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20,000 Leagues Under the Sea: A Pop-Up Book

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Marine biologist Professor Pierre Aronnax of France is invited by the US navy to investigate some 'unexplained incidents' in their waters. This leads to his capture by the crew of the *Nautilus*, an undersea ship, and a meeting with the mysterious Captain Nemo. First published in 1870, Jules Verne's great classic thus predicted the possibility of submarines, submarine warfare and the exploration of the ocean depths.

Nothing if not bold, Sam Ita has created a graphic novel version of the Verne classic with dramatic pop-ups of the *Nautilus*, of the sea monster that tries to devour them, of Atlantis and of the Maelstrom that may, or may not, have sucked the *Nautilus* to its doom at the end of the tale. Cutaways and flaps with additional pop-up surprises abound. The creaks and groans with which the breathtaking feats of paper engineering rise up from each double page spread seem particularly apposite in this book about a submarine arriving from the depths of the ocean.

Ita's sombre palette of greys, blues, greens and beige printed on sturdy matt card make this novelty title an intensely aesthetic object, a subtle response to a novel that engaged with much more than adventure. The political dimension to Verne's novel (the characterisation of Nemo, an Indian whose family and homeland have been destroyed by the British, was an attack on British imperialism) can only be sketched in in this adaptation but hopefully, young readers whose imaginations have been engaged by this thrilling version of the tale may later seek out the original.

Running Order:

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