further inland against the island shoals. Their guns are unrelenting, blasting the sea to froth behind the Nautilus, gaining on her...

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Redmond is at Nemo's side.

NEMO
Five degrees down.

REDMOND
Five degrees down, aye!

Redmond works the brass levers --

EXT. CRESPO ISLAND COAST - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus submerges between the island and the oncoming fleet, HER HULL STILL GLOWING with phosphorescent paint.

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus slips below the waves, mortars plowing the water in its wake. Once it's clear of the surface, it banks into a heavy turn, trying to outmaneuver its pursuers.

DEEPER -- The Nautilus descends, trailing bubbles, the shelling fading away above it. The sudden tranquility is almost deafening itself.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cahill comes up into the chamber, joins Nemo near the wheel.

NEMO
Dr. Cahill. How many injured?

CAHILL
Well over half the crew. Mostly lacerations, three fatal gunshot wounds... Every man conscious insisted on returning to duty.

Nemo nods at that. He glances at the speed indicator, then up at the surface through the bubble glass.

Up there: the shadowy keels of warships overtaking them.

NEMO
I feared this, Doctor. Down here we may escape their guns, but the subduction of the surrounding volcanic ridge creates a greater current here than on the surface.
(significantly)
We cannot hope to outrun them.

CAHILL

They know where Vulcania is.

NEMO

Yes. And if they reach it -- if any of those ships ever sees land again -- our secret is lost forever. And with it...

CAHILL

The death of all the World?

Nemo looks at him grimly.

NEMO

We've one hope. If he takes the bait...

Cahill frowns, wondering what he means by that, but has little time to consider it --

Up there: MORE SPINNING DEPTH CHARGES BEGIN TO FALL.

REDMOND

Brace for bombardment!

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - DAY

The Nautilus sails through a falling garden of EXPLODING DEPTH CHARGES, weaves through and between them like a sea serpent, rocking with each impact, taking damage --

INT. NAUTILUS - VARIOUS

MORE SPIKES pound the Nautilus's sides, many of them punching through -- SPOUTING WATER INTO THE ENGINE ROOM, THE DIVING CHAMBER, VARIOUS CREW QUARTERS -- crewmen slip and fall under the torrent --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - SAME

SPIKES RESOUND off the hull like torrential rain, PIERCING THROUGH OVER THE STAIRS, SPRAYING MIST OVER THE CHART TABLE --

One spike EMBEDS ITSELF IN THE GLASS below one of the forward bubble windows, cracking it without punching through --

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN (UNDERWATER) - GYRE WALL - DAY

The Nautilus approaches the shimmering GYRE WALL. The submarine sails into the gyre, piercing the veil and passing through to the greater volcanic ridge beyond.

The iron keels of Bonneville's fleet follow...

EXT. VIRAGO - CONTINUOUS

Pursuing at full speed under steam and sail together. Bonneville stands on the quarterdeck, secure in his command, looking over the water with a spyglass.

CARSTAIRS

Sir, we're losing sight of our quarry. He's sailing into an active volcanic ridge -- the bubble trail is getting lost among the hot geysers in the sea bed.

BONNEVILLE

And you'd like to abandon the chase and proceed straight to his base.

CARSTAIRS

We do have the advantage, sir.

BONNEVILLE

Yes, but what you fail to understand is that just as he doesn't want us learning his secrets, we must not allow him to survive with ours.

(he looks out at the water, thinking)

Active geysers... Signal the fleet. We're going to lengthen the fuses on our mines.

CARSTAIRS

We'll never hit him.

BONNEVILLE

We don't have to hit him, Lieutenant. We only need to hit the bottom.

(a smile)

Hell itself will do the rest...

EXT. UNDERWATER VOLCANIC RANGE - "CATHEDRAL CITY" - DAY

The Nautilus descends into the undersea chimney field, past majestic volcanic spires billowing superheated water.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - SAME

Redmond is looking profoundly agitated as they descend, the first time we've seen real fear in him.

NEMO

Depth?

REDMOND

Eight hundred feet! Captain, we're taking water now. If we go any deeper --

NEMO

Those are hydrothermal vents, Mister Redmond -- hot enough to melt lead! Our only safe passage is below their funnels.

EXT. UNDERWATER VOLCANIC RANGE - "CATHEDRAL CITY" - SAME

MORE DEPTH CHARGES DESCEND, falling in a slow cascade over the valley of volcanic chimneys as the Nautilus sails between the spires.

Most of the charges fall into hot billows, EITHER EXPLODING PREMATURELY OR MELTING LIKE CANDLES as the superheated gases reduce them to liquid. But some of them make it through...

INT. WHEELHOUSE - SAME

Nemo, Redmond and Cahill stare out at the falling minefield, bracing themselves as A NUMBER OF CHARGES DESCEND INTO THEIR PATH, hundreds of yards ahead... and keep right on falling, their lit fuses trailing sparks through the water.

CAHILL

Why didn't they go off...?

EXT. UNDERWATER VOLCANIC RANGE - "CATHEDRAL CITY" - DAY

The charges fall to the cragged volcanic seabed like pine cones, landing with a clang, scattered under Nautilus's path. Their fuses burn down, then...

THE CHARGES BEGIN TO EXPLODE, OPENING FISSURES in the seabed.

SALT WATER pours into the cracks, immediately meeting hot magma and becoming WALLS OF SUPERHEATED STEAM.

MOLTEN LAVA BUBBLES UP from the fresh crevices... solidifying to create RISING BOULDERS OF ROCK AND SULFURIC GAS...

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

The rising lava boulders break the surface under and around the fleet ships, and EXPLODE under the reduced pressure. The warships are buffeted, their sides pounded by flying rock --

EXT. CATHEDRAL CITY - SAME

The sea around the Nautilus quickly becomes a nightmare. The sub banks right, but cannot avoid the roiling miasma --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

Nemo pilots her through the spire maze as BOULDERS PUMMEL THE SHIP'S SIDES from below. Water jetting in around the spikes BEGINS TO STEAM...

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - CONTINUOUS

MORE BOULDERS rise up past the Nautilus, pounding her flanks as they pass -- one of them SMASHES-IN THE STARBOARD SALON WINDOW, BENDING THE SHIELD IN --

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

GOUTS OF STEAMING SEAWATER flood into the salon, blasting furniture across the room, shattering glass --

EXT. CATHEDRAL CITY - WIDE - CONTINUOUS

THE HYDROTHERMAL CHIMNEYS BEGIN TO BILLOW FASTER, doubling their lethal output as the undersea fissures add pressure.

INT. ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus is getting cooked alive.

Kell and his crew are gasping, sheened in sweat, pressure and temperature gauges redlining. The turbines begin to smoke, spinning at dangerously high speed. Kell pulls himself over to the horn --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Nemo struggles with the wheel --

KELL (V.O.)
(over horn)
Captain, the engines are
overheating! We must reduce speed!

Nemo doesn't answer, intensely focused on the spectacle outside as the Nautilus sails through it. His gaze comes to rest on one of the black smokers ahead --

REDMOND
Captain, the engines!

Nemo scans the surface above, but can see nothing. Making a decision, he brings the wheel about hard...

... aiming straight for the spire. Nemo grips the wheel:

NEMO
Brace for impact!

Cahill and Redmond go wide-eyed -- has he gone insane?!

The Nautilus charges full-on at the looming spire until it fills the windows, and at the last moment Nemo spins the wheel hard --

EXT. NAUTILUS - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus banks to port just before collision and slices the spire deeply across one side, opening a gash with its side rakers.

Moments later, HOT GASES shoot from the gash, cracking the rock on that side, melting it. THE SPIRE BEGINS TO LEAN, TOPPLING LIKE AN UNDERSEA SKYSCRAPER.

The SUPERHEATED WATER billowing from its top begins to shoot out at an angle, until it resembles a longbore cannon...

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

A WHITE-HOT POOL OF SUPERHEATED SEAWATER blooms and boils in the middle of the fleet, moving toward one of the ships fast.

EXT. FLEET WARSHIP (CHANCELLOR) - SAME

The doomed ship's crew scrambles and panics, its propeller churning the water to froth as it tries to outrun the oncoming menace, but too late...

EXT. VIRAGO - SAME

Bonneville watches in fascination as the superheated maelstrom overtakes another one of his warships... vaporizing the water beneath it and liquefying its hull.

THE SHIP GLOWS RED HOT AND BURSTS INTO FLAMES as its magazines ignite, its cannons RUPTURING AND EXPLODING.

Bonneville becomes furious:

BONNEVILLE

Signal the others! We're going to
disperse -- We'll take Virago to
seize the base, the rest are to
stay until he's dead and drowned!

CARSTAIRS

Aye, sir!

EXT. CATHEDRAL CITY - WIDE

The wounded black smoker finally topples completely and
COLLAPSES, several hundred tons of volcanic rock smashing
open across the ocean floor -- the impact is cacophonous.

As it collapses, its trunk pulls open a massive chunk of the
sea bed, billowing even more hot gas, spilling even more
seawater into the open fissure... CREATING A SINKHOLE.

The Nautilus continues through the maze of volcanic chimneys
at full speed, as the sinkhole grows and spreads beneath it,
toppling more spires.

Suddenly HALF THE SEABED COMPLETELY COLLAPSES --

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

-- CREATING A MASSIVE SINKHOLE ON THE SURFACE, swallowing
another one of Bonneville's ships --

EXT. NAUTILUS (UNDERWATER) - CONTINUOUS

THE NAUTILUS sails through the maelstrom, buffeted and
battered --

THE KEEL RAKERS BEGIN TO MELT, dissolving under heat and
sulfuric acid --

MORE DEPTH CHARGES descend, exploding all around. The
Nautilus continues inland, approaching the slope of the
volcanic island off Ceylon --

INT. PORT AFT UPPER BALLAST - CONTINUOUS

THE HULL PATCH GIVES WAY AND BLASTS OPEN, loosing a torrent
of water into the compartment --

INT. ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kell and his men are broiling as STEAM PIPES SQUEAL AND BURST
OPEN, TURBINES SHRIEK --

KELL
We're losing her!

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

KELL (V.O.)
(over horn)
Captain, we're losing her!

Redmond and Cahill are begging Nemo:

CAHILL
You're taking us inland! We'll be
trapped at the base of the volcano!

REDMOND
We have to surface, sir!

NEMO
No. Not yet...

Nemo looks up and around, as if expecting something.

They blink at him, bewildered -- this is suicide. Maybe he
has gone insane...

NEMO (cont'd)
Clear the wheelhouse. Get below,
both of you...
(perfectly lucid)
God is about to arrive.

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - OFF CRESPO ISLAND - CONTINUOUS

The island volcano looms over the remaining ships of the
fleet as power across the waves. Most of them are heading
inland --

-- but Bonneville's ship is not, heading north now for
Vulcania with nothing to stop it.

EXT. VIRAGO CONNING TOWER - DAY

Bonneville stands with Carstairs, looking out over the
foaming waves ahead, grinning in smug satisfaction.

CARSTAIRS
We should make Vulcania in six
hours, sir.

BONNEVILLE
Very good, Lieut--

Suddenly Bonneville stops in mid-sentence, stunned by something:

BONNEVILLE'S POV - THE INDIAN OCEAN - WIDE

As Bonneville looks out on the water... the waves all suddenly stop.

EXT. FLEET WARSHIPS - SAME

The waves lapping at their sides also vanish suddenly, the water becoming glass.

INTERCUT - BONNEVILLE AND THE OTHER WARSHIPS

As their captains and crews look out:

The entire Indian Ocean has gone dead calm.

Bonneville and the other captains look out over the waveless sea, breathless.

EXT. CRESPO ISLAND SHORE BATTERIES - SAME

At the shore batteries, the mortar crews stare out in awe. Along the shoreline, fishermen and villagers stand dazed.

THE OCEAN RECEDES five hundred feet from the shoreline, pulling back and back into the distance.

EXT. FLEET WARSHIPS - SAME

On their decks, Bonneville and Carstairs stand frozen, waiting. The fleet crews wait, listening.

Then comes a great, strong wind... and A LOW RUMBLE THAT FILLS THE SKY. It BUILDS...

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - CRESPO ISLAND - WIDE

The volcano explodes.

Crespo Island is destroyed instantly, in an eruption so violent that the blast can be heard literally around the world. MASSIVE SHEETS OF EARTH AND FOREST TEAR LOOSE and are pulled up into billowing clouds of ASH AND CRIMSON FIRE.

A MASSIVE MUSHROOM CLOUD FORMS, rising up into the stratosphere, staining the sky black. GIGANTIC CHUNKS OF FLAMING ROCK are hurled across the sky like meteors.

The horizon begins to ripple, then to rise, to become A 130-FOOT TIDAL WAVE, sweeping inland at 80 miles per hour.

IT ENGULFS THE ENTIRE FLEET, capsizing the ironclads, turning them end over end, rolling them under to disappear in its ravenous path...

Bonneville's ship races to escape the flood, with Bonneville on deck screaming, looking up at the oncoming juggernaut... just in time to see his own ships rolling at him in the curve, to smash the Virago and everyone on it to perdition...

The wave continues, building height and volume, headed inland toward Ceylon and pulling up everything in its path...

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

The Nautilus IS CAUGHT UP IN THE TIDAL WAVE AND SWEEP OVERLAND BY THE FLOOD. The sub sails up and over the shore batteries, past a lighthouse, sixty feet above ground and climbing...

INTERCUT - INT. WHEELHOUSE/EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Cahill grasps the wheelhouse rail, holding on for dear life as the ship pitches and yaws wildly, riding the torrent. Nemo struggles with the wheel --

NEMO

Up five degrees! Keep our bow high!

Redmond clutches the levers, fighting to remain on his feet -- Cahill leaps to Nemo's aid, both of them grappling with the wheel together --

The tidal wave has reached a coastline city -- and THE NAUTILUS BEGINS PLOWING THROUGH BUILDINGS as it is swept along in the disaster, its iron bow blasting through old temples, colonial houses, a palace dome --

-- sailing over and through a RAIL YARD, past rolling sheds, tumbling boxcars, a locomotive being smashed against a railroad bridge and nearly toppling onto Nautilus --

-- SPECTACULAR DEVASTATION surrounds the ship, great artifacts of humanity tumbling alongside her like toys in the flood -- statues, pavilions, A FULL-SIZE CIRCUS CAROUSEL --

-- until a stone fortress looms immediately ahead, impossible to avoid --

NEMO (cont'd)

Hard a'port!!

THE NAUTILUS hits the fortress wall hard, slicing open her keel just behind the starboard anchor well --

INT. NEMO'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Nemo's cabin is torn open to the flood, water blasting in through the hull gash --

INT. NAUTILUS GALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Angelo and several wounded sailors are immediately engulfed in seawater, flailing for their lives, the entire compartment filling in seconds --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nemo and Cahill grapple with the wheel, red-faced with the strain, until Cahill's eyes focus on something else:

CAHILL
(gasping)
Captain! The window --!

One of the wheelhouse bubble windows is cracking. A spiderweb crack, splintering wider around one of the iron spikes from Bonneville's depth charges embedded in the glass...

NEMO
Clear the wheelhouse! Both of you,
go below!

Cahill and Redmond make no move to leave. The three men watch as the window weakens, and the crack widens... as the Nautilus is pounded by huge chunks of rock and uprooted trees...

INT. NAUTILUS CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The corridor begins to flood, trapping Luberti and another sailor -- a wall of water rushes after them as they run through a hatchway, struggle to close the door against the onrush tide -- finally manage to close and seal it --

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cahill's eyes go wide...

NEMO
Blow all ballast! Emergency
surface!

THE BUBBLE WINDOW COLLAPSES, flooding the wheelhouse. Cahill is blown backwards, swept into the rail to nearly tumble headfirst into the chart room below --

NEMO (cont'd)
Cahill! Doctor --!!

Nemo has both arms wrapped around the wheel, trying to hold on while seawater floods in through the jagged glass and douses him to the neck --

EXT. CEYLON FLOOD PLAIN - DOWNSLOPE TO BAY OF BENGAL - DAY

The Nautilus surfaces in the midst of a ruined flood plain, as the tidal wave begins to lose speed and intensity. The submarine lists in the water nose high as it's carried downhill in the rapids, surrounded by rushing breakers, swept over the thinnest part of the Jaffna peninsula.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The torrent from the ruined bubble window begins to subside --

NEMO
(to Redmond)
Take the wheel! Quickly!

Redmond does so as Nemo comes to Cahill's side, kneeling, lifts him to his feet --

EXT. CEYLON EASTERN COAST - BAY OF BENGAL - DAY

The Nautilus has been swept clear across the peninsula and is now coasting back out into open water, barely afloat... but floating.

Torrents of muddy black water and debris wash down the mountainside, pushing the Nautilus out into the Bay of Bengal.

EXT. NAUTILUS - BAY OF BENGAL - NIGHT

It could still be day -- it's impossible to tell anymore.

Nemo and his crew -- some thirty survivors in all -- are standing topside on the deck of their battered craft.

EXT. BAY OF BENGAL - ESTABLISHING

HALF THE ASIAN SEABOARD IS COMPLETELY SUBMERGED. Crimson ash-filled skies... rains of fire and brimstone... boiling floats of pumice, coasting through black water, sulfur and steam.

Hell itself.

Cahill leans against the ship's dorsal fin, breathing slowly, Redmond beside him. All of them are gazing out at the utter devastation... AND CAHILL COLLAPSES.

NEMO

Cahill! What...

Cahill looks up at him as Nemo kneels. Nemo looks Cahill over, pulls open his jacket -- and sees that his shirt is stained with blood. A thin metal spike protrudes from a puncture wound over his heart.

Nemo looks down into Cahill's eyes. Cahill looks back at him, barely strong enough to whisper, and asks:

CAHILL

Did you do this on purpose...?

Nemo blinks --

CAHILL (cont'd)

You knew they were bombarding us...
you knew we were at the base of the
volcano... you led them there...

His breath grows weak:

CAHILL (cont'd)

Did you just kill thousands of
people to protect your secret?!
(tears roll down his face)
What have you done?

Nemo gazes down at him, as his breath grows shallow, faint...
and CAHILL DIES.

Nemo takes his friend's hands for a moment, then folds them.
He looks up, stands to face the rest of his crew.

They stand before him, weary, wounded, bewildered. Wondering
why.

Finally, framed against the fiery backdrop, Nemo speaks:

NEMO

This is what will become of the
world, if our secrets are too soon
discovered by Man.

The men wait. Redmond, Kell and Burroughs watch, listening.

NEMO (cont'd)

We have been entrusted with this gift, and I believe, with a duty. We are the sentinels, the keepers of a trust that we must hold sacred... against the day when the world is ready, for a new and better life.

He looks over their faces, and at last has nothing more to say than this:

NEMO (cont'd)

Will you accept this trust?

The men look on, silent... then one by one, every man of them nods quietly. Redmond is the last of them; he meets Nemo's gaze and nods "yes."

Nemo nods -- their pact is formed. The men stand silently, waiting for orders.

Nemo looks down at Cahill's body, overcome for a moment.

NEMO (cont'd)

Best speed to Vulcania. Repair crews to stations.

The men nod and file down into the sub. Redmond and Kell lift Cahill's body, and take it down through the hatch. Nemo is alone on the deck, gazing out at the hellfire sky.

Suddenly a CIRCUS SEAL hops onto the deck from the roiling water, barking. Nemo blinks at it incredulously, watches as it flops across the plating and down the stairs into the submarine. A moment later, he follows.

MUSIC BEGINS...

EXT. UNDERWATER - INDIAN OCEAN - DAY

AN UNDERSEA FUNERAL. Nemo and his crew are all in diving suits now, with Nemo at the head, as Cahill is laid to rest in a coral grave...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RORAPANDI BAY - SUNSET

A CARGO STEAMER on the water, emerging from the docks at Rorapandi under a crimson sky...

A LONG, YELLOW-EYED SEA MONSTER is waiting for it, low in the water, looking like a cross between a shark and an alligator.

The HYDRAULIC WHINE OF ITS ENGINES GROWS IN INTENSITY as it accelerates, its glowing yellow eyes filling the frame, an engine of destruction.

And just before the waves wash over those eyes, we see a man silhouetted in one of them... a man standing at a wheel...

Captain Nemo.

THE END