

# Squashed Editions

Edited by Glyn Hughes

The stuff you're supposed to have read, squashed up into nice little afternoon reads

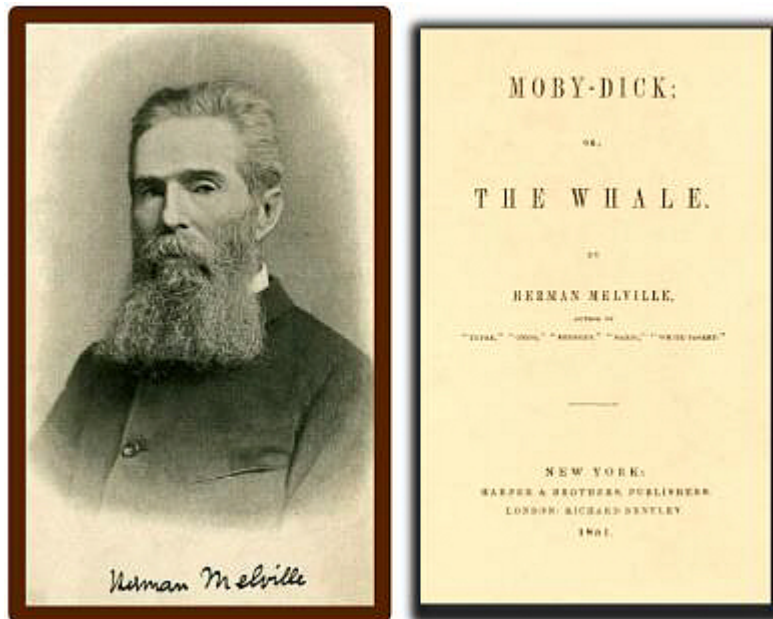
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## Moby-Dick or, The Whale by Herman Melville

The original, squashed down to read **in about 45 minutes**

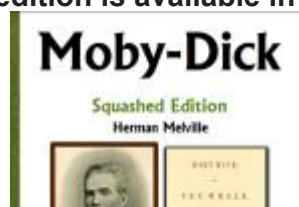


(New York, 1851)

Melville's strange, vast, tale, founded on his own experience as schoolmaster-turned-whaler, was far from well-received initially. Now, it tends to be seen as one of the glories of American Romanticism and among the greatest stories ever told.

*Abridged: GH*

This edition is available in print...





## Moby-Dick or, The Whale

"WHALE: This animal is named from roundness or rolling" - *Webster's Dictionary*

"So be cheery, my lads, let your hearts never fail,  
While the bold harpooneer is striking the whale!" - *Nantucket song*.

---

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago- never mind how long precisely- having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world.

There is nothing surprising in this. Landsmen, pent up in lath and plaster, tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks, if they but knew it, almost all in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all.

Now, when I say that I am in the habit of going to sea, I do not mean as a passenger. Passengers get sea-sick. No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor, right before the mast. The transition is a keen one, I assure you, from a schoolmaster to a sailor, and requires a strong decoction of Seneca and the **Stoics** to enable you to grin and bear it.

I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote. I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts.

I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford. It was a Saturday night in December.

With halting steps I paced the streets, and passed the sign of 'The Crossed Harpoons'- it looked too expensive and jolly there. At the sign of 'The Trap' I found a negro church. Wretched entertainment!

I at last came to a forlorn swinging sign over a door with a painting upon it faintly representing a jet of misty spray, and these words- "The Spouter Inn:- Peter Coffin." Coffin?- Spouter?- Rather ominous, thought I. But it is a common name in Nantucket.

Entering, it reminding one of the bulwarks of some condemned old craft. On one side hung a very large oilpainting so thoroughly besmoked, that it was only by diligent study and careful inquiry of the neighbors, that you could determine its faint resemblance to a gigantic fish. The opposite wall was hung all over with a heathenish array of monstrous clubs and spears mixed with rusty old whaling lances and harpoons.

I sought the landlord, and discovered that his house was full- not a bed unoccupied. "But you haint no objections to sharing a harpooneer's blanket, have ye? I s'pose you are goin' a-whalin', so you'd

better get used to that sort of thing."

I told him that I would put up with the half of any decent man's blanket.

"Take a seat. Supper'll be ready directly."

It was cold as Iceland- no fire but two dismal tallow candles- but the fare was of the most substantial kind- not only meat and potatoes, but dumplings! Dumplings!

But though the other boarders kept coming in by ones, twos, and threes, and going to bed, yet no sign of this harpooneer fellow.

"Landlord! said I, "what sort of a chap keeps such late hours?" It was now hard upon twelve o'clock.

The landlord chuckled. "To-night he went out a peddling, you see, to sell his head."

"Please unsay that story, for I've no idea of sleeping with a madman."

"Wall," said the landlord, "be easy, this here harpooneer has just arrived from the south seas, where he bought up a lot of 'balmed New Zealand heads (great curios, you know), and he's sold all on 'em but one, and that one he's trying to sell to-night, cause to-morrow's Sunday, and it would not do to be sellin' human heads about the streets."

I considered the matter a moment, and then up stairs we went, and I was ushered into a small room, cold as a clam, and furnished with a prodigious bed, almost big enough indeed for any four harpooneers to sleep abreast. Though none of the most elegant, it yet stood the scrutiny tolerably well.

At last I slid off into a light doze, when I heard a heavy footfall in the passage. Lord save me, thinks I, that must be the harpooneer, the infernal head-peddler. The stranger entered the room, and without looking towards the bed, placed his candle on the floor. I was all eagerness to see his face, but he kept it averted for some time while employed in unlacing his bag's mouth. This accomplished, he turned round- when, good heavens! what a sight! There was no hair on his head but a small scalp-knot on his forehead. His bald purplish head looked for all the world like a mildewed skull, and completely covered in squares of tattooing. Ignorance is the parent of fear, I confess I was now as much afraid of him as if the devil himself had thus broken into my room.

"Who-e debel you?"- he at last said.

"Peter Coffin!" shouted I. "Angels! save me!"

"Don't be afraid now," said he, grinning, "Queequeg here wouldn't harm a hair of your head."

"You gettee in," he added, in not only a civil but a really kind and charitable way. For all his tattooings he was on the whole a clean, comely looking cannibal. Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian.

I turned in, and never slept better in my life.

Upon waking next morning about daylight, I found Queequeg's tattooed arm, almost indistinguishable from the patchwork counterpane, thrown over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. He commenced dressing at top by donning his beaver hat, a very tall one, by the by, and then- still minus his trowsers- he hunted up his boots.

I was watching to see where he kept his razor, when lo and behold, he takes his harpoon from the corner, whets it a little on his boot, and striding up to the bit of mirror against the wall, begins a vigorous scraping of his cheeks. The rest of his toilet achieved, he proudly marched out of the room, sporting his harpoon like a marshal's baton.

If I had been astonished at first catching a glimpse of so outlandish an individual as Queequeg, that astonishment soon departed upon taking my first daylight stroll through the streets of New Bedford. Besides the Feejeeans, Tongatobooarrs and Brighggians, and the wild specimens of the whaling-craft which reel about the streets, you will see other sights still more curious, certainly more comical.

In New Bedford there stands a Whaleman's Chapel, and few are the moody fishermen, shortly bound for the Indian Ocean or Pacific, who fail to make a Sunday visit to the spot. Entering, I found the chaplain had not yet arrived; and silent islands of men and women sat steadfastly eyeing marble tablets, with black borders, commemorating this captain, or that whole crew, killed by this whale or lost to that other one.

Oh! ye whose dead lie buried beneath the green grass; ye know not the desolation that broods in bosoms like these. How it is that we still refuse to be comforted for those who we nevertheless maintain are dwelling in unspeakable bliss? But Faith, like a jackal, feeds among the tombs, and even from these dead doubts she gathers her most vital hope. Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance.

Father Mapple entered, climbed the rope ladder to his high pulpit.

"Shipmates, WHAT is this lesson that the book of Jonah teaches? If we obey God, we must disobey ourselves; and it is in this disobeying ourselves, wherein the hardness of obeying God consists. Woe to him who seeks to pour oil upon the waters when God has brewed them into a gale! Oh! shipmates!"

\* \* \*

Returning to the Inn, I found Queequeg sitting before the fire, holding a little idol, humming, and with a jack-knife gently whittling away at its nose.

I proposed a social smoke; and, producing his pouch he quietly offered me a puff. He seemed to take to me quite as naturally and unbiddenly as I to him; and when our smoke was over, he pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were married; meaning, in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends; he would gladly die for me.

After supper he went about his evening prayers, and I deliberated a moment whether I would join him or otherwise. I was a good Christian; born and bred in the bosom of the infallible Presbyterian Church. But what is worship?—to do the will of God. And what is the will of God?—to do to my fellow man what I would have my fellow man to do to me. Consequently, I kindled the shavings; helped prop up the innocent little idol; offered him burnt biscuit, salamed before him twice or thrice; and that done, we undressed and went to bed, at peace with our own consciences and all the world. In our hearts' honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg— a cosy, loving pair.

\* \* \*

We talked. Queequeg was a native of Rokovoko, an island where his father was High Chief. It is not down in any map; true places never are. He had first sought passage to learn wisdom among the Christians. But, alas! the practices of whalemens soon convinced him that even Christians could be both miserable and wicked. I told him that whaling was my own design, and informed him of my intention to sail out of Nantucket. He at once resolved to accompany me, embraced me, pressed his forehead against mine, and blowing out the light, we rolled over, and very soon were sleeping.

Next morning, Monday, after disposing of the embalmed head to a barber, for a block, we went down to the Moss, the little packet schooner, and, after a fine run, we safely arrived in Nantucket.

I learnt that there were three ships up for three-years' voyages. I peered and pryed about the Devil-dam; from her hopped over to the Tit-bit; and finally, going on board the Pequod, looked around her



for a moment, and decided that this was the very ship for us.

"Is this the Captain of the Pequod?" said I, "I was thinking of shipping."

"Want to see what whaling is, eh? Thou art speaking to Captain Peleg. It belongs to me and Captain Bildad, we are part owners and agents. Clap eye on Captain Ahab, young man, thou wilt find that he has only one leg."

"What do you mean, sir? Was the other one lost by a whale?"

"Lost by a whale! Young man, come nearer to me: it was devoured, chewed up, crunched by the monstrousest parmacetty that ever chipped a boat!- ah, ah!

Bildad, like Peleg, and indeed many other Nantucketers, was a Quaker. They are fighting Quakers; they are Quakers with a vengeance. Nor will it at all detract from him, dramatically regarded, if he seems to have a half willful overruling morbidness at the bottom of his nature. For all men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidness. Be sure of this, O young ambition, all mortal greatness is but disease.

After signing the papers, I inquired of Captain Peleg, where Captain Ahab was to be found.

"Any how, young man, he won't always see me, so I don't suppose he will thee. Oh, thou'lt like him well enough; no fear, no fear. He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen. No, no, my lad; stricken, blasted, if he be, Ahab has his humanities!"

\* \* \*

At last it was given out that some time next day the ship would certainly sail. So next morning, Queequeg and I took a very early start there, while Captain Ahab remained invisibly enshrined within his cabin.

Among landsmen, this business of whaling has somehow come to be regarded as a rather unpoetical and disreputable pursuit. Doubtless the world thinks that our vocation amounts to a butchering sort of business. But what disordered slippery decks of a whale-ship are comparable to the unspeakable carrion of those battle-fields from which so many soldiers return to drink in all ladies' plaudits?

Whaling not respectable? Whaling is imperial! By old English law, the whale is "a royal fish."

\* \* \*

The chief mate of the Pequod was Starbuck, a native of Nantucket, and a Quaker by descent. "I will have no man in my boat," said Starbuck, "who is not afraid of a whale." By this, he seemed to mean, that an utterly fearless man is a far more dangerous comrade than a coward.

Stubb was the second mate, a native of Cape Cod; a happy-go-lucky; neither craven nor valiant; taking perils as they came with an indifferent air.

The third mate was Flask, a native of Tisbury, in Martha's Vineyard. A short, stout, ruddy young fellow, very pugnacious concerning whales, who somehow seemed to think that the great leviathans had personally and hereditarily affronted him.

Now each mate, like a Gothic Knight of old, is always accompanied by his boat-steerer or harpooneer, who in certain conjunctures provides him with a fresh lance, when the former one has been badly twisted. The Pequod's harpooneers were, first of all Queequeg, whom Starbuck, the chief mate, had selected for his squire. Next was Tashtego, an unmixed Indian from Gay Head,

Stubb the second mate's squire. Third was Daggoo, a gigantic, coal-black negro, with a lion-like tread and golden hoops in his ears. Curious to tell, he was the Squire of little Flask, who looked like a chess-man beside him.

As for the residue of the Pequod's company, know that not one in two of the men before the mast in the American whale fishery are Americans born, though pretty nearly all the officers are.

And then Little Black Pip, poor Alabama boy! On the grim Pequod's forecastle, beating his tambourine.

For several days after leaving Nantucket, nothing above hatches was seen of Captain Ahab.

It was one of those less lowering, but still grey and gloomy enough mornings that as I mounted to the deck at the call of the forenoon watch, so soon as I levelled my glance towards the taffrail, foreboding shivers ran over me. Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck.

His whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus. Upon each side of the Pequod's quarter deck, and pretty close to the mizzen shrouds, there was an auger hole, bored into the plank. His bone leg steadied in that hole; one arm elevated; Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out beyond the ship's ever-pitching prow. Ahab stood before all with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe.

Ahab stood for a while leaning over the bulwarks. Lighting the pipe at the binnacle lamp and planting the stool on the weather side of the deck, he sat and smoked.

"How now," he soliloquized at last, withdrawing the tube, "this smoking no longer soothes. I'll smoke no more- "

He tossed the still lighted pipe into the sea.

### **Cetology.**

The uncertain, unsettled condition of this science of Cetology is attested by the fact, that in some quarters it still remains a moot point whether a whale be a fish. Be it known that I take the good old fashioned ground that the whale is a fish, and call upon holy Jonah to back me. Next: how shall we define the whale?

To be short, then, a whale is A SPOUTING FISH WITH A HORIZONTAL TAIL. There you have him.

I divide the whales into three primary BOOKS:

**Book I.** (Folio): Sperm Whale, Right Whale, Fin-Back, Hump-Back, Razor-Back, Sulphur-Bottom

**Book II.** (Octavo): Grampus, Black Fish, Narwhale (or, Nostril Whale), Killer

**Book III.** (Duodecimo): The Huzza, The Algerine, and the Mealy-Mouthed Porpoises.

But I now leave my cetological System, thus unfinished. God keep me from ever completing anything.

\* \* \*

The Quarter-Deck. (ENTER AHAB: THEN, ALL)

It was not a great while after the affair of the pipe, that one morning shortly after breakfast, Ahab, as was his wont, ascended the cabin-gangway to the deck. Soon his steady, ivory stride was heard, as to and fro he paced his old rounds, upon planks so familiar to his tread, that they were all over dented, like geological stones, with the peculiar mark of his walk.

"D'ye mark him, Flask?" whispered Stubb; "the chick that's in him pecks the shell. 'Twill soon be out."

"What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?"

"Sing out for him!" rejoined a score of voices.

"And what do ye next, men?"

"Lower away, and after him!"

"Look ye! d'ye see this Spanish ounce of gold? Mr. Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul."

Receiving the top-maul from Starbuck, he advanced towards the main-mast with the hammer uplifted in one hand, exhibiting the gold with the other: "Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; shall have this gold ounce, my boys!"

"Huzza! huzza!" cried the seamen, as they hailed the act of nailing the gold to the mast.

"Captain Ahab," said Tashtego, "that white whale must be the same that some call Moby Dick."

"Captain Ahab," said Starbuck, "Was not Moby Dick that took off thy leg?"

"Who told thee that?" cried Ahab; then pausing, "Aye, Starbuck; aye, my hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismasted me. Aye, aye! it was that accursed white whale that made a poor pegging lubber of me for ever and a day! I'll chase him round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! to chase that white whale over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave."

"Aye, aye!" shouted the harpooneers and seamen.

"Steward! go draw the great measure of grog. But what's this long face, Mr. Starbuck; wilt thou not chase the white whale?"

"Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous."

"Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. Who's over me? Stand up amid the general hurricane, thy one tost sapling cannot! Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me now, without rebellion."

"God keep me!- keep us all!" murmured Starbuck, lowly.

I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine.

\* \* \*

Of the wild superstitions linked with the White Whale, was the unearthly conceit that Moby Dick was ubiquitous; that he had been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same instant of time. Some went further, declaring Moby Dick immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time). Already several fatalities had attended his chase, and such seemed the White Whale's ferocity, that every dismembering or death was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent.

And there was another thought; it was the whiteness of the whale that, above all things, appalled me.

\* \* \*

Perhaps the only formal whaling code was that of Holland in 1695. The American fishermen have been their own legislators, whose simple laws might be engraven on a Queen Anne's forthing, or the barb of a harpoon, and worn round the neck, so small are they.

I. A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it.

II. A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it.

What are the souls of Russian serfs and Republican slaves but Fast-Fish? What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish? What was Poland to the Czar? What India to England? All Loose-Fish. What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World but Loose-Fish?

And what are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too?

\* \* \*

A week or two and we were slowly sailing over a sleepy, vapoury, mid-day sea, and the many noses on the Pequod's deck proved more vigilant discoverers than the three pairs of eyes aloft. A peculiar and not very pleasant smell was smelt in the sea.

As we glided nearer, the stranger showed French colors, we saw that the Bouton-Rose held alongside what the fishermen call a blasted whale, that is, a whale that has died unmolested on the sea. Stubb was soon on the case and, informed the French captain that "Only yesterday his ship spoke to a vessel, whose captain and chief-mate, with six sailors, had all died of a fever caught from a blasted whale." His tale was believed, and thanks given for his offer to help them divest themselves of the unhappy carcass.

As the Frenchman gained some distance, the Pequod slid in and Stubb quickly pulled to the floating corpse. Seizing his sharp boat-spade, he commenced an excavation in the body, a little behind the side fin.

"I have it," cried Stubb, with delight, striking something in the subterranean regions, "a purse!"

Dropping his spade, he thrust both hands in, and drew out handfuls of something that looked like ripe Windsor soap, or rich mottled old cheese; very unctuous and savory withal. And this, good friends, is ambergris, worth a gold guinea an ounce to any druggist.

Ambergris is largely used in perfumery. The Turks use it in cooking, and also carry it to Mecca, as frankincense is carried to St. Peter's in Rome. Some wine merchants drop a few grains into claret, to flavor it. Who would think, then, that such fine ladies and gentlemen should regale themselves with an essence found in the inglorious bowels of a sick whale! Yet so it is.

I cannot conclude the chapter without repelling a charge often made against whalers, that whales always smell bad. The truth is, that living or dead, if but decently treated, whales are by no means creatures of ill odor.

\* \* \*

It was but some few days after encountering the Frenchman, that a most significant event befell the most insignificant of the Pequod's crew. Poor Pip! the little negro ye have heard of him before; ye must remember his tambourine.

It came to pass, that Stubb's after-oarsman chanced to sprain his hand, and, temporarily, Pip was put into his place. Now the boat paddled upon a whale; and as the fish received the darted iron, it



gave its customary rap, which caused Pip to leap out of the boat with the line entangled around him. "Damn him, cut!" roared Stubb; and so the whale was lost and Pip was saved.

Stubb then cursed Pip officially; and unofficially gave him much wholesome advice. "Stick to the boat, Pip, or by the Lord, I won't pick you up if you jump; mind that. We can't afford to lose whales; a whale would sell for thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama."

But we are all in the hands of the Gods; and Pip jumped again, under very similar circumstances. Alas! Stubb was but too true to his word.

By the merest chance the ship itself at last rescued him; but from that hour the little negro went about the deck an idiot. The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul.

Look not too long in the face of the fire, O man! Never dream with thy hand on the helm! There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness. And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces.

\* \* \*

According to usage they were pumping the ship next morning; and lo! no inconsiderable oil came up with the water; the casks below must have sprung a bad leak. Starbuck went down into the cabin to report this unfavourable affair.

"Captain Ahab, sir. We must up Burtons and break out."

"Up Burtons and break out? Now that we are nearing Japan; heave-to here for a week to tinker a parcel of old hoops?"

"Either do that, sir, or waste in one day more oil than we may make good in a year. What we come twenty thousand miles to get is worth saving, sir."

"Begone! Let it leak! "

"What will the owners say, sir?"

"Let the owners stand on Nantucket beach and outyell the Typhoons. What cares Ahab?"

"Captain Ahab..." said the reddening mate.

Ahab seized a loaded musket from the rack, and pointing it towards Starbuck, exclaimed: "There is one God that is Lord over the earth, and one Captain that is lord over the Pequod!"

Mastering his emotion, Starbuck half calmly rose, and as he quitted the cabin, paused for an instant and said: "Thou hast outraged, not insulted me, sir; but for that I ask thee not to beware of Starbuck; let Ahab beware of Ahab; beware of thyself, old man."

\* \* \*

Now, at this time it was that my poor pagan companion, and fast bosom-friend, Queequeg, was seized with a fever. Poor Queequeg! His cheek-bones grew sharper. Not a man of the crew but gave him up; and, as for Queequeg himself, his only desire was that his final rest be in one of the wooden canoes he had heard of made for those who died in Nantucket; it being not unlike the custom of his own race to float out to the stars. He shuddered at the thought of being buried in his hammock, according to the usual sea-custom.

Thus was the carpenter called and a coffin made.

"He'll have to die now," ejaculated the Long Island sailor.

In good time my Queequeg gained strength, suddenly leaped to his feet, gave himself a good stretching, yawned a bit, and pronounced himself fit for a fight.

With a wild whimsiness, he now used his coffin for a sea-chest; and his spare hours he spent in carving the lid with all manner of grotesque figures taken from the twisted tattooing on his body, the work of a departed prophet and seer of his island, who had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth.

\* \* \*

Penetrating further and further into the heart of the Japanese cruising ground, the Pequod was soon all astir in the fishery. These are the times of dreamy quietude, when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it; and would not willingly remember, that this velvet paw but conceals a remorseless fang.

But the mingled, mingling threads of life are woven by warp and woof: calms crossed by storms, a storm for every calm. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? Let faith oust fact; let fancy oust memory; I look deep down and do believe.

\* \* \*

At sun-rise this man went from his hammock to his mast-head at the fore; and had not been long at his perch, when a cry was heard and a rushing- and looking up, they saw a falling phantom in the air; and looking down, a little tossed heap of white bubbles in the blue of the sea.

The life-buoy- a long slender cask- was dropped from the stern, where it always hung obedient to a cunning spring; but no hand rose to seize it, and the sun having long beat upon this cask it had shrunk, so that it slowly filled, and followed the sailor to the bottom, as if to yield him his pillow.

The lost life-buoy was now to be replaced; but no cask of sufficient lightness could be found, when by certain strange signs and inuendoes Queequeg hinted a hint concerning his coffin.

"A life-buoy of a coffin!" cried Starbuck, starting.

"Rather queer, that, I should say," said Stubb.

"It will make a good enough one," said Flask, "the carpenter here can arrange it easily."

\* \* \*

Next day, a large ship, the Rachel, was descried, bearing directly down upon the Pequod, her spars thickly clustering with men.

"Bad news; she brings bad news," muttered the old Manxman. But ere her commander, with trumpet to mouth, could hopefully hail, Ahab's voice was heard.

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"Aye, yesterday. Have ye seen a whale-boat adrift?"

Throttling his joy, Ahab negatively answered this unexpected question. "Where was he?- not killed!- not killed!" cried Ahab, closely advancing. "How was it?"

It seemed that the day previous, while three of the stranger's boats were engaged with a shoal of whales, the white hump and head of Moby Dick had suddenly loomed up out of the water, and, in the confusion of pursuit, one of their boats had been lost from sight. The stranger Captain desired the Pequod to unite with his own in the search.

"My boy, my own boy is among them. For God's sake- I beg, I conjure"- exclaimed the stranger Captain to Ahab. "For eight-and-forty hours let me charter your ship- I will gladly pay for it, and roundly pay for it- you must, oh, you must, and you SHALL do this thing."

"His son!" cried Stubb, "We must save that boy."

"YOU too have a boy, Captain Ahab, nestling safely at home now, a child of your old age too."

"Avast," cried Ahab- then in a voice that molded every word- "Captain Gardiner, I will not do it. Even now I lose time. Good-bye. God bless ye, man, and may I forgive myself. Mr. Starbuck, let the ship sail as before."

Soon the two ships diverged their wakes. But you plainly saw that this ship that so wept with spray, still remained without comfort. She was Rachel, weeping for her children, because they were not.

\* \* \*

(Pip catches Ahab by the hand to follow.) "Lad, lad, thou must not follow Ahab now. The hour is coming."

In this foreshadowing interval all humor, forced or natural, vanished. Alike, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, seemed ground to finest dust, and powdered, for the time, in the clamped mortar of Ahab's iron soul. Like machines, they dumbly moved about the deck, ever conscious that the old man's despot eye was on them.

At the first faintest glimmering of the dawn, his iron voice was heard from aft,- "Man the mast-heads!"- and all through the day, till after sunset and after twilight, the same voice every hour, at the striking of the helmsman's bell, was heard- "What d'ye see?- sharp! Sharp!"

"I will have the first sight of the whale myself,"- he said. "Aye! Ahab must have the doubloon!" And with his own hands he rigged a nest of basketed bowlines; and had his person hoisted to the highest perch. Now, the first time Ahab was aloft, one of those red-billed sea-hawks came wheeling and screaming round his head. But Ahab's eyes were elsewhere.

"Your hat, sir!" cried the Sicilian seaman.

But already the black hawk darted away with his prize.

The intense Pequod sailed on; the rolling waves and days went by; the life-buoy-coffin still lightly swung; and another ship, miserably misnamed the Delight, was descried. Upon the stranger's shears were beheld the shattered, white ribs, and some few splintered planks, of what had once been a whale-boat; now more like to the peeled and bleaching skeleton of a horse.

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"Look!" replied the hollow-cheeked captain.

"Hast killed him?"

"The harpoon is not yet forged that ever will do that."

As Ahab glided from the dejected Delight, the strange life-buoy hanging at the Pequod's stern came into conspicuous relief. "Ha! look yonder, men!" cried a foreboding voice. "Ye turn us your taffrail to

show us your coffin!"

\* \* \*

It was a clear steel-blue day. Oh, immortal infancy, and innocence of the azure! How oblivious were ye of old Ahab's close-coiled woe! From beneath his slouched hat Ahab dropped a tear into the sea; nor did all the Pacific contain such wealth as that one wee drop.

Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that and not I.

That night, in the mid-watch, the old man went to his pivot-hole, snuffing up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, he declared that a whale must be near. Ahab rapidly ordered the ship's course to be slightly altered, and the sail to be shortened.

\* \* \*

"There she blows!- there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby Dick!"

Soon the boats were dropped; all the boat-sails set- all the paddles plying; and Ahab heading the onset. A death-glimmer lit up Fedallah's sunken eyes. White birds were wheeling round and round, with joyous, expectant cries.

Their vision was keener than man's; Ahab could discover no sign in the sea. But suddenly as he peered down and down into its depths, he profoundly saw a white living spot no bigger than a white weasel. It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast, shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea.

Seizing a harpoon, he commanded his crew to grasp their oars. But as if perceiving this stratagem, Moby Dick, with that malicious intelligence ascribed to him raised his pleated head lengthwise beneath the boat. The bluish pearl-white of the inside of the jaw was within six inches of Ahab's head. Ripplingly withdrawing from his prey, Moby Dick swam swiftly round and round the wrecked crew; sideways churning the water in his vengeful wake.

Dragged into Stubb's boat with blood-shot eyes, Ahab lay crushed, like one trodden under herds of elephants.

"The harpoon," said Ahab, half way rising, "Lay it before me;- any missing men?"

"There were five oars, sir, and here are five men."

Soon, it was almost dark, but the look-out men still remained unset.

\* \* \*

At day-break, the mast-heads were punctually manned afresh, and soon "There she breaches!" was the cry, as the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to Heaven.

"Aye, breach your last to the sun, Moby Dick!" cried Ahab, "thy hour and thy harpoon are at hand!"

"Lower away," he cried, so soon as he had reached his boat- a spare one, rigged the afternoon previous.

But ere close limit was gained, the White Whale churned himself into furious speed, rushing among the boats with open jaws and a lashing tail; and heedless of the irons darted at him. But skilfully



manoeuvred, the boats for a while eluded him; though, at times, but by a plank's breadth. A maze of the lines, loose harpoons and lances, with all their bristling barbs and points, came flashing and dripping up to the chocks in the bows of Ahab's boat.

The White Whale made a sudden rush among the tangles; dashing together the boats of Stubb and Flask, and then, diving down into the sea, disappeared in a boiling maelstrom, in which, for a space, the odorous cedar chips of the wrecks danced round and round, like the grated nutmeg in a swiftly stirred bowl of punch.

Ahab's yet unstricken boat seemed drawn up towards Heaven by invisible wires, as, arrow-like, shooting perpendicularly from the sea, the White Whale dashed his broad forehead against its bottom, and sent it, turning over and over, into the air.

As before, the attentive ship came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat, picked up the floating mariners, tubs and oars. Ahab was found grimly clinging to his boat's broken half, his ivory leg had been snapped off, leaving but one short sharp splinter.

"But no bones broken, sir, I hope," said Stubb.

Mustering the company, the Parsee sailor was not there.

"Great God!" cried Starbuck; "never, never wilt thou capture him, old man- Jesus, this is worse than devil's madness. Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea?"

\* \* \*

The morning of the third day dawned fair and fresh, daylight look-outs dotted every mast.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab.

"Nothing, sir."

"I've oversailed him. Aye, he's chasing ME now; not I, HIM. Fool! the lines- the harpoons he's towing. About! about! Come all of ye! Forehead to forehead I meet thee, this third time, Moby Dick!"

In due time the boats were lowered; and Ahab paused upon the point of the descent;

"Starbuck!"

"Sir?"

"For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage, Starbuck."

"Aye, sir, thou wilt have it so."

"Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing, Starbuck!"

"Truth, sir: saddest truth."

"Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of the flood. Starbuck. I am old; shake hands with me, man."

Their hands met; their eyes fastened; Starbuck's tears the glue.

"The sharks! the sharks!" cried a voice from the low cabin-window; "O master, my master, come back!"

The voice spake true; for numbers of sharks, seemingly rising from out the dark waters beneath the hull, maliciously snapped at the blades of the oars. Ahab knew that the whale had sounded. Suddenly the waters around them slowly swelled in broad circles.

"Give way!" cried Ahab to the oarsmen, and the boats darted forward to the attack; but maddened by yesterday's irons, Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven. He rose, and showed one entire flank as he shot by them. Lashed round and round to the fish's back; pinioned in the turns of lines around him, the half torn body of the Parsee was seen; his distended eyes turned full upon old Ahab. The harpoon dropped from his hand.

"Oh! Ahab," cried Starbuck, "not too late is it, even now, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!"

"Pull on!"

Moby Dick sideways writhed and, so suddenly canted the boat over, that had it not been for the gunwale to which he then clung, Ahab would once more have been tossed into the sea. The whale wheeled round, and catching sight of the black hull of the ship, the source of all his persecutions, he bore down upon its advancing prow amid fiery showers of foam.

"I spit my last breath at thee. THUS, I give up the spear!"

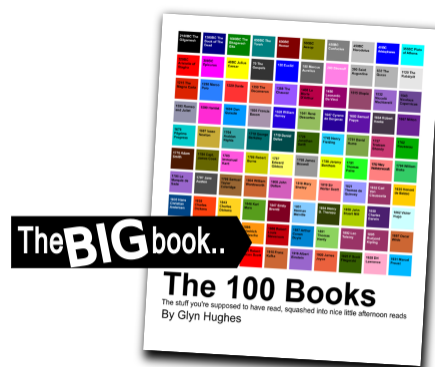
The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; the line ran foul. Ahab stooped to clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was shot out of the boat, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its depths.

For an instant, the tranced boat's crew stood still; then turned. "The ship? Great God, where is the ship?"

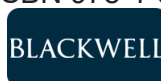
And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oar, and spinning all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the Pequod out of sight.

"I only am escaped alone to tell thee" - Job

The drama's done. Why then here does any one step forth?- Because one did survive the wreck. Buoyed up by a coffin, the unharmed sharks glided by as if with padlocks on their mouths. On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was the Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan.



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