

GREAT ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

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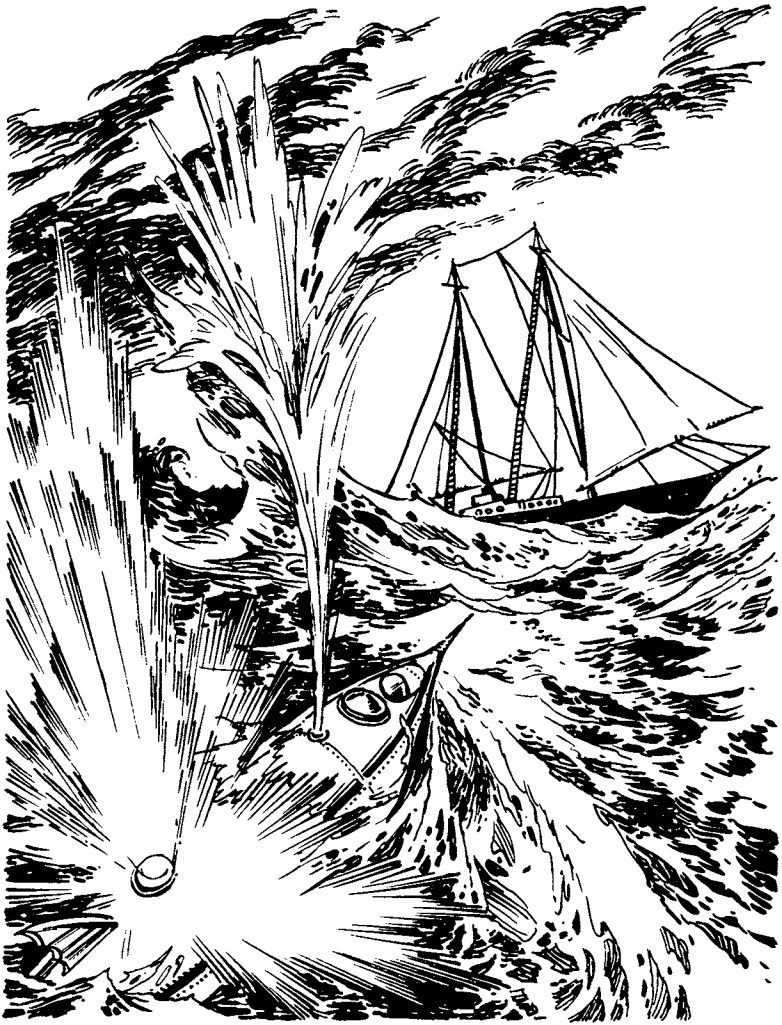
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The Mysterious "Thing"

Chapter 1

The Mysterious Monster

The year 1866 was marked by several strange and mysterious events at sea. Ships from many countries had met an “enormous black thing” hundreds of feet long. It was larger than any creature known to scientists. The “thing” gave off an eerie glow underwater and spurted columns of water hundreds of feet into the air.

The “thing” was sighted in July off the coast of Australia, then, three days later, in the waters of the Pacific Ocean more than 2,100 miles away. The next sighting, two

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weeks later, was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, 6,000 miles away. What an extraordinary creature this must be to move from one place to another in such a short time!

Reports of this "thing" caused great excitement in every country of the world. Wild stories about all kinds of sea monsters appeared in newspapers in every language of the globe. Scientists argued among themselves as to whether such a huge, speedy sea monster could exist.

Then, early in 1867, this sea monster stopped being a scientific problem and became a real danger. Merchant steamers and passenger ships were being struck by something! Was it a rock? A reef? Or this sea monster?

One ship, the *Scotia*, was examined in dry-dock after a collision at sea. Her engineers couldn't believe their eyes! A hole in the shape of a perfect triangle had opened up her



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