

EXT. THE MOON - DAY

A dark blue sky of stars. CRANE DOWN/PULL OUT TO REVEAL:

JULES VERNE (60), stands in 1800's gentlemanly attire, hat against his chest, lit by a purple and pink light source.

CONTINUED CRANE DOWN/PULL OUT REVEALS: Verne is standing on the bluish moon surface, craters and moon hills behind him.

ALICE (OFF-SCREEN)

With all due respect, Mr. Verne, I believe you're going the wrong way.

CLOSE UP: Verne turns his head 3/4 to the camera, away from the purple glow, now lighting just one side of his face.

JULES VERNE (IN A FRENCH ACCENT)

Now how did you get all the way up here, young lady? Are you lost?

REVERSE: Alice, in her classic outfit and pose. Over a moon ridge behind her is Earth, rendered like an archaic map.

ALICE

Likewise, Mr. Verne.

SIDE VIEW OF ALICE: She smiles. Over a moon ridge behind her is a vintage spaceship (Source: *From the Earth to the Moon*).

ALICE

Why not come back down with me?

VERNE CLOSE-UP: He turns his face back to the purple light.

JULES VERNE

My final science adventure novel.

Verne stands with his back to us, now facing the magenta light source - The glorious pink & purple Milky Way cosmos.

JULES VERNE

The ultimate destination of man.

Alice stands with her arms crossed. She raises an eyebrow.

ALICE

Perhaps you shouldn't put a rocket before the horse, so to speak.

Verne turns back to her, slightly annoyed. Alice is walking away towards the spaceship. Frowning, Verne puts his hat on.

VERNE (OFF-SCREEN)

Pardon me, miss. But what are you getting at with these questions?

CLOSE-UP: Alice stops. She looks over her shoulder.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
Quite simply, you have not shown them far enough... within.

SIDE SHOT: Verne walks after her, purple light on his back.

VERNE  
Nonsense. What could be deeper than the center of the Earth?

Alice stands at the tripod legs of the vintage spaceship. A door with built-in steps and a railing opens, folding down.

ALICE  
Not the right question, but it's a start. Well, Mr. Verne, shall we?

OVER ALICE'S SHOULDER: Verne has stopped a few paces away.

VERNE  
What manners! You haven't properly introduced yourself, yet you now request my company on an adventure.

ALICE  
I'm Alice Liddell. And like you, I never refuse a... how do you refer to it? "A Voyage Extraordinaire."

Verne thinks deep. His old hand grabs the railing.

EXT. VINTAGE SPACESHIP IN SPACE - DAY

The spaceship flies through blue space towards Earth.

Through the large window at rocket's front, Alice and Verne sit in a blue-lit cockpit. They are close to Earth. The ship starts shaking as waves of fire begin to wash over the hull.

INT. VINTAGE SPACESHIP - DAY

SIDE VIEW of a relaxed Alice, bathed in red light from the fire. RACK-FOCUS PAST HER to Verne, with a ruffled brow.

VERNE  
You do not fear the fire.

CLOSE-UP: Fire reflects in Alice's eyes. They dart to Verne.

ALICE

Not anymore. But it is not my fears  
that are of lasting relevance.

EXT. STRATOSPHERE: DAY

MEDIUM SHOT: The last bits of fire dance off the spaceship  
as it plummets down through the turquoise stratosphere.

SUPER WIDE SHOT: The rocket plunges into the highest clouds.

TILT UP from a low cloud layer to a layer high above. A  
Cheshire Cat hot air balloon emerges from the cloud above.

Verne and Alice are in the basket. Her hand grasps a rope.

ALICE

Forget not the strength of stories.  
And your adventure novels, whether  
inspired by hope. Or by curiosity.

Alice pulls out her Vorpall Blade, and puts it to the rope.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Or by fear. Will, in turn, inspire  
others. What does Mr. Verne fear?

VERNE

I and many others look skyward not  
in fear or wonder but with intent.  
Our future is to master the sky.

FAST SHOTS: Alice cuts four ropes. Her hair flies up. Verne  
grabs his hat. The basket plunges into the clouds below.

INT. CLOUD - DAY

Fogginess flies upward as they drop. In the low visibility,  
Verne grabs the basket with his free hand. He leans over.

ALICE (OFF-SCREEN)

What lies beyond, through the fog of  
uncertainty? Your noteworthy  
curiosity is contagious, Mr. Verne.

VERNE POV: Rushing past the camera, layers of cloud suddenly  
part. The green sea is far below, dotted by icebergs. Under  
the waves is an indistinct, massive compass rose.

EXT. ANTARCTIC SEAS - DAY

EXTREME WIDE SHOT: The basket falls towards the rough seas.  
An icy landmass and white mountain lie along the horizon.

Alice turns to Verne, still gripping the basket.

ALICE  
And curious boys sometimes dive into  
lives of scientific discovery.

WIDE SHOT: CAMERA DROPS with the basket as both plunge into the sea. SPLASH! Just below the surface, bubbles disperse: A small version of the NAUTILUS is already quickly descending.

EXT. UNDER THE SEA - DAY

DEEP LOW ANGLE of the Nautilus far above, sinking away from the sparkling surface towards the darkness below. The black undersea terrain resembles the 19th century London skyline.

Five menacing, dimly-lit TENTACLES reach out from below.

INT. SMALL NAUTILUS

In the dimly-lit yellow vessel, Alice and Verne, dressed in maritime attire, look out the big, black window before them.

Suddenly, a tentacle slaps against the window, its widened end morphed into Dr. Bumby's face with a suckle for a mouth.

ALICE  
Young I may be, I have come to know  
that not all men of science are  
driven by noble pursuits..

VERNE  
Is that not self-evident?

Alice grabs her Vorpall Blade's handle. At the window, Dr. Bumby's face morphs back to a normal tentacle and detaches.

ALICE  
Not in your work. What do you fear?

VERNE  
Ah. But the beast outside I neither  
fear nor recognize. This, which you  
have manifested, is of what nature?

Alice reaches for and grasps a lever on the wall beside her.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. UNDER THE SEA

OVER BLACKNESS:

ALICE (V.O.)

Try as I have to cast light,...

A spotlight turns on, revealing hundreds of intersecting tentacles around the mini-Nautilus. They retreat into the darkness, forming a spherical radius just beyond the reach of the spotlight, each with two glowing eyes at its tip.

ALICE (CONT'D)

-it has not revealed a discernible shape. Neither a beginning nor end. An undeniable Leviathan, yes, but always just out of sight, always nearby. Encircling. Suffocating.

VERNE (V.O)

Nothing is inescapable. Allow me.

A swarm of tentacles parts to allow the passage of the mini-Nautilus to enter the top of an underwater volcano.

EXT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN

The half-submerged mini-Nautilus, with its hatch ajar, sits motionless near the water's edge in a vast crystal cavern. PAN to Alice, on the rocky shore, dressed as an explorer.

VERNE (OFF-SCREEN)

Though not yet understanding the nature of your beast, you presume to guide me towards my own fears?

ALICE

Your skepticism is justified, but lacking clarity does not induce nor justify inaction, nor has it ever.

Verne, torch in hand, looks at a cave painting: Tribal war. One side has only spears, the other arrows. Behind the archer warriors, a tribal chief points forward.

ALICE (CONT'D)

And yet, even advances by those of noble intention are not immune from unintended consequences, whether by lack of inner reflection or by external manipulation.

Alice is behind Verne. He turns around, face now under-lit.

VERNE

Perpetual reflection and discretion are important. But how can I help?

CLOSE UP on Alice, face also under-lit. She points at Verne.

ALICE  
Do you not feel responsibility for  
the endeavors of those you inspire?

VERNE  
Yes. And what is deeper than the  
origin of man is his dark nature.

ALICE  
We're nearly there. Take us deeper.

Alice takes Verne's hand. Verne closes his eyes.

FADE TO WHITE:

EXT. HIGH BALCONY OF WAR CITY CENTRAL TOWER - DAY

FADE IN FROM WHITE:

Alice and Verne stand on a big steam-punk balcony, a fiery red and black sky behind them. Verne takes a step forward.

VERNE  
I now wonder. Is this hell?

CAMERA PUSH OUT over the balcony railing, revealing the view. Far below, from the base of the tower, a dark, smokey, circular city spreads out, arranged in walled ring layers.

ALICE (OFF-SCREEN)  
You are afraid it may one day be.

Beyond the farthest wall is a dead wasteland of fire, smoke, and explosion craters. Massive explosions on the horizon.

CLOSE ON VERNE: He squints in deep thought.

VERNE  
Only hell on Earth can halt man's  
destined ascension to the heavens.

A big, nearby explosion. Verne and Alice brace themselves.  
WIDE PULL-OUT: The tower against a terrible sky. Fastened to the tower, a giant cannon is smoking. It blasts off again.

ALICE  
Yes. Man's best minds will lead us  
all to one of two inevitable ends.

VERNE  
What lies within the hearts of men  
that can usher forth such a world?

Verne turns around. Against the steam-punk tower wall is a

massive, 20th century revolving door of bronze and glass.

Alice stares as Verne walks past her towards the door.

ALICE

Now *that* is the right question.

IN THE GREYSCALE REFLECTION: In a 21st century suit, Verne stands before a sparkling, Utopian city of glass towers.

VERNE

And the answer is through this door.  
My final novel, to serve as a  
warning to future scientists. That  
is what you desire, yes? ...Alice?

Verne turns around. An empty balcony. Alice is gone.

Verne nods. He turns back to the door. He takes a breath.  
PUSH IN WITH Verne as he opens the door and goes inside.

BLOW OUT TO WHITE: