

Moby Dick Book Notes

Moby Dick by Herman Melville

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Contents

Moby Dick Book Notes.....	1
Contents.....	2
Author/Context.....	5
Plot Summary.....	7
Major Characters.....	8
Objects/Places.....	11
Quotes.....	13
Topic Tracking: Fate.....	17
Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling.....	20
Topic Tracking: Religion.....	23
Topic Tracking: Vengeance.....	25
Chapter 1 - 2.....	28
Chapter 3.....	29
Chapter 4 - 6.....	30
Chapter 7 - 9.....	31
Chapter 10 - 12.....	32
Chapter 13 - 15.....	33
Chapter 16.....	34
Chapter 17 - 19.....	35
Chapter 20 - 22.....	36
Chapter 23 - 25.....	37
Chapter 26 - 27.....	38
Chapter 28 - 30.....	39
Chapter 31 - 32.....	40
Chapter 33 - 35.....	41



<u>Chapter 36.....</u>	<u>43</u>
<u>Chapter 37 - 39.....</u>	<u>44</u>
<u>Chapter 40 - 42.....</u>	<u>45</u>
<u>Chapter 43 - 45.....</u>	<u>46</u>
<u>Chapter 46 - 48.....</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>Chapter 49 - 51.....</u>	<u>49</u>
<u>Chapter 52 - 53.....</u>	<u>51</u>
<u>Chapter 54.....</u>	<u>52</u>
<u>Chapter 55 - 57.....</u>	<u>54</u>
<u>Chapter 58 - 60.....</u>	<u>55</u>
<u>Chapter 61 - 63.....</u>	<u>56</u>
<u>Chapter 64 - 66.....</u>	<u>57</u>
<u>Chapter 67 - 70.....</u>	<u>58</u>
<u>Chapter 71.....</u>	<u>59</u>
<u>Chapter 72 - 73.....</u>	<u>60</u>
<u>Chapter 74 - 75.....</u>	<u>61</u>
<u>Chapter 76 - 78.....</u>	<u>62</u>
<u>Chapter 79 - 81.....</u>	<u>63</u>
<u>Chapter 82 - 84.....</u>	<u>65</u>
<u>Chapter 85 - 87.....</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>Chapter 88 - 90.....</u>	<u>68</u>
<u>Chapter 91 - 92.....</u>	<u>69</u>
<u>Chapter 93 - 95.....</u>	<u>70</u>
<u>Chapter 96 - 98.....</u>	<u>71</u>
<u>Chapter 99 - 101.....</u>	<u>72</u>
<u>Chapter 102 - 104.....</u>	<u>73</u>



[Chapter 105 - 107.....](#) 74

[Chapter 108 - 109.....](#) 75

[Chapter 110 - 112.....](#) 76

[Chapter 113 - 115.....](#) 77

[Chapter 116 - 120.....](#) 78

[Chapter 121 - 123.....](#) 79

[Chapter 124 - 126.....](#) 80

[Chapter 127 - 129.....](#) 81

[Chapter 130 - 132.....](#) 82

[Chapter 133.....](#) 83

[Chapter 134.....](#) 84

[Chapter 135.....](#) 85

[Epilogue.....](#) 86



Author/Context

"No American author has been more puzzled over and written about, more lambasted and lionized, than Herman Melville." ~ Laurie Robertson-Lorant, *Melville*

Herman Melville was born on August 1, 1819 to Allan and Maria Melville, the third child of a family eventually including four boys and four girls. In 1826, Melville was stricken with scarlet fever, permanently weakening his eyesight. His father died in 1832, leaving the family in severe financial trouble. In spite of this, Melville managed to go to college, and find a job as a teacher, a profession he would soon quit, unsatisfied.

The rest of his young adulthood became a quest for financial security, and he shipped out as a merchant sailor. In 1842, he set sail on the whaler "Acushnet." The ship anchored in the French Polynesia, and his encounters with a cannibal tribe there became the subject of his first novel, *Typee*(1846). His second novel, *Omoo*(1847), is based on the later mutiny aboard the "Acushnet," one in which he took part.

His first two novels were received well by the public, but did not bring in enough money. In 1847, Melville married Elizabeth Shaw, making it even more difficult to support his family. He wrote three more novels, *Mardi*(1849) an allegorical fantasy, *Redburn*(1849), and *White-Jacket*(1850), a return to the more realistic style of *Typee*. Melville began to study Shakespeare more closely, deeply affected by passages in *King Lear*, driving him to write more profound prose. It was also around this time that Melville befriended Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of *The Scarlet Letter*. Under Hawthorne's influence, Melville grew greatly concerned about the spiritual state of man, transfixed by the conflict between good and evil.

Melville originally promised his publishers a manuscript, *The Whale*, in the autumn of 1850, however, he was delayed in submitting it. The novel, the title of which would change to *Moby-Dick*, was first published in London in October of 1851, followed by a publication in America a month later. The novel was not a success. Critics lambasted it for its confusing, polymorphic nature, as it swung between metaphor to comedy to science; readers did not flock to buy it.

In later years, however, the novel has come to be regarded as one of "literature's ultimate achievements."(*New Essays on Moby-Dick*,p.1) It's refusal to stick to one genre, jumping from comedy to tragedy, metaphysics to exacting realism, has influenced scholar and writer alike. Hundreds of thousands of essays have been written on the novel, studying its allegorical complications, and the debate it raises between Calvinism and the necessity of Free-Will. The character of Ahab and the White Whale he so mindlessly pursues, have become two of the most well known characters in American literature.

After writing *Moby Dick*, Melville became more and more of a recluse. His later novels and short stories, including "Bartleby the Scrivener," (1853) and *The Confidence-Man*(1857), are increasingly dark and satirical comments on the American way of life. In



his later years, Melville tried his hand at poetry, and one final prose novel, *Billy Budd*(1891). He died September 28, 1891, in virtual obscurity; it was only in later years that his works were reevaluated, and received the critical respect they so richly deserved.

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Plot Summary

The story begins with Ishmael heading out to find a whaling vessel to join. On his way to Nantucket, the first American City of whaling, he meets a harpooning savage named Queequeg, and the two become quick friends. They find their ship, the Pequod, and despite ominous warnings, and absence of the captain, they board with the rest.

However, things are not what they seem, because when the head of the boat, Captain Ahab, make his first appearance, there is something troubling about him. Things become even more clearly wrong when Ahab gives voice to his desire: he wishes to hunt down the White Whale, Moby Dick, the whale that took his leg, and kill him. All other desires in him are second to that, and nothing can prevent him from achieving his goal. The majority of his crew is all for the adventure, although one man, the chief mate Starbuck, is worried about its eventual end.

The Pequod sails over foreign seas, in order to reach the equator, a known hangout of Moby Dick, at the right season. They meet various crafts, and some ships have stories to tell of the White Whale; their stories describe only death and destruction; Moby Dick is unable to be killed by human hands, an immortal creature. Moby Dick takes on mythical overtones, as an avenging angel, and even possibly God himself. The ship goes about the regular business of whaling, and in between chapters of the story, Ishmael takes up instructing his reader on the process of killing whales and processing it for oil, the persistence of whales in our culture, and even biology lessons on their physical natures.

Finally they approach their intended destination. With each ship they pass, they come closer and closer to finding Moby Dick, and Ahab is driven further into madness. He creates a weapon out of steel, blessed by harpooner's blood, for the specific purpose of killing the whale, and he ignores the pleas of help from another ship, trying to find it's lost men.

Moby Dick is seen at last. The hunt spans over three days, and after it is done, the entire crew of the Pequod, save one, has been killed. The ship is sunk, the whale-boats destroyed, and Ahab himself is yanked to his death by the very iron he himself forged. Only Ishmael survives, to be picked up by another vessel; only he is left to tell the tale.



Major Characters

Ishmael: The narrator of the story, Ishmael disappears into his own tale after the first ten or so chapters, popping up periodically to give comments on the text. He is an every man; as such, it is difficult to describe specific things about him. He is a schoolteacher on the land, and has an open mind when it comes to the world around him. Also, he has prodigious knowledge of whaling, which he shares between chapters of plot in the narrative. Ishmael is the only man aboard the Pequod to survive the novel.

Queequeg: The friendly cannibal Ishmael first meets in the city of New Bedford; they become fast and good friends, despite Queequeg's less than Christian background. Queequeg is an extremely noble, decent man, with an almost child-like wonder at the world; he is willing to put his life in jeopardy to save anyone. He becomes one of the three harpooners of the Pequod.

Captain Ahab: Captain of the Pequod. Ahab is the main focus of Moby Dick. He is a tall, tremendously proud man, in at least his fifties, who lords over his ship like a dark god of vengeance. He has a vivid line, either a birthmark or a scar, which runs the entire length of his body, seemingly splitting him in two. His leg was taking in whaling accident by Moby Dick, and ever since then, he has become obsessed with hunting down the whale and killing it. In his mind, Moby Dick comes to represent all of the injustice in the world. He is the novel's most famous character, and an easily recognizable symbol of monomania. Ahab does have human decency in him, but it is continually driven out to sea by his need for revenge. He is killed when trying to harpoon Moby Dick.

Starbuck: The Chief Mate of the Pequod. Starbuck is a decent, honorable man. Unlike the rest of the crew, he is not taken in with Ahab's quest, and is continually trying to get the old man to turn home. Starbuck has a wife and son who he misses very much, and fears he will never see again. He is the only man willing to stand up to Ahab, and tell him his true thoughts about Ahab's obsession. Ahab has him stay aboard the Pequod during the hunt for Moby Dick, in an effort to spare him his life, which, of course, fails.

Stubb: Stubb is the second mate. He is most easily characterized by a free sense of humor; Stubb is able to laugh at everything, up to and including death itself. Unlike Starbuck, he has no fear of mortal danger, and nothing seems to bother him very much. While mending a harness or chasing a whale, his jokes remain constant.

Flask: The third mate of the Pequod. Flask considers the life of every whale a personal insult, and attacks them with a vengeance. He often plays the straight man to Stubb's outrageous commentary.

Moby Dick: The whale that gives its name to the title of the book, Moby Dick hovers outside the entire narrative, occasionally poking his head out in the stories of ships that the Pequod encounters on her voyage. He is an avenging presence, unable to be killed by human hands, and very likely immortal. He is symbolized as a vengeful God



incarnate, only killing when he himself is pursued. There are reports of him taking out entire whaling vessels. He is also called the White Whale.

Fedallah: Also known as the Parsee, Fedallah is the leader of the band of men taken on by Ahab to crew his personal boat. Fedallah does not speak much, but he has an air of mystery about him that keeps him separate from the rest of the crew. He makes a dire prophecy of Ahab's fate, and of his own; he dies before Ahab, which is one of the omens of Ahab's death.

Minor Characters

Peter Coffin: The landlord of the Spouter-Inn.

Bulkington: A sailor that Ishmael first meets in the Spouting-Inn, and later sees on the deck of the Pequod. His character is unknown, but he holds himself apart from the other men when Ishmael first sees him.

Father Mapple: The head of the Whaleman's Chapel in Nantucket. He delivers a sermon on Jonah, and speaks of the dangers of sin.

Captain Peleg: A stiffly religious man, a Quaker. The other owner of the Pequod.

Captain Bildad: A boisterous, swearing man, one of the two owners of the Pequod. He helps guide the ship out of port, and plays 'good cop' to his partner, Captain Peleg.

Elijah: A sort of bum prophet that Ishmael and Queequeg meet before getting aboard the Pequod. He has dire warnings about the future of the voyage, all of which come true.

Aunt Charity: Bildad's sister, who helps get the ship ready to sail. She also tries to prohibit the men from drinking on the ship, which is quickly thrown over. One of the only two women in the novel.

Tashtego: A proud Indian from an island off Nantucket. One of the three harpooners of the Pequod.

Daggoo: A coal black negro-savage. One of the three harpooners of the Pequod.

Dough-boy: The ship's black steward.

Pip: A fun-loving, intelligent young black boy who falls over the side during a whale hunt, and goes insane before he can be picked up again. Like Lear's Fool, he provides a counterpoint to Ahab's driven madness; Ahab takes pity on him after he goes mad, and has Pip stay below in Ahab's cabin.

Radney: The mate of the Town-Ho, a cowardly fellow who is killed by Moby-Dick, perhaps in retaliation for flogging Steelkit.



Steelkit: Steelkit, one of the sailors of the Town-Ho. He is a noble, proud man, driven to rebellion by the ignorance of Radney.

Fleece: The Pequod's cook, who delivers a humorous sermon to sharks about not eating so loudly.

Derrick De Deer: The Captain of the Jungfrau; he comes to the Pequod to beg for some oil, then tries to out race them in pursuit of a whale.

Gabriel: A madman from the Jeroboam, who believes he carries vials sealed by the angels. He warns his captain, and Ahab, not to go after Moby-Dick, who he believes to be the Quaker god incarnate.

Captain Boomer: The Captain of the Samuel Enderby, who lost an arm to Moby Dick.

The Carpenter: The carpenter of the Pequod, who isn't extremely intelligent. He serves as an amusing foil for some of Ahab's rants. He is also an extremely hard worker.

Perth: The blacksmith of the Pequod, who lost his family after a robbery; he helps Ahab make his harpoon.

Manxman: The oldest sailor aboard the Pequod, who passes occasional words of wisdom.

Mrs. Hussey: The wife of the landlord of the inn Ishmael and Queequeg stay in Nantucket; she runs the place while her husband is away. She is one of two women in the novel.



Objects/Places

Nantucket: The city from which the Pequod starts its journey, and the city where American whaling first began.

The Spouter-Inn: The inn where Ishmael first meets Queequeg. It is a whaler's inn, with various whaling weapons hung on the walls, and a bar set inside the jaw of a whale. The landlord is Peter Coffin.

Queequeg's Idol, Yojo: The small idol to which Queequeg worships. Queequeg prays to it each night before retiring to bed, and consults it before any decision. It tells him that Ishmael has to pick the ship the two men are to sail on.

The Whalemens Chapel: A non-denominational church made for whalers and their widows. Its walls are covered with monuments to sailors who've been lost at sea; since their bodies can never be recovered, this is the only mark left of them.

Pulpit: The pulpit in the church is designed like the prow of a boat. When the ladders are removed, it effectively separates Father Mapple from the rest of the flock. From it, the Father delivers a sermon about Jonah and the Whale.

The Pequod: The ship that Ishmael and Queequeg set sail on. It is primarily of the old school of design, with some new additions onto its deck. A proud ship, it is sunk when Ahab finally finds Moby-Dick.

Pipe: Stubb is hardly ever seen without his pipe; it provides him with constant comfort. When Ahab tries to smoke one himself, however, he is unable to achieve that peace, and throws the pipe overboard.

Ivory Leg: The man-made leg replacing the leg Ahab lost after fighting Moby Dick. It is made from a dead whale, and there are many special settings on the deck of the Pequod made in order to accommodate it. The leg is broken twice; the first time it is replaced by another ivory leg, the second time by wood.

Mast-head: The look-out perch high above the deck of the ship where the men stand to spot for whales. It has its antecedents in Egyptian culture. It can be hard to concentrate on the watch while standing on the mast-head, because of the dullness of it. When the Pequod enters into the Pacific line, a man falls into the ocean from the mast-head, and is killed.

Doublon: A Spanish gold-piece that Ahab nails into the main mast. He offers it to whoever spots Moby Dick first. However, Ahab is the only man aboard the ship ever to spot Moby Dick.

Whale-line: The line attached to the harpoon, which keeps the whale boat in contact with the whale, it snaps tight when the harpoon has been thrown successfully. It is this



line which catches around Ahab's neck at the end of the novel, and drags him to his death.

Ahab's Chart: In his cabin, Ahab has hundreds of sea-charts that he uses to track the known movements of Moby Dick. It has markings of where the whale has been previously seen, and from these markings, Ahab can judge Moby Dick's routine swimming grounds.

The Goney: The first boat the Pequod runs into. It is in ill-repair, and doing poorly.

The Town-Ho: The ship that first sees Moby-Dick. It tells the story of Steelkit and Radney, who is killed by the whale.

The Jeroboam: The ship that bears the madman Gabriel. A man named Mayhew is the captain, but he is forced to take orders from Gabriel, who has the men in fear of his insane, god-like powers.

The Jungfrau: Also known as the Virgin, it is a clean ship, with no whales. The captain, Derick De Deer, comes to beg oil from the Pequod, and also tries to beat them to get to a whale. It is last seen pursuing a wave that the men aboard have mistaken for a whale spout.

The Samuel Enderby: A British sailing ship, it's captain, Captain Boomer, lost an arm to Moby-Dick to match Ahab's lost leg.

Queequeg's Coffin: Queequeg falls sick, and has a coffin built for him; when he recovers, he offers the coffin to replace the lost life-buoy. It was what saves Ishmael in the end.

Ahab's Harpoon: Forged in blood with the strongest steel available, it is designed by Ahab to be the only weapon to kill Moby Dick.

The Rachel: A ship whose captain lost his son to Moby Dick. When he asks for Ahab's help to find the lost boy, Ahab refuses. The Rachel is the ship that picks up Ishmael after the Pequod has sunk.

The Delight: The last ship that the Pequod sees; they are dropping a body into the ocean, and they have lost three other men in hunting Moby Dick.



Quotes

Quote 1: "Call me Ishmael." Chapter 1, pg. 1

Quote 2: "I turned in, and never slept better in my life." Chapter 3, pg. 21

Quote 3: "'Starboard gangway, there! side away to larboard- larboard gangway to starboard! Midships! midships!'" Chapter 9, pg. 33

Quote 4: "Queequeg was a native of Kovoko, an island far away to the West and South. It is not down in any map; true places never are." Chapter 12, pg. 46

Quote 5: "A noble craft, but somehow most melancholy! All noble things are touched with that." Chapter 16, pg. 58

Quote 6: "'He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen. Mark ye, be forewarned; Ahab's above the common; Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves; fixed his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales.'" Chapter 16, pg. 67

Quote 7: "Know ye now, Bulkington? Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous slavish shore?" Chapter 22, pg. 89

Quote 8: "For, when Stubb dressed, instead of first putting his legs into his trowsers, he put his pipe into his mouth." Chapter 27, pg. 97

Quote 9: "More than once did he put forth the faint blossom of a look, which, in any other man, would have soon flowered out in a smile." Chapter 28, pg. 103

Quote 10: "'What business have I with this pipe? This thing that is meant for sereneness, to send up mild white vapors among mild white hairs, not among torn iron-grey locks like mine. I'll smoke no more-'" Chapter 30, pg. 107

Quote 11: "'Look sharp, all of ye! There are whales here-abouts! If ye see a white one, split your lungs for him!'" Chapter 31, pg. 108

Quote 12: "But I now leave my Cetological System standing thus unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower. For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught- nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!" Chapter 32, pg. 120



Quote 13: "Oh, Ahab! What shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep, and featured in the unbodied air!" Chapter 34, pg. 122

Quote 14: "'Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with three holes punctured in his starboard fluke- look you, whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!'" Chapter 36, pg. 135

Quote 15: "'All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event- in the living act, the undoubted deed- there, some unknown but still reasoning thing put forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me.'" Chapter 36, pg. 136

Quote 16: "He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it." Chapter 41, pg. 154-155

Quote 17: "And of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?" Chapter 42, pg. 165

Quote 18: "The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course- its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events." Chapter 47, pg. 181

Quote 19: "Now then, thought I, unconsciously rolling up the sleeves of my frock, here goes for a cool, collected dive at death and destruction, and the devil fetch the hindmost." Chapter 49, pg. 193

Quote 20: "'I don't know that, my little man; I never yet say him kneel.'" Chapter 50, pg. 194

Quote 21: "And had you watched Ahab's face that night, you would have thought that in him also two different things were warring. While his one live long made lively echoes along the deck, every stroke of his dead limb sounded like a coffin-tap. On life and death this old man walked." Chapter 51, pg. 197

Quote 22: "All men live enveloped in the whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks; but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present perils of life." Chapter 60, pg. 239

Quote 23: "'Your voraciousness, fellow-critters, I don't blame ye so much for; dat is natur, and can't be helped; but to govern dat wicked natur, dat is de pint. You is sharks,



sartin; but if you govern de shark in you, why den you be angel; for all angel is not'ing more dan de shark well governed." Chapter 64, pg. 250

Quote 24: "'O head! thou hast seen enough to split the planets and make an infidel of Abraham, and not one syllable is thine!'" Chapter 70, pg. 264

Quote 25: "'Nay, keep it thyself,' cried Gabriel to Ahab; 'thou art soon going that way.'" Chapter 71, pg. 269

Quote 26: "Meantime, Fedallah was calmly eyeing the right whale's head, and ever and anon glancing from the deep wrinkles there to the lines in his own hand. And Ahab chanced so to stand, that the Parsee occupied his shadow; while, if the Parsee's shadow was there at all it seemed only to blend with, and lengthen Ahab's." Chapter 73, pg. 278

Quote 27: "And thus, through the courage and great skill in obstetrics of Queequeg, the deliverance, or rather, the delivery of Tashtego, was successfully accomplished, in the teeth, too, of the most untoward and apparently hopeless impediments; which is a lesson by no means to be forgotten. Midwifery should be taught in the same course with fencing and boxing, riding and rowing." Chapter 78, pg. 290

Quote 28: "The predestinated day arrived, and we duly met the ship Jungfrau, Derick De Deer, master, of Bremen." Chapter 81, pg. 295

Quote 29: "But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy." Chapter 87, pg. 328

Quote 30: "What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World but Loose-Fish? What all men's minds and opinions but Loose-Fish? What is the principle of religious belief in them but Loose-Fish? What to the ostentatious smuggling verbalists are the thoughts of thinkers but Loose-Fish? What is the great globe itself but a Loose-Fish? And what are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too?" Chapter 89, pg. 336

Quote 31: "The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul." Chapter 93, pg. 349

Quote 32: "Oh! my friends, but this is man-killing! Yet this is life. For hardly have we mortals by long toilings extracted from this world's vast bulk its small but valuable sperm; and then, with weary patience, cleansed ourselves from its defilements, and learned to live here in clean tabernacles of the soul; hardly is this done, when- *There she blows!*- the ghost is spouted up, and away we sail to fight some other world, and go through young life's old routine again." Chapter 98, pg. 361

Quote 33: "'Oh, Life! Here I am, proud as a Greek god, and yet standing debtor to this block-head for a bone to stand on!'" Chapter 108, pg. 397



Quote 34: "'Thou hast outraged, not insulted me, sir; but for that I ask thee not to beware of Starbuck; thou wouldst but laugh; but let Ahab beware of Ahab; beware of thyself, old man.'" Chapter 109, pg. 399

Quote 35: "'If thou could'st, blacksmith, glad enough would I lay my head upon thy anvil, and feel thy heaviest hammer between my eyes. Answer! Can'st not smoothe this seam?'" Chapter 113, pg. 408

Quote 36: "One after another they peered in, for nothing but their own eyes could persuade such ignorance as theirs, and one after another they slunk away. In his fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his fatal pride." Chapter 124, pg. 432

Quote 37: "Slowly crossing the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side, and watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to his gaze... But the lovely aromas in that enchanted air did at last seem to dispel, for a moment, the cankerous thing in his soul... the step-mother world, so long cruel- forbidding- now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to bless. 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." Chapter 132, pg. 450

Quote 38: "'There she blows!- there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby-Dick!'" Chapter 133, pg. 454

Quote 39: "'Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake, I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! *Thus*, I give up the spear!'" Chapter 135, pg. 477



Topic Tracking: Fate

Chapters 1 - 15

Fate 1: Ishmael believes he is called to whaling by the hand of Fate. At the time, he only wished to see the majesty of whales and the world, but after everything that has happened, he now believes the decision was already made for him. The free will of man exists, but it is influenced by unseen forces, and leads to outcomes one cannot possibly predict.

Fate 2: Ishmael sees Bulkington in the Spouter-Inn. Although he doesn't know it yet, Bulkington will end up on the Pequod with him; already he is being enmeshed in the fate of the ship he hasn't even seen yet.

Fate 3: The sermon Father Mapple delivers is about man's inability to escape Fate, or defy God's will. Jonah tries to escape his fate, but is captured by a whale. His sermon is connected to whaling, as it is a whaleman's chapel, and the idea of a whale as the avenging force of God is planted in the mind of the reader.

Fate 4: Between the gallows painted on the sign of the inn in Nantucket, and the name Peter Coffin, it already seems to Ishmael that ill omens are everywhere. Either the fate of the Pequod has already been decided, or Ishmael is just seeing things because he is nervous to embark on his journey. No matter how it is interpreted, Ishmael is presented with symbols of death and doom wherever he goes in town.

Chapters 16 - 30

Fate 5: Queequeg allows his fate to be controlled by Ishmael, by forcing him to choose the ship on which they will sail. When Ishmael goes to the docks, he picks the Pequod almost at random, having rejected two other ships for no other reason than their names. He somehow feels the Pequod is the right ship. Once again, Fate is intertwined in a decision that is of Ishmael's own free will.

Fate 6: The bum Elijah, who acts as sort of a prophet, predicts the fate of the ship to be doomed. Even though he is just a man saying this, Ishmael still finds it difficult to discount what he says. There is a feeling of men playing a part in a larger story that they don't quite understand. As a prophet, Elijah warns of the future, but is unable to change it, or really help those embroiled in it.

Chapters 31 - 45

Fate 7: Ishmael sees Bulkington on the ship, and wonders how a man could rush from one voyage to another. In his wondering, he concludes that rational thought and decision making are essentially helpless in the face of those things that drive us onward: our inner needs, private demons, and of course, Fate.



Fate 8: Stubb is able to laugh at the future because he believes that everything is preordained; this trust in fate eliminates any worry. For him, fate is a comforting blanket, an absolution from any sort of individual responsibility over any possible outcome. Since his life is already pre-determined, he doesn't worry about what's going to happen, and he doesn't regret what he does in the meantime.

Chapters 46 - 60

Fate 9: Ishmael sees how free will and fate can be intertwined as he watches Queequeg weave the mat. Free will determines the fate to which we are destined, just like each weave of the map fits with those around it. Ahab dooms himself by his choice to hunt Moby Dick; he is faced with ill omens throughout the novel, but pays them no heed, driven by a force that is perhaps out of his control. Is Man free to choose, or are all his choices chosen for him in advance?

Fate 10: Ishmael comes around to Stubb's way of thinking, refusing to worry about anything and leaving himself open to his fate. There is an almost suicidal aspect to this; Ishmael frees himself from worrying about death after being washed out of the whaling boat and nearly killed. He laughs, casting aside his cares and worries.

Fate 11: In the encounter with the Goney, there are two ill omens: the captain drops his horn when he tries to speak of Moby Dick, and fish swim from the Pequod to the Goney. While these are both easily explained as coincidences, they leave a sense of foreboding with the crew, so heavy is the sense of possible doom. Later, there is another ill omen: the sight of a giant squid when a whale is expected. It remains a question whether these occurrences are omens of the future, or if the feeling of doom is so prevalent that any coincidence is taken as foreshadowing of a dangerous future.

Fate 12: Daggoo spots something in the water that he thinks is Moby Dick. Upon further inspection, they discover it is just a giant squid. They take this as a bad omen.

Chapters 76 - 90

Fate 13: Ishmael describes the meeting of the Pequod with the Jungfrau as being "predestined." Every event in life is already scheduled out, so the meeting of ships is no coincidence; there is, in fact, no such thing as coincidence. Things operate almost as if in a play, or a novel; nothing is left to chance, because everything springs from the mind of an all-knowing creator.

Chapters 106 - 120

Fate 14: Perth is a blacksmith who lost his family and went to sea afterwards. Ishmael wonders why death could not have taken him instead of his family, leaving a widow and children left to dream of their father. Instead, fate has left a broken and empty man; fate is not something that can be understood, only endured.

Fate 15: Fedallah can see Ahab's future, and knows how and when the old man will die. The future is a convoluted one, and seems to almost promise that Ahab is immortal;



there are strong shades of the witches' prophecy in "Macbeth," in which Macbeth could only be killed by a man "not of woman born." An impossible prophecy is being presented, which is both of interest to the reader (who knows, or at least strongly suspects, that anyone who gets word of their own death will most certainly die by the end of the book), and a challenge to Fate (or the author's pen.).

Chapters 121 - Epilogue

Fate 16: Ahab is driven by something he cannot understand, and he decides to call it his fate. However, he is driven to stand up to the gods and his perceived injustice, and by doing so, he is creating his fate. Or does he? One of the largest questions presented by the novel is whether or not Ahab is doomed from the start to find Moby Dick and be destroyed by him, or if he could have chosen to go free at any point. Many opportunities are provided to Ahab to turn back, from the pleas of the Rachel, to Starbuck's desperate reasoning. Alongside these opportunities, there is a hint of doom in the air from the very start. The prophecies of Elijah, and the various dark omens that go unheeded, makes Ahab's journey seem inevitable, as if he is being pulled by a force out of his control.



Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling

Chapters 1 - 15

Nature of Whaling 1: Ishmael chooses to go to Nantucket out of a feeling of loyalty because Nantucket is the first city to send out American whalers. This feeling of loyalty comes from the inherent powerfulness of whaling as a craft. The nature of the profession inspires this sort of feeling.

Nature of Whaling 2: The first of many discussions of the number of things whaling brings to the world; it established the city of New Bedford by bringing people to the port for the purpose of sailing out on whalers. Whaling is responsible for much more than the hunting of whales, a theme taken up later in such chapters as "The Advocate."

Chapters 16 - 30

Nature of Whaling 3: Despite the fact that whalemens are not often considered the best of company, they have survived more terrors in their day-to-day lives than normal people even dream of. They are well regarded by royalty, and they have helped to colonize foreign lands without violence. The oil from whales might even be the stuff that is used to anoint royalty, which means that whalers provide what's needed to even the highest seats of power.

Chapters 31 - 45

Nature of Whaling 4: The chapter on Ceteology is one of the longest in the book; however, at the end, Ishmael states he has only scratched the surface. Whalers hunt creatures so majestic, so numerous, that it is impossible for them to be fully understood and categorized, no matter how hard a man tries. Throughout the novel, Ishmael spends chapter upon chapter describing the physical build of the whale, the habits, the skull size, etc. This presentation serves not to diminish the mystery of the animal, but rather increase it; so much is known, and yet much more remains unknown.

Nature of Whaling 5: There are a number of routines on board a whaling ship, and the captain is treated like a king; this indicates a sort of closed society, one with its own defined hierarchy. It creates a miniature country, closed off from the rest of the world, with its king and his court. Ahab uses this to his advantage, because it gives him absolute power over his men; once the Pequod sets sail at the start of the story, it never touches land again.

Nature of Whaling 6: The mast-heads can be linked back to the watch-posts of ancient Egypt, where men used them to spy ahead on land. Everything in whaling can be linked back to the past; the process is one of taking useful and important things in other pursuits, and taking them on to the process of hunting whales.

Chapters 46 - 60



Nature of Whaling 7: There is a custom, when whaling ships meet, of having a conversation. This custom is not practiced among other types of ships, giving it a kind of honor among whalers. This reflects back on the earlier idea of a whaler being a microcosm of a country, with meetings with other so-called "countries" being extremely polite and civilized.

Chapters 61 - 75

Nature of Whaling 8: Despite all the long history, and the noble qualities of whaling, the actual practice of stripping the whale's carcass is a bloody, dangerous one, as is seen in this chapter, and a few others in the book. Men's lives are endangered on more than one occasion, and the ship's deck becomes covered with gore and blood from the dead whale. The carcass is thrown overboard and quickly devoured by hungry sharks.

Nature of Whaling 9: There is an honor between Queequeg and Ishmael when he is holding the rope connecting the two together, which dictates that if one man goes down, the other will go with him. This is done whenever the monkey-rope is used, like the idea of the captain going down with the ship. Whaling requires this sort of dependency between men; it inspires in their character a trust and moral strength.

Chapters 76 - 90

Nature of Whaling 10: Whaling goes back to the time of the Greeks, when Persius killed a whale to save his bride-to-be. It is even possibly connected to saints, like St. George and the Dragon. Because it has origins in such noble stories, it is a noble profession. This is curious, however, since these elder myths all tell tales of whales being killed to protect people, while the business of modern day whaling is to hunt the creatures down for profit.

Nature of Whaling 11: The men hunt a large group of whales, and one boat is caught inside. In the middle of the group, peaceful, calm young whales poke at the boat and seem playful. This sense of peace strongly contrasts with the vicious nature of the men attacking the whales, and the violence this inspires. The hunting of whales can be seen as the hunting on innocents.

Chapter 91 - 105

Nature of Whaling 12: Out of the whale comes the stuff known as sperm, and in order to prepare it, the men have to squeeze it. This creates a peaceful, easy feeling in Ishmael, and a deep affection for his fellow man. Whaling allows for physical contact not generally allowed on land. Reminiscent of the ambergris, it is also something soothing coming out of the internals of a living creature. (There is also a possible homo-erotic subtext at work; sperm and its connotations of sexuality, along with the grabbing of other men.)

Nature of Whaling 13: The business of whaling is a constant one; it is not stopped because you are tired, or busy doing something else. You have to hunt a whale when you see one, and make the situation fit the circumstances, rather than the other way

around. Melville compares this to the nature of life itself, and the pursuit of truth: just when you've found a place to stand, or an idea to believe, after much hard searching, another challenge appears, and you're thrown back into the fray.



Topic Tracking: Religion

Chapters 1 - 15

Religion 1: The first mention of religion is when Ishmael enters a black church. He is slightly frightened by the seriousness and loudness of it; religion is a mysterious thing; he relates it even to a biblical image, that of Tophet and a Black Angel of Doom. There is something very Old Testament, full of wrath and brimstone, in this short glimpse, and it disturbs Ishmael.

Religion 2: Even though he is not of any specific ordained faith, Ishmael still goes to church on Sunday; it is a whaler's church, designed to preach to men of the sea, and their needs. It is an automatic search for reasoning in his world, a habit born out of lack of knowledge, and custom.

Religion 3: Jonah tried to escape the will of God. To go against God is to invite his wrath; his wrath in the form of a whale, in this story. Much is made in the novel of attacking or fighting against God; Ahab takes it upon himself to punish Moby Dick, a brute animal, for biting off his leg. In his mind, he is fighting against God, choosing to put his own proud will above that of fate's.

Religion 4: Ishmael does not see it as a problem to make token worships to a pagan's idol if it helps to bring him closer to another man. Religion is something to be used for comfort, but it need not be followed blindly; it is important to define one's own course by what one sees fit. Going to church and prayer are important, but when it comes to practical purposes, you must be good to your fellow man, because that is God's will.

Chapters 16 - 30

Religion 5: Queequeg fasts for a full day, in order to perform his religious Ramadan. Ishmael thinks this is foolish, because it puts a man in danger of death, but Queequeg will not be convinced to stop. For Ishmael, religious practices are mere formality, and only valuable for the comfort and reassurance they provide. When it causes danger to one's self, it must be thrown away. Queequeg, however, chooses to believe more strongly in unseen forces, and the duties that must be paid to them.

Religion 6: Bildad and Peleg are not going to let Queequeg on the boat unless he can prove he has been converted to Catholicism; Ishmael tries to convince them that Queequeg is part of the church of life in which everyone is a part. They change their minds, though, as soon as they see an example of Queequeg's skill with the harpoon, sacrificing the spiritual for the practical.

Religion 7: Ishmael is bothered by the prophet only when he learns that the prophet's name is Elijah, the name of the Biblical prophet.

Chapters 31 - 45



Religion 8: Ahab's rage against the whale is a rage against the injustices piled down on man by God since the creation of Adam. This relates earlier to the story of Jonah; however, Ahab is not just trying to escape God, he's trying to attack him; not avoiding his destiny but showing his defiance. He believes himself above the natural world, and almost a god. This belief lends him power and majesty, but it also brings about his doom.

Chapters 46 - 60

Religion 9: Ahab will not kneel, because of his ivory leg- but he is prideful as well, so he would never kneel before anyone, not even God. Pride is the one thing that will not be tolerated by God. Ishmael is not strictly religious, although he observes when it comes to him; but he considers himself a passenger aboard a vessel, and not its captain, and so he survives. Ahab considers himself the pilot, and tries to decide his own fate.

Chapters 61 - 75

Religion 10: Fleece is ordered to deliver a sermon to the sharks, in order to get them to stop feeding in such a frenzy. The sermon is one an actual priest might give, albeit more eloquently, about the importance of self-control and discovering the angels in our nature. The metaphor of the flock as a group of hungry sharks is indicative of an old statement on religion; feed the stomachs, then the souls. Fleece's preaching largely goes unheeded, basically because the sharks are dumb beasts who can't understand what he's saying; they are also too busy feeding to pay attention to much else.

Religion 11: Gabriel is the name of the madman aboard the Jeroboam. He calls himself after the angel of God, and believes he hold vials sealed by the angels. He warns that going against Moby Dick is doomed, because he believes Moby Dick to be the incarnation of God. Oddly enough, even though he is half mad, his predictions all come true; he warns his own ship against attacking the White Whale, and the first mate is killed. Then he warns Ahab not to sail against Moby Dick, and the entire ship is destroyed. Elijah offers the same warning earlier, and he seems slightly mad; such a close connection with Fate and prophecy indicates a certain strangeness of character.

Chapters 76 - 90

Religion 12: The story of Jonah is one that can be proved, if the Bible is not taken too literally. Faith is something the can always defeat doubt. As seen before, religion is not something to be taken exactly, but only as it fits the situation; belief should adapt to the world, and not the other way around.

Chapters 121 - Epilogue

Religion 13: Ahab equates the fact that the carpenter works on both legs and coffins as the capriciousness of the gods. He believes he can stand against such capriciousness; that he can understand the will of the gods, or God, and he can decide where he should stand in such a will. The idea of free will is very important here: the choice of each man to either follow God, or stand against Him.



Topic Tracking: Vengeance

Chapters 16 - 30

Vengeance 1: Ahab wishes to take some time to relax and smoke a pipe, but because of the insane need for revenge that has been burning in him ever since he lost his leg to Moby Dick, he cannot have any peace. He tosses the pipe over the side instead, symbolic of him tossing away all comfort. Vengeance, at least in a man, is a need, or emotion, that cannot live alongside other emotions. It destroys peace of mind, and sets one's soul to warring; it is clearly not something to be valued.

Chapters 31 - 45

Vengeance 2: Ahab tells Starbuck that all things are masks for God, and that Moby Dick is just a mask for the inscrutable things that attack us everyday. His need for revenge has gone past the anger of losing his leg; for him, Moby Dick has come to be all the wrongs in the world. Vengeance inspires monomania, the obsession with one goal, and it turns everything into a reflection on the person who is feeling it; everything in Ahab's world is either for or against his hunt.

Vengeance 3: Ahab looks at himself as a ship leaving behind a wake in the world; his choice of pursuing revenge has put him apart from a normal life. For him, his monomania has now ceased to be a choice. That which put him apart from other men, has now made him doomed to always be apart, no matter what he should choose now.

Vengeance 4: Starbuck, who is a decent and honorable man, is terrified by Ahab's desire. He knows that his need for revenge will doom them all. Starbuck, as mentioned in the chapter describing him, has a deep-seated fear of "spiritual terrors." While he will face a whale like any other man, the oddness and depth of Ahab's madness is something he can't quite face head on. The extreme to which Ahab will go to satisfy his need for revenge, is something that is not human. It lends a tragic circumstance to his surroundings.

Vengeance 5: Ahab's madness gives him a sort of cunning, and it forces him to look at the rest of the world, mainly his crew, as tools to achieving his ends. The need for vengeance eliminates all other thoughts in his mind. He no longer can normally consider people as "people," but looks down on everyone as his means to achieving his goal. The monomania reduces his humanity.

Vengeance 6: Ahab sleeps as though in a fever, and is often driven to the decks with a look of half-madness. This is caused by the decency in his soul warring with his monomaniacal drive for revenge; his goodness is what makes him look insane, he is so far gone. There is still some decency left in him, which is horrified by what he is becoming - it comes up at different moments, in his later dealings with Starbuck, and in his caring for the mad Pip. This can be viewed as one of the tragedies of his character;



not that he is so driven, but that he can still occasionally experience regret and compassion even through his madness.

Chapters 46 - 60

Vengeance 7: Fedallah is associated with the devil, and the reason he was hired by Ahab was in order to hunt Moby Dick. His cause has him associating with things outside of humanity. He has sold himself over to mysticism.

Vengeance 8: The fish traveling over to the other ship is normal, but to Ahab it is a sign of desertion. His monomania makes him paranoid, believing everything to be a sign of people leaving him. Also, he does not travel to the other ship, because his need for revenge has driven out even the desire for normal conversation.

Vengeance 9: Here it is Moby Dick who acts in vengeance, killing a man who wounded someone else. The distinction is that it is provoked vengeance in the name of someone else. Ahab pursues Moby Dick because he lost his leg to the whale; but the only reason the whale took his leg was that Ahab was hunting him in the first place. Moby Dick only attacks when pursued, which may be what gives him his apparent invulnerability.

Chapters 76 - 90

Vengeance 10: When being pursued by pirates, Ahab sees himself as being chased by devils towards his goal. Everything relates back to the hunt for Moby Dick. Also, he knows that his course is a damned one, but he chooses it still. There is a profound sense of defiance in his vengeance, as if privately Ahab knows that he will die, but still wishes to push onward.

Chapters 91 - 105

Vengeance 11: Ahab looks at the doubloon, and describes it in terms of his own determination, immovable mountains, and so forth. He justifies his search in everything he sees. Like the pirates, and the fish that swim away from the ship, everything is a sign to him; everything is part of his journey, his choice of the hunt.

Chapters 106 - 120

Vengeance 12: When his ivory leg is damaged, Ahab uses this as further fuel to push him onward. Vengeance justifies itself; he is receiving pain from a wound inflicted at one time by Moby Dick, and since he cannot strike at God for inflicting that pain, he will hunt down the whale. What drives his vengeance is a profound sense of injustice in the world, a feeling of being treated wrongly and needing to redress these wrongs. Like Job, man is supposed to endure, but Ahab's pride and majesty, which raise him above his fellows, also force him to be unsatisfied (to understate) with his position.

Vengeance 13: Not even the beauty of the Pacific can touch Ahab but for a moment. His desires consume all other thoughts. This relates to the early comment on his infrequently surfacing humanity. Ahab is offered numerous moments of retreat, of



salvation, but his monomania eliminates the ability to examine such choices. His later dealings with the Rachel provide another example; when he is asked to help in the search for a missing child, he refuses.

Vengeance 14: Ahab can never be calm with his desire to kill the White Whale- he asks the blacksmith to smooth his brow, but that can only happen in death. In order to put himself closer to his goal, he creates a weapon he believes can hurt the whale, and in doing so, uses the blood of men. There is a lowering of humanity in this, a descent into savagery.

Chapters 121 - Epilogue

Vengeance 15: Ahab's fury and need for revenge comes from his tremendous pride. He cannot simply accept the pain the world has given him; he feels he must strike back at the world, in the guise of the whale that took his leg. It also fuels that pride, because in believing that Moby Dick hurt him especially, he is giving himself a quality above other men. This relates also to the question of God in the narrative, and what happens to a man who feels the need to strike back at God.

Vengeance 16: Even when almost all of his boats are destroyed, Ahab pushes onward, even when Moby Dick is trying to escape. He cannot let go to save anyone's life, especially his own. Besides, he believes himself immortal, because of the seemingly impossible prophecy made by Fedallah. But he still dies, and the prophecy comes true; there is a thread of man being able to occasionally foresee the turn of events, but not truly being able to change them.



Chapter 1 - 2

Chapter 1 - 2

Loomings/The Carpet-Bag

"Call me Ishmael." Chapter 1, pg. 1 opens the book, one of the most famous opening lines in literature.

Ishmael is a schoolteacher who every so often get the desire to go sailing. When he sails, he normally sails as a merchant sailor, because he is paid and has no responsibility. This time, however, he decides to go on a whaling ship. He believes that fate itself had a hand in his decision.

Topic Tracking: Fate 1

Ishmael packs his things, and heads to Nantucket to find a ship. He chooses Nantucket over other nearer cities, because Nantucket was the first American city to send out whalers.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 1

He is stuck in New Bedford for two nights and a day. He looks for a place to stay, passing by two inns that are too nice for the amount of money he has; the third place he sees is a black church, which he quickly leaves.

Topic Tracking: Religion 1

Close to the sea, he comes upon one final place, The Spouter-Inn. The building looks old and rundown enough for him to be able to afford it, and he goes inside.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3

The Spouter-Inn

The entryway and public room of the inn is full of whaling art and weaponry; the public room is dominated by a bar set into the jaw of a whale, run by a man named Jonah. Ishmael finds the landlord, Peter Coffin, and asks for a room. The house is full, but the landlord tells him he can have a room if he is willing to share it with a harpooneer.

Ishmael eats supper with various other sailors, and grows more and more worried about the man with whom he is to bunk. After supper, the crew of the *Grampus*, a just returned whaling ship, comes into the public room. The men sit around and talk and buy drinks, but Ishmael notices one of them keeping apart from the rest. The man, Bulkington, is to become one of his shipmates later in the story.

Topic Tracking: Fate 2

Ishmael decides he is unwilling to sleep with another man, and tries to lay down on a bench in the common room. He soon finds it impossible to sleep, and decides to wait for the harpooneer; it is getting very late, and the man does not show. Ishmael asks the landlord what kind of man would be out so late, and the landlord says the harpooneer is out selling his head. A brief confused exchange occurs, until Ishmael finally demands to be let in on the joke. The harpooneer is out selling shrunken human heads from New Zealand. Ishmael remains irresolute, until the landlord tells him the harpooneer must have settled down someplace else for the night.

Ishmael is led to his room, where he finds a sturdy bed and the harpooneer's belongings. He gets into the bed, but is unable to sleep. He manages to fall into a light doze when he hears footsteps outside the door. He resolves to keep silent, and the man enters the room with a candle. The harpooneer starts going through his things, and Ishmael is horrified by the sight of his face, which he thinks is covered in bruises; a closer look reveals them to be tattoos. The man continues to undress, and Ishmael, frozen with fear, does not speak to introduce himself; he realizes the man must be a cannibal. Once he is completely undressed for bed, the harpooneer performs an odd ceremony with a small wooden idol.

He then gets into bed with Ishmael, who lets out a cry. A struggle ensues, and the landlord is called into the room. He introduces the two, giving the harpooneer's name as Queequeg. Queequeg makes peace, Ishmael reasons he seems a decent sort for a cannibal, and the two get back into bed.

"I turned in, and never slept better in my life." Chapter 3, pg. 21



Chapter 4 - 6

Chapter 4 - 6

The Counterpane/Breakfast/The Street

Ishmael wakes up the next morning to find Queequeg's arm thrown over him and their quilt. He finds it hard to tell the difference between the arm and the quilt. Ishmael wakes Queequeg, and is once again favorably impressed by the man as he watches him get dressed for the day.

Ishmael joins the rest of the boarders downstairs for breakfast. He remarks on how all the men, each more accustomed to the rigors of the sea, find such social situations uncomfortable. Queequeg does not, however, and is possessed of a confident coolness that marks him above his peers; he uses his harpoon to spear food. After eating, Ishmael goes out for a walk.

There are a wide variety of people out on the street - whalemens of all kind, from the decent sort to the country bumpkin. They are drawn there because of all the wonders that whaling brings to the world.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 2



Chapter 7 - 9

Chapter 7 - 9

The Chapel/The Pulpit/The Sermon

It being Sunday, Ishmael decides to visit a Whaleman's Chapel.

Topic Tracking: Religion 2

Inside, he finds a small congregation of sailors, and sailors' widows. There are monuments to the fallen seamen on the walls by the pulpit. Ishmael sees Queequeg is also there. He thinks briefly on the bitterness of dying at sea.

Father Mapple enters the church and climbs onto the pulpit, which is designed as the stern of a ship.

The church is called to order, in the language of the sea: "Starboard gangway, there! side away to larboard- larboard gangway to starboard! Midships! midships!" Chapter 9, pg. 33 Father Mapple leads the congregation in a prayer and a hymn, then delivers a sermon. The subject is the story of Jonah, a man who tried to avoid the order of God to become a prophet. Jonah tried to escape from God by going to sea, but was swallowed by a whale.

Topic Tracking: Fate 3

Topic Tracking: Religion 3



Chapter 10 - 12

Chapter 10 - 12

A Bosom Friend/Nightgown/Biographical

Ishmael returns to the inn and finds Queequeg there alone. He watches as Queequeg leafs seemingly at random through a book and is moved by the simplicity of the cannibal's decent behavior. The two talk, and quickly become fast friends. The pair is sealed that night, when Queequeg splits his money equally between the two of them. Ishmael makes a token worship to Queequeg's idol, reasoning that the only worship of God that matters is a decency to one's fellow man, and the two get into bed.

Topic Tracking: Religion 4

The two men continue talking late into the night, and Ishmael learns Queequeg's history.

"Queequeg was a native of Kovoko, an island far away to the West and South. It is not down in any map; true places never are." Chapter 12, pg. 46

He was the son of a king and the nephew of a High Priest, who took it into his head to see Christendom. Being of strong will, he forced his way onto a whaling boat, refusing to leave even if hacked to bits. The captain made him a whaleman. Although he finds Christendom to be less than promised, he has chosen to stay in this world, while maintaining his Pagan practices.

Ishmael and Queequeg decide to go to sea on the same whaling ship, and the two go to sleep.



Chapter 13 - 15

Chapter 13 - 15

The Wheelbarrow/Nantucket/Chowder

The next morning, Monday, they set out for Nantucket, bringing their things down to the docks in a wheelbarrow. Queequeg tells two anecdotes of culture shock; the first, of his own misunderstanding of how to use a wheelbarrow, and the second, of a foreigner's confusion of his tribe's beliefs.

They buy passage on a ship, and set sail. On the ship, some fellow passengers make fun of the friendship between the black man and the white man. Queequeg takes the worst of the offenders and flips him around. Later on the trip, the same man falls overboard, and Queequeg dives into the water and saves him without a second thought.

Upon arriving in the city of Nantucket, the men go looking for an inn that Peter Coffin recommended. They find it, and on the outside, a sign which gives off the appearance of the gallows.

Topic Tracking: Fate 4

They go inside, meet Mrs. Hussey, the landlord's wife, and get a room for the night. They also have a supper of excellent chowder.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16

The Ship

That night, Queequeg tells Ishmael that Queequeg's god, Yogo, has ordered that Ishmael go alone to pick out a ship for the two of them to join up with. Ishmael is reluctant, but is unable to convince Queequeg to change his mind, so he eventually agrees.

The next day, Ishmael goes to the docks. He explores two ships before coming upon the Pequod, and immediately decides that it is the one for them. The ship is impressive:

"A noble craft, but somehow most melancholy! All noble things are touched with that."
Chapter 16, pg. 58

Topic Tracking: Fate 5

Inside a tent on the quarterdeck, Ishmael meets Captain Peleg, an elderly gruff man, who is one of the two owners of the ship. Peleg asks about Ishmael's experience, and then tells him about the Pequod's captain, Captain Ahab, who lost one of his legs to a whale. Peleg agrees to take Ishmael on, and brings him down below-deck to meet the other owner of the boat, Captain Bildad, a strictly religious man. Bildad offers Ishmael the 777th share, or lay, of the profits, but Peleg argues him up to 300th; Ishmael, who expected a greater amount, agrees. He mentions Queequeg, and the two captains agree to sign him on.

Before he leaves, Ishmael asks Peleg about Ahab. Peleg says that Ahab is still recovering from losing the leg, and is resting before the voyage:

"He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen. Mark ye, be forewarned; Ahab's above the common; Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves; fixed his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales."
Chapter 16, pg. 67

Peleg hints that something in Ahab's last voyage changed him. Ishmael departs, wondering about Ahab, but certain that the Pequod was the right ship for him and Queequeg.



Chapter 17 - 19

Chapter 17 - 19

The Ramadan/His Mark/The Prophet

Queequeg is observing a day of fasting, called Ramadan, and Ishmael waits until the evening to knock on their door. When Queequeg doesn't answer, Ishmael becomes concerned, and forces the door open. Inside, he finds Queequeg sitting quietly, unresponsive to any of Ishmael's attempts to rouse him. It is only when the sun of the next day has risen that Queequeg finishes his Ramadan. Ishmael tries to convince him of the dangers of foolish religious self-sacrifice, but Queequeg takes no heed.

Topic Tracking: Religion 5

The two men eat breakfast, then leave for the Pequod.

At the ship, Captains Bildad and Peleg are at first reluctant to let Queequeg on, unless it can be proved he has converted to Catholicism. Ishmael attempts to argue for his friend, but it is only after Queequeg shows his skill at harpooning (by hitting a far off target) that he is signed on.

Topic Tracking: Religion 6

When they are leaving the ship, Ishmael and Queequeg are accosted by a poorly dressed, diseased stranger. He warns the two about dangers aboard the Pequod, especially from Ahab. Ishmael does not take him seriously, until he tells them his name, Elijah, the name of a biblical prophet.

Topic Tracking: Fate 6

Topic Tracking: Religion 7

The two men walk away, both deciding he is a fake. There is a moment of fear when it seems Elijah is following them, but Ishmael turns to face him, and Elijah ignores them.



Chapter 20 - 22

Chapter 20 - 22

All Astir/Going Aboard/Merry Christmas

Over the next few days, the ship is prepared for voyage: sails are mended, cable replaced, food stored. Bildad's sister, Aunt Charity, helps out a great deal. Ishmael still feels reservations about setting sail with a captain he's never met, but he chooses to ignore them. Finally, the word is given that the Pequod will set sail tomorrow. Queequeg and Ishmael head out early the next morning.

Before getting on the ship, they run into Elijah again. Ishmael roundly denounces him. Before they can get away from him, Elijah mentions a strange group of men who boarded the ship earlier.

The ship itself is quiet, so Ishmael and Queequeg sit and wait. Queequeg sits on the back of a sleeping sailor, and tells Ishmael how this is the custom of the royalty in his country. The sailor wakes up, and tells them that Captain Ahab boarded the Pequod the night before. They hear someone moving around, who the sailor identifies as Starbuck, the chief mate. The rest of the crew gets on the ship.

The Pequod sets sail at noon on Christmas day. Captain Peleg guides the ship out of the harbor, while Captain Bildad sings hymns to the men. When they are out of the harbor, Bildad gives some last minute advice to the crew and the mates, tells them to be careful in their hunt, and then the two men leave on a small boat.



Chapter 23 - 25

Chapter 23 - 25

The Lee Shore/The Advocate/Postscript

Ishmael sees Bulkington standing at the helm, and wonders what is it about the man that would make him leave the safety of port for another voyage, after already having been at sea for four years. Bulkington, like the rest of the men on the ship except Ishmael, is doomed to die on this voyage.

"Know ye now, Bulkington? Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous slavish shore?" Chapter 22, pg. 89

Topic Tracking: Fate 7

Ishmael sets out to prove the value of whaling.

Whalemen are not well regarded in company, because they are considered a form of butcher. But even if that is true, whaling has a long history of being well honored and sponsored by royalty. Whaling is responsible for the peaceful discovery of many foreign lands, and whalemen have braved more terrors than any socially acknowledged heroes. Whale oil might also be used to anoint kings.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 3



Chapter 26 - 27

Chapter 26 - 27

Knights and Squires/Knights and Squires

The chief mate of the Pequod, Starbuck, is a decent, competent man. He has a deep reverence for the sea, and also a respect for the dangers of his profession. Starbuck has the kind of courage that can handle the rigors of the natural world, like winds or whales, but cannot handle more spiritual terrors. However, he is a decent man, and Ishmael promises that the story will not destroy his fortitude.

Stubb is the second mate of the Pequod. He is a good-humored, apparently fearless man, who is never seen without a pipe in his mouth, which might help to explain his cheerfulness.

"For, when Stubb dressed, instead of first putting his legs into his trowsers, he put his pipe into his mouth." Chapter 27, pg. 97

The third mate is Flask, a short strong man, who attacks each whale as if it had personally offended him.

These three men each man a boat when hunting a whale. With each is a harpooner. Queequeg goes with Starbuck. Tashtego, a proud Indian, rides with Stubb, and Daggoo, a giant black man, goes with Flask.

The rest of the crew is made up mostly of islanders.



Chapter 28 - 30

Chapter 28 - 30

Ahab/Enter Ahab; To Him, Stubb/The Pipe

Several days pass, with Ahab still staying below deck, and Ishmael's anticipation of seeing him grows. Then, one day, when Ishmael comes up for his afternoon watch, he finds the captain standing on deck, staring out to sea. He is a feverish, intense looking man, with a vivid line running down from his hair through his neck, and possibly even the length of his entire body. There are holes made for his ivory peg leg on either side of the deck, and Ahab stood in one of them, with an air of determination and royalty about him.

Eventually, he goes back into his cabin, but he continues to make appearances above deck, and the gradual improvement of the weather improves his spirit.

"More than once did he put forth the faint blossom of a look, which, in any other man, would have soon flowered out in a smile." Chapter 28, pg. 103

More time passes, and as the ship goes further into the Tropics, Ahab spends more and more time up above deck, unable to sleep. One night, when he is pacing back and forth, Stubb comes up, and asks if there is any way the sound of Ahab's peg leg could be muffled. Ahab snaps at him, and when Stubb holds his ground, Ahab advances on him in such a fearsome manner that Stubb retreats. Going back to his bed, he doesn't know whether to go back up and strike Ahab, or to pray for him.

After Stubb leaves, Ahab calls for his pipe and stool. He tries to smoke, to soothe his nerves, but it fails to calm him.

"What business have I with this pipe? This thing that is meant for serenity, to send up mild white vapors among mild white hairs, not among torn iron-grey locks like mine. I'll smoke no more-" Chapter 30, pg. 107

And with that, he tosses the pipe into the sea, and begins to pace the deck again.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 1



Chapter 31 - 32

Chapter 31 - 32

Queen Mab/Cetology

The next morning, Stubb tells Flask of a dream he had that night, inspired by his conversation with Captain Ahab. In the dream, Ahab kicked him with his ivory leg, but when Stubb tried to kick him back, he was turned aside by a merman. The merman tells Stubb that it is an honor to be kicked by an ivory leg. Flask says this sounds like a foolish dream, and Stubb says it might be, but it's taught him never to approach Ahab.

Ahab shouts to the crew, "Look sharp, all of ye! There are whales here-about! If ye see a white one, split your lungs for him!" Chapter 31, pg. 108

It is difficult to make a classification of whales. A great number of men have attempted and failed; but the majority of these men have failed to actually ever see a whale, let alone study one. Ishmael divides them into three books: I. The Folio Whale; II. The Octavo Whale; III. The Duodecimo Whale.

In the Folio, there is the Sperm Whale, the Right Whale, the Fin Back Whale, the Hump-backed Whale, the Razor Back Whale, and the Sulphur Bottom Whale. The Sperm whale is the largest whale, and its oil, called spermaceti, is the most valuable. The Right Whale was the first kind to be hunted by men, and from it men get whale-bone, and "whale-oil." The Fin Back can be distinguished by its spout, and is smaller than the Right whale. The Humpback has a larger hump than the Sperm whale; little is known of the Razor Back whale; the Sulphur Bottom has a belly covered with barnacles.

In the Octavoes, there are the whales of less size: the Grampus, who breathes loudly, the Black Fish, which is known for its grin, the Narhwale, who has fine oil, but not very much of it, the Killer, with a savage disposition, and Thrasher, named for its tale.

Finally, there are porpoises of the Dudecimoes: the Huzza, the Algerine, and the Mealy-mouthed porpoise.

"But now I leave my cetological System standing thus unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower. For small erections may be finished by their first architect; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught- nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!" Chapter 32, pg. 120

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 4



Chapter 33 - 35

Chapter 33 - 35

The Specksynder/The Cabin Table/The Mast-Head

There is a large importance attached to harpooners; in the old Dutch Fishery, the command of a whale ship was split between the captain and chief harpooner, called a Specksynder. Things have changed between now and then, but the harpooner is still treated with respect; he lodges in the same area as the officers and the captain, and he takes his meals in the captain's cabin.

While whaling is generally a more familiar and family-like business than merchant sailing, the customs of where the officers eat and sleep are still rigorously upheld. And even though Ahab is not given to shallowness, he still follows this form, using it to maintain a position of superiority over his men, like that of a king.

"Oh, Ahab! What shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep, and featured in the unbodied air!" Chapter 34, pg. 122

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 5

At noontime, Dough-Boy the steward tells Ahab that dinner is ready. Ahab tells Starbuck, then goes below. Starbuck waits enough time for Ahab to seat himself, then tells Stubb, and leaves. Stubb lounges, then tells Flask, and goes below; finally, Flask follows.

Although the mates could be inclined, on deck, to speak roughly to the captain if necessary, once below at the dinner table they are completely humble and inoffensive around him. They wait for him to serve himself, so each can be served in turn, and they dare not speak of anything. Flask is the last person to sit down, and also the first to get up again, since he has to leave as soon as it seems that Stubb is ready to go. This means that he almost never gets to finish a meal, and is almost always hungry.

After the mates and the captains are done eating, the harpooners come in and eat. They are much more relaxed than the mates.

The cabin is exclusively the domain of the captain, which implies that the other men are just visiting it, even if they sleep near it. They do not belong inside, because of Ahab's reclusive nature.

It is during the more pleasant weather that Ishmael has his first time up on the mast-head, a perch up atop one of the ship's masts where one can be on the look-out for whales. There is a long history of mast-head standers, from the Egyptians to Napoleon.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 6



The ship has three mast-heads, which are kept occupied from sun-rise to sun-set; it is hypnotic, dull work, and over the course of a three or four year journey, the time each man spends up on it amounts to several months. It is not extremely safe, with just two planks to stand on.

Ishmael admits that he kept a miserable watch, because it was easy to fall into a reverie while standing up there alone. He warns ship captains not to hire introspective looking young men to sail with them, for they will be unable to concentrate on the sea to look for whales.



Chapter 36

Chapter 36

The Quarter-Deck

One morning, after breakfast, not long after he threw his pipe overboard, Ahab comes onto the deck. He paces back and forth, as he usually does, but the dents of his ivory leg into the ship seem more pronounced. Stubb notices this, and tells Flask that he thinks whatever has been bothering Ahab will soon come out.

Ahab goes back below to his cabin; then, near the end of the day, he comes back up, and tells Starbuck to summon all the men to the deck. This is an unusual order, made only in times of great importance.

Once all the men are up, Ahab asks them what they do if they see a whale: "Sing out for him!" And next? "Lower away, and after him!" These answers please Ahab. He pulls out a doubloon, and announces:

"Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with three holes punctured in his starboard fluke- look ye, whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!" Chapter 36, pg. 135

He nails the coin to the mast. Tashtego asks if Ahab is speaking of Moby-Dick, and Ahab says he is. Starbuck asks if Moby-Dick was the one who took Ahab's leg, and Ahab says it was. He swears he will chase Moby-Dick around they globe till he (the whale) is dead. The men are all eager to be with him, and Ahab sends for some drink. Starbuck doesn't look convinced, so Ahab tells him that he seeks Moby-Dick to avenge himself of all the wrongs in the world:

"All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event- in the living act, the undoubted deed- there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me." Chapter 36, pg. 136

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 2

Starbuck gives in. The drink is brought out, and the men stand around in a circle; Ahab passes the drink to each man. A ceremony is performed, where each man drinks, and the harpoons are baptized by the drink. Ahab swears for them all to hunt Moby-Dick to the death, and then has the men disperse. He returns to his cabin.



Chapter 37 - 39

Chapter 37 - 39

Sunset/Dusk/First Night-Watch

Ahab prepares for bed, and marvels at how easy it was to get the crew to go along with his wishes.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 3

Starbuck is terrified of the consequences of sailing with Ahab and going along with his plan. He knows it will not lead to any good.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 4

Stubb knows of Starbuck's fear, but he chooses to laugh instead of worry.

Topic Tracking: Fate 8



Chapter 40 - 42

Chapter 40 - 42

Midnight, Forecastle/Moby-Dick/The Whiteness of the Whale

The men of the ship sit around singing and talking. They get Pip, the cabin-boy, to play something on his tambourine, and they dance to the music. All are eager to hunt the whale for Ahab, but Pip is frightened by their violent enthusiasm.

Ishmael is sympathetic to Ahab's wild desires, and he eagerly learns the history of the whale they are all sworn to hunt.

For some time, Moby-Dick had been seen in the seas most frequented by Sperm Whalers; he was known for his violent attacks, and intelligence that seems greater than that of ordinary whales. Whenever men hunted him, there were awful injuries, and the whale seemed unstoppable. Wild rumors about the White Whale abounded: Moby-Dick was ubiquitous, often seen in two places at once; he was immortal. He could be identified by his snow-white hump and wrinkled forehead.

Ahab is obsessed with finding the whale; he attributes all evil in the world to the whale.

"He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it." Chapter 41, pg. 154-155

Ahab is aware that his goal is mad, but he also believes that his methods for achieving that goal are sane. His need for vengeance has put him apart from humanity, but he can still pretend to be normal, which is how he was able to get the helm of a ship to use to chase Moby-Dick. All the men are with him, and he intends to pursue the whale around the world.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 5

Topic Tracking: Religion 8

It is the whiteness of Moby-Dick that terrifies Ishmael. The color of white will increase the terror of anything. It is because white symbolizes purity, the absence of anything. Nature covers everything up with bright colors, but white is the truth beneath it all.

"And of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?" Chapter 42, pg. 165



Chapter 43 - 45

Chapter 43 - 45

Hark!/The Chart/The Affidavit

The men are on watch at night when one of them hears a noise below deck, like a cough. None of the other men believe him.

In his cabin, Ahab has a large chart of the sea, which he uses to track the movements of Moby-Dick. Sperm whales are said to follow certain patterns through the sea, which makes it possible for Ahab to track the White Whale. Moby-Dick has been seen in a certain part of the tropics, and while it is impossible for the Pequod to reach that place at the right time this year, Ahab plans to wait until the next season to visit this place. In the three hundred and sixty days between now and then, he can go about a more random search for the whale, hoping to come across him by accident.

Ahab's obsession torments him, especially at night; often he will wake from unsettling dreams and run up onto the deck as if escaping a fire. His soul wars with his monomania, and gives him a look of half-madness.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 6

In order to prove that his story is not unbelievable, Ishmael tells of a time when a whale was harpooned and escaped, only to be killed years later by the very same man who harpooned him the first time. Also, there are many whales that have been identified by their aspect, and named; naming a particular Moby-Dick would not be completely unusual.

Whaling is much more dangerous than most people think, probably because most whaling deaths and injuries go unrecorded. And people who've never seen a whale also fail to have a true conception of its size.

There are records, going back to the time of the Romans, of a Sperm Whale sinking ships intentionally.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 7



Chapter 46 - 48

Surmises/The Mat-Maker/The First Lowering

Although Captain Ahab is focused on hunting down Moby-Dick above all other things, he still makes sure to pursue other whales on the hunt. He does this because he needs to keep the men with him, and while his obsession can sustain him, the others would soon lose focus if not provided with day to day targets. He tells the men on the mast-head to shout if they see anything, even a small porpoise.

One afternoon, Ishmael and Queequeg are weaving sword mats to lash to the whaling boats. Everything is calm and peaceful, and Ishmael fancies that he can almost see the thread of life moving in the weaving:

"The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course- its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events." Chapter 42, pg. 181

Topic Tracking: Fate 9

Tashtego calls out a whale from the mast-head. The ship follows after, and the boat crews prepare to embark. Before they can do so, a group of black men appear from nowhere to surround Ahab as his personal crew- these were the men that Elijah saw boarding earlier, and that were heard coughing.

The new crew of Ahab's begins lowering his boat; at the helm stands Fedallah, a strangely dressed man who comes from the Manilas, a race that many sailors suspect to be in league with the devil. Once the boats are ready, four are dropped into the sea: Starbuck's, Stubb's, Flask's, and Ahab's, which is manned by the new crew.

Each mate is responsible for driving his rowing crew faster; Stubbs manages this with odd, sermon-like exhortations. He calls across to Starbuck, and asks him what he thinks of the new men. Starbuck says they must have been smuggled on before the ship sailed. Stubb agrees, and says it must be because of Moby-Dick.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 7

The other men of the ship are at first a little disturbed by the presence of the strangers, but the work of rowing soon takes their minds off of it.

The whales settle down into the sea, and Starbuck has Queequeg come forward, to watch for them surfacing. Flask gets upon the shoulders of Daggoo to see farther. No matter how Flask stamps or moves, Daggoo remains still. Stubb relaxes and lights a pipe, but before he is able to smoke it, his harpooner, Tashtego sees the whales. The



four boats race after a disturbance in the water, each mate shouting various encouragement's to his crew; Ahab's shouts are so vile and crude that they are not fit to repeat.

A storm is approaching, and the boats are pulled apart. Starbuck's is closest, and he spots the whale. Queequeg throws his harpoon, but misses, and the boat is overturned in the commotion. The storm increases, making it impossible to bale out the swamped boat. The men huddle around. After a few hours, the Pequod comes out of a thick fog and almost runs them over. They manage to get its attention, and climb back on board.



Chapter 49 - 51

Chapter 49 - 51

The Hyena/Ahab's Boat and Crew. Fedallah/The Spirit-Spout

Ishmael can't help but laugh at his near-death experience. He asks Queequeg, Stubb, and Flask if this sort of thing happens often, and they all say it does. Realizing what a dangerous profession he's gotten himself into, he decides to make a draft of a will, a common past time among sailors.

"Now then, thought I, unconsciously rolling up the sleeves of my frock, here goes for a cool, collected dive at death and destruction, and the devil fetch the hindmost." Chapter 49, pg. 193

Topic Tracking: Fate 10

Stubb is amazed that Ahab would go out on a whaling boat with his lack of leg. Flask is not as impressed, because he still has one knee, and a good part of the other one.

"I don't know that, my little man; I never yet say him kneel." Chapter 50, pg. 194

Topic Tracking: Religion 9

It is a matter of some debate whether or not a whaling captain should risk himself in the actual chase; with Ahab, this seems even more dangerous, because of his handicap. Knowing this, he hired a crew for his own boat without telling the owners of the Pequod, or the men of the ship.

The shock of the new men soon passes, but Fedallah fails to fit in with everyone else. He has a mysterious air about him.

Weeks pass, and the Pequod sails through many cruising grounds. One night, Fedallah spots a jet of water spouting up, and the men are excited by his shout. They take after the spout, and Ahab paces back and forth on the deck:

"And had you watched Ahab's face that night, you would have thought that in him also two different things were warring. While his one live long made lively echoes along the deck, every stroke of his dead limb sounded like a coffin-tap. On life and death this old man walked." Chapter 51, pg. 197

But although the ship moves quickly, and the men are eager to find the whale making the spout, they are unable to see it again.

Days later, the spout is seen again, and again the Pequod chases after it, with the same results. It begins to happen every few nights, seemingly pulling the ship on after it. Some of the men begin to think that it is Moby-Dick, luring them on to attack them in the



remotest seas. But when the ship turns east towards the Cape of Good Hope, the spout disappears. The weather worsens, and the sea becomes more and more violent, but Ahab remains on deck as much as ever.



Chapter 52 - 53

Chapter 52 - 53

The Albatross/The Gam

The Pequod passes by another ship, the Goney, or Albatross. The other ship is in dull repair, having been long away from home. Ahab asks if they've seen Moby-Dick, but when the other captain gets a horn to shout out a reply, he drops the horn into the ocean, which makes him impossible to hear. As the two ships pass, the small fish that were swimming around the Pequod swim over to the Goney; although this is a normal occurrence, Ahab sees it as a sign of desertion.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 8

Topic Tracking: Fate 11

The obvious reason that Ahab didn't go over to board the Goney was that a storm was coming. Despite this, Ahab was not interested in speaking with any other whaling captain, unless he could find out more about Moby-Dick. This is unusual, because when whaling ships meet, it is generally a custom for the captains to meet on one boat, the two chief mates on the other, in order to have a polite conversation, and maybe exchange mail. This sort of meeting is called a "gam," and is a practice common only among whaling ships.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 8



Chapter 54

Chapter 54

The Town-Ho's Story

While still in the Cape of Good Hope, the Pequod meets the Town-Ho, and in the brief conversation, they hear news of Moby-Dick. Ishmael tells the story as he told it in an inn to some Spaniards years later.

The Town-Ho was sailing on the Pacific. One morning, a large amount of water is found in the hold, which indicates a leak somewhere in the hull; the captain sets sail for the nearest island to have the leak repaired.

As the ship goes toward port, the leak increases, and Radney, the mate, who is a bit of a coward, is worried. One day, he approaches the men at work, and hears Steelkit, a noble, powerful man, mocking him. Radney orders the men back to pumping, which they immediately jump to. Later, when Steelkit is finished working his shift, he takes a rest; Radney comes over to him, and orders him to clean the decks. This order is clearly meant to be an insult to Steelkit, who calmly says it is not his work, and points to the three boys whose job it is to regularly clean the ship. Radney swears at him, and advances on him with a hammer. Steelkit warns him to stay clear, and says that if the hammer so much as grazes his cheek, he will murder Radney. As soon as he says this, the hammer touches his face, and Steelkit hits him.

Three junior mates and four harpooners immediately surround Steelkit, but he and a group of men (including two Canallers of low character) escape and gain control of the forecabin deck. Steelkit swears that not a man of his will return if the captain refuses to flog them, and they go down below, where they are quickly locked in.

Gradually the men desert back to the captain, until all that is left below is Steelkit and the two Canallers. Steelkit decides the next day to charge the rest of the ship, and try and seize it. The Canallers ostensibly agree, but as soon as Steelkit is asleep, they tie him up, and call to the captain. They are pulled onto the deck, and the captain has all three hoisted onto the rigging, to hang there until morning.

The next day, all the men are called up to the deck, and the mutineers are separated from those who hadn't followed Steelkit. The captain says he ought to flog all of them, but because they surrendered early, he will make do with just a reprimand. He then whips the Canallers.

After he is finished with the two, the captain approaches Steelkit, but before he can flog him, Steelkit whispers a threat that stops the captain from going through with it. Radney, who has been recovering in the berth, has no such compunctions, and whips Steelkit.



Steelkit makes a weapon from a lanyard and an iron ball, an instrument with which he plans to murder Radney. But before he can, a whale is spotted, none other than Moby-Dick himself. In the chase, Radney falls from his boat, and is swallowed by Moby-Dick. Later, when the ship arrives at port, Steelkit and the men who were faithful to him, escape the ship for good.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 9



Chapter 55 - 57

Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales/Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales, and the True Pictures of Whaling Scenes/Of Whales In Paint; In Teeth; In Wood; In Sheet-iron; In Stone; In Mountains; In Stars

There are many men who have tried to paint pictures of a whale, but none have truly succeeded; most drawings are exaggerated, or grossly inaccurate. There are some pictures of whales that are close to correct; these generally manage to capture the essence of whaling, if not the exact physical measurements. There are pictures of whales everywhere, from paintings by beggars to engravings in wood.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 9



Chapter 58 - 60

Chapter 58 - 60

The Brit/Squid/The Line

The Pequod sails onward, passing through large amounts of yellow substance called brit, which the Right Whale feeds on.

Some naturalists regard that every creature on land has a component on sea, and that the two things are equal to each other; but the sea is far more dangerous and subtle than the land.

The Pequod continues her journey to the island of Java, and one day, Daggoo spots something in the water that he thinks is Moby-Dick. The boats are lowered, but when the thing is found, it turns out to be a giant squid. It is a bad omen, and the men return to the ship.

Topic Tracking: Fate 12

The whale-line is the length of rope attached to the harpoon, which connects the boat to the whale it is following. The line is coiled about the boat in such a way as to be dangerous to any man who is unwary of it- once the harpoon is in the whale, the rope can snap quickly.

"All men live enveloped in the whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks; but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present perils of life." Chapter 60, pg. 239



Chapter 61 - 63

Chapter 61 - 63

Stubb Kills a Whale/The Dart/The Crotch

The next day is a warm one, and the crew falls into a vague, dreamy stupor. This stupor is broken, however, when a sperm whale is spotted. The boats are lowered, and the whale is followed. It sounds, and when it comes back up, it is nearest to Stubb's boat, who immediately gives chase. Tashtego gives out a cry, which is echoed by Daggoo and Queequeg. He hits the whale with a harpoon, and the whale line snaps taught- the men of Stubb's boat start pulling in the line, to get closer to the whale. Stubb throws dart after dart into the whale, and blood pours forth from the creature. He stabs a lance once last time, thrusting it in and holding it there, until the whale dies.

The harpooneer not only must be ready to throw the harpoon at a moment's notice; he also must keep rowing with everyone else, and be yelling encouragement to everyone else. After he has hit the whale, he and the boat-header have to change places quickly, so the harpooneer can be in the correct spot in the back of the boat.

The crotch is a notched stick standing up in the bow of the boat, where a harpooneer can rest his two harpoons. Each harpoon is attached to the line, and it is best to try and get both into the whale. This is very difficult to do, and it is important to remember to throw out the second harpoon the second the first one is gone. Otherwise, it will fly around the boat and could impale someone. Once the second harpoon is in the water, it can also be dangerous, cutting through other lines; this danger is multiplied when four boats are all in the water at the same time.



Chapter 64 - 66

Chapter 64 - 66

Stubb's Supper/The Whale as a Dish/The Shark Massacre

The dead whale is brought back to the Pequod, and it is tied to the side of the ship. Ahab, who led the chase as was typical, is now dissatisfied and depressed about the whole operation. It seems to only remind him that Moby-Dick is still alive.

Stubb is extremely excited, and orders Daggoo to cut him a piece of the whale to eat for his supper. That night, as he eats the cooked whale-steak, large numbers of sharks attack the corpse of the whale in the water, doing their best to devour it.

Stubb calls Fleece, the black cook, over to him. He accuses Fleece of overcooking the steak, and tells him to preach to the sharks to stop eating so loudly. Fleece goes over to the side of the boat, and delivers a sermon of sorts, with Stubb's encouragement.

"Your voraciousness, fellow-critters, I don't blame ye so much for; dat is natur, and can't be helped; but to govern dat wicked natur, dat is de pint. You is sharks, sartin; but if you govern de shark in you, why den you be angel; for all angel is not'ing more dan de shark well governed." Chapter 64, pg. 250

Stubb congratulates Fleece on a job well done, then lectures him on cooking whale steak properly.

Topic Tracking: Religion 10

There is a long history of men eating whale; the whale would naturally be considered by all a good meal, except for the fact that there is so much of him that it takes away your appetite. Very few men eat whale nowadays, because it is also exceedingly rich.

When a sperm whale is killed at night, it is customary to send the men to bed till morning before cutting into it; but this isn't always possible, because of the many sharks that always gather around the corpse, and devour it.

When Queequeg comes out on watch, he and another sailor take spears and stab at the sharks attacking the dead whale; this drives the sharks into a further frenzy, because when one of their own is injured, they quickly attack it.



Chapter 67 - 70

Chapter 67 - 70

Cutting-In/The Blanket/The Funeral/The Sphynx

Using a complex series of pulls and hooks, the men use gravity and a windless to strip the whale of its skin, and then its under layer of blubber. The process is a dangerous one, because it involves a harpooneer getting onto the body of the whale itself, and cutting a hole into it.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 8

There is a layer of the whale that covers the blubber; when it dries, it becomes thin and brittle, nearly transparent. This is not the skin - the blubber itself is the whale's actual skin. The skin will yield, in the case of a large Sperm Whale, one hundred barrels of oil; that oil is only three fourths of the weight of the entire substance. The skin is taken off in long strips, called blanket-pieces.

The peeled body of the whale is dropped into the ocean. The remains float in the water, almost as a ghost of the dead whale itself, to scare away other ships.

Before the whale is stripped, it is beheaded, and the head is hung against the ship's side.

Once all the work is done, it is noon, and the men go below to eat. Ahab comes onto the deck by himself, and stares at the head of the whale, hypnotized by its silence. He addresses the head as if he wishes it to speak to him, and asks it to divulge the secret thing within it.

"O head! thou hast seen enough to split the planets and make an infidel of Abraham, and not one syllable is thine!" Chapter 70, pg. 264

Another ship is spotted, and the Pequod approaches her.



Chapter 71

Chapter 71

The Jeroboam's Story

The ship approaching turns out to be another whaler; the distances and currents between the two are so great, though, that the Pequod can't approach it. A signal is sent out, which the other ship responds to, and by its response, it is shown to be the Jeroboam of Nantucket. The Jeroboam lowers a boat, and the captain rides it over, but refuses to come aboard the Pequod, because of an epidemic on board his own ship.

The small boat keeps pace with the larger one. It holds the captain, named Mayhew, and, among the men pulling the oars, a wild fellow that Stubb had heard mention of from the Town-Ho. The wild looking man, who calls himself Gabriel, believes himself to be a prophet of some kind. The rest of the crew of the Jeroboam is scared of him, and he convinces them to follow him, so Mayhew cannot get rid of him. Gabriel has full run of the ship.

Ahab says he is not afraid of any epidemic, and tells Mayhew to come aboard. Gabriel calls out a warning against it. Ahab asks if they have seen Moby-Dick, and Mayhew tells a story.

It seems when the Jeroboam first left port, and the men heard the stories of Moby-Dick, Gabriel decided that the whale was the Shaker God himself, incarnated in physical form. But when Moby-Dick is sighted by the ship two years later, the captain and his first mate Macey, who is eager to kill Moby-Dick, along with a crew of five men, go after him. They almost succeed, but Moby-Dick manages to kill Macey instead, and the rest of the boat is unharmed. This incident left Gabriel with even greater power among the men, because they believed he had predicted the accident.

Ahab makes it known that he plans on going after Moby-Dick himself. Gabriel shouts out dire warnings. It so happens that the Pequod has a bit of mail for the Jeroboam: a letter to Macey from his wife. Ahab gives it to Mayhew, but before the captain can reach it, Gabriel grabs it, and throws it back onto the Pequod.

"Nay, keep it thyself," cried Gabriel to Ahab; 'thou art soon going that way.'" Chapter 71, pg. 269

With that, Gabriel orders the men to row the boat back to the Jeroboam.

Topic Tracking: Religion 11



Chapter 72 - 73

The Monkey-Rope/Stubb and Flask Kill a Right Whale; and Then Have a Talk Over Him

One of the hardest parts of stripping a whale is inserting the hook into the body to pull out strips of blubber. This was Queequeg's job; the rope by which he was attached to the ship, called a monkey-rope, was held by Ishmael. This is dangerous, because if Queequeg should fall into the ocean and die, honor demanded that Ishmael go down with him.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 9

Sometimes Queequeg would slip from the whale and fall between it and the ship, where he is in danger of being crushed between the two, or attacked by the frenzied sharks attacking the carcass. Tashtego and Daggoo try to stab at the sharks with spears, but in their enthusiasm, they come closer to stabbing Queequeg than the sharks.

When Queequeg is at last finished, he is offered a drink; Stubb is enraged to find the drink the steward Dough-Boy holds to be mere ginger and water. Aunt Charity had given the concoction to the steward, with orders that the harpooners were not to have any spirits. Stubb goes down below, and brings back two flasks. The first has rum, which is given to Queequeg; the other has Aunt Charity's gift, which is thrown into the ocean.

The Pequod again comes into seas with brit, indicating the presence of Right Whales. Although the Pequod was a Sperm Whaler, and did not generally hunt Right Whales, the order is given that a Right Whale should be taken that day, if possible. A Right Whale is soon spotted, and Stubb and Flask both go after it.

After they have killed it, Stubb asks Flask what he thinks Ahab wants with the Right Whale. Flask says that it is a legend, coming from Fedallah that a ship with a Sperm Whale's head on the starboard side, and a Right Whale's head on the larboard side cannot be capsized. Stubb, half-joking, suggests Fedallah is the devil, and that Ahab has made a deal with the devil to better capture Moby-Dick. Stubb promises to keep a close eye on Fedallah.

The Right Whale is brought back to the ship, and its head is cut off and hung on the opposite side of the boat from the Sperm Whale's head.

"Meantime, Fedallah was calmly eyeing the right whale's head, and ever and anon glancing from the deep wrinkles there to the lines in his own hand. And Ahab chanced so to stand, that the Parsee occupied his shadow; while, if the Parsee's shadow was there at all it seemed only to blend with, and lengthen Ahab's." Chapter 73, pg. 278



Chapter 74 - 75

Chapter 74 - 75

The Sperm Whale's Head- Contrasted View/The Right Whale's Head- Contrasted View

The head of the Sperm Whale is more dignified than the head of a Right Whale; it has symmetry. The eyes are pushed back far on either side of the skull, so that maybe the whale can see two different things at once, and the ears are extremely small.

Oftentimes, the lower jaw of the whale is pried off, and pulled aboard the ship, so the ivory can be removed. Queequeg, Tashtego, and Daggoo are responsible for this work on the Pequod.

While the skull of a Sperm Whale can be said to resemble a Roman chariot, the skull of a Right Whale looks like a gigantic shoe. The Right Whale has no ivory teeth, no slender lower jaw like the Sperm Whale. The Right Whale has two external spout-holes, while the Sperm Whale only has one.



Chapter 76 - 78

Chapter 76 - 78

The Battering Ram/The Great Heidelburgh Tun/Cistern and Buckets

The forehead of a Sperm Whale's skull resembles a large battering ram. The skull is exceedingly thick, and impossible to pierce with a harpoon. It can be divided into two parts, a lower, consisting of the cranium and jaws, and the upper, a mass entirely free of bones. It is in the lower that the oil resides, and it is the lower that is tapped to release that oil. The operation, like the beheading of the whale, is a dangerous one.

Tashtego climbs up to the overhanging arm of the ship, and tying one end of rope onto the arm, he climbs down the rope onto the skull of the whale. With a spade, he finds the best place to start plumbing, and buckets are hoisted up to him to fill with oil. The more oil removed, the further down Tashtego has to stab.

After they have been doing this for some time, Tashtego falls into the skull. Daggoo immediately calls out man overboard, and has a bucket swung over that he gets on, using it to bring himself to the head. While he's doing this, one of the hooks holding the head up gives way, sinking the head even further into the water. The remaining hook looks like it will give way at any second. Daggoo tries to send the bucket down into the head for Tashtego to grab onto, but before it can, the last hook tears free, and the head drops into the ocean completely, taking Tashtego with it.

Queequeg dives into the sea after him. He cuts a hole in the whale head, and yanks Tashtego out by his head, pulling him up to the surface.

"And thou, through the courage and great skill in obstetrics of Queequeg, the deliverance, or rather, the delivery of Tashtego, was successfully accomplished, in the teeth, too, of the most untoward and apparently hopeless impediments; which is a lesson by no means to be forgotten. Midwifery should be taught in the same course with fencing and boxing, riding and rowing." Chapter 78, pg. 290



Chapter 79 - 81

Chapter 79 - 81

The Prairie/The Nut/The Pequod Meets the Virgin

The Sperm Whale is a strange creature, in terms of studying its "face." It has no actual nose, which, being the central part of any face, has a large affect on the countenance of the whale. The most impressive part of the Whale's head is its brow, which is as wide and smooth as a prairie.

In a full-grown whale, the skull is at least twenty feet in length; the brain is cased inside of it like a nut in a shell. From the skull extends the spine of the whale, and the hump of the whale rises above the larger vertebrae.

"The predestinated day arrived, and we duly met the ship Jungrau, Derick De Deer, master, of Bremen." Chapter 79, pg. 295

Topic Tracking: Fate 13

The Pequod meets a German boat, the Jungfrau, or Virgin. The captain, Derick De Deer, comes over with a lamp-feeder to beg for some oil. Ahab asks for news of Moby-Dick, but the captain begs ignorance; his ship is a clean one, well deserving of its name.

Oil is brought to him, and he leaves to go back to his ship, but as he is going, whales are spotted, and he gives chase. The German boats have a head start on the Pequod's. There are eight whales, the average herd size, and in the rear swims a huge, old bull, which seemed to be afflicted with some disease that has slowed it down. All boats go for this one whale, because of his slowness and his size, and the Pequod's boats soon pass all but De Deer's boat. De Deer is confident that he will reach the whale first, and waves the newly filled lamp feeder at the Pequod's crew. Starbuck is annoyed at this, and tells his men to go faster.

De Deer's boat remains in the lead, until a crab takes hold of one the oars, and the boat nearly capsizes. This gives the Pequod's boats time to get near him. The flight of the whale is a pitiable sight, his only fin swimming as fast as it can go. Derick, seeing that he will be defeated, has a harpooneer stand up to dart the whale, but no sooner does he make the order, Queequeg, Daggoo, and Tashtego also get up, and manage to all three hit the whale. The force of the whale pulling the three ships knocks the German boat out of the way, and Derick and his harpooneer are both thrown into the ocean.

The wounded whale dives, and there is a long time of calmness, as the men wait for him to resurface. He does, exhausted and wounded badly; he is dying, but Flask stabs him one more anyway. The whale dies, and the men wait for the Pequod to come and pick it up.



While they are stripping the whale, the Pequod starts to tip towards it, due to the unusual size and weight of the thing. Starbuck does his best to keep it with them to the last, but eventually, Queequeg has to cut it free, and it sinks into the ocean.

Not long after this, the Jungfrau lowers boats again; they have seen the spout of a Fin Back, a whale impossible to capture due to its swimming speed, and mistake it for a Sperm Whale. The other ship sails away after it.



Chapter 82 - 84

Chapter 82 - 84

The Honor and the Glory of Whaling/Jonah Historically Regarded/Pitchpoling

The history of whaling stretches far back into the past. There is the myth of Perseus, who killed a leviathan to save the maiden Andromeda; the famous story of St. George and the Dragon could be about whales. Even Vishnoo, one of the three persons of the Hindu god, has had dealings with the whale.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 10

Some Nantucketers distrust the story of Jonah. Pictures in the Bible show Jonah being swallowed by a whale with two spouts, indicating a Right Whale; such a whale couldn't swallow something as big as a man. A bishop argued against this by saying that Jonah could have been lodged in the mouth of the whale, not the stomach. There are many combating theories, including the idea that Jonah took refuge in a dead whale. To many, the distance that Jonah traveled in the whale seemed impossible, but then there were passages that made it possible; besides, it was in the order of a miracle.

Topic Tracking: Religion 12

It is a popular belief that by greasing the bottom of a whaling boat, it can be made to move faster. Queequeg believes strongly in this, and one morning after the encounter with the Jungfrau, he took pains in anointing his boat.

Whales are spotted, and boats are lowered after them. The whales move fast, but Tashtego is able to hit one; however, the whale keeps swimming, and there is the danger that it will pull free of the harpoon. Stubb takes after it in the process of pitchpoling; with a long lance, connected to a length of rope, he darts the whale, then pulls the lance back, and repeats the process. He does this until the whale dies.



Chapter 85 - 87

Chapter 85 - 87

The Fountain/The Tail/The Grand Armada

The spout of a whale is an amazing thing. Because it breathes air like a normal man, the whale must surface. However, it can manage to stay below for much longer, breathing through its spout. It is dangerous to approach the thing too closely, but Ishmael hypothesizes that the spout is nothing but mist, the effect of a whale thinking about Eternity.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 11

The tail of the Sperm Whale is at least fifty feet square. It is highly flexible, and hugely powerful, and capable of five basic functions: to swim faster, to be used as a weapon in battle, to sweep, to lobtail (slapping the ocean), and in peaking flukes. The tail is so mighty that it cannot be truly expressed in words.

The Pequod sails through the straits of Sunda, passing by Asia and China, on its way to the Line in the Pacific, a known hunting ground of Moby-Dick. They do this without stopping on land, because the ship is well stocked with food and water, enough for years of sailing. The area is known as home to herds of Sperm Whales, and soon one is spotted; the Pequod takes after it. While they are following the herd, a group of pirates start to chase them from behind. The Pequod soon outdistances the pirates, but the incident troubles Ahab, who sees it as being chased to his vengeance by devils.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 10

Soon the herd is close enough, and boats are lowered to take after it. At first it seems that the herd might outdistance them, but then the whales seem to see their pursuers, and panic; much like a rioting group of humans, all this floundering doesn't achieve much in the way of escape. The boats separate, each searching for lone whales on the outside of the herd to attack. Soon after, Queequeg hits one, and his boat is pulled into the heart of the herd. Using thick squares of wood called druggs, the men of his boat attempt to impede other whales, to be gotten later. Eventually, Queequeg's boat stops in the middle of the herd, and they are unable to break free; the inside is calm, and peaceful, with young whales coming up to the boat and bumping gently against it. The men even see a young whale still attached to his mother's umbilical cord.

"But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy." Chapter 87, pg. 328



A wounded whale comes back into the herd, allowing the trapped boat to escape. The herd swims away, and the Pequod manages to only capture one whale; the other wounded or drugged ones will have to be gotten by other ships.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 12



Chapter 88 - 90

Chapter 88 - 90

Schools and Schoolmasters/Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish/Heads or Tails

While herds, as described in the previous chapter, are common, groups of twenty to fifty, called schools, are even more frequent. There are two kinds of schools, one comprised of mostly females, and the other, mostly males. The female school always has a single male swimming with them, called the schoolmaster; it is he who protects them from attack by whaling ships. A school of males is far more boisterous, and the most dangerous to encounter.

There are two essential laws in whaling:

1. A Fast-Fish is owned by the party to which it is held fast.
2. A Loose-Fish is open game.

A Fast-Fish is any whale that is connected by any controllable medium to a ship. A Loose-Fish is one with no such connection. Like on land, possession is nine-tenths of the law.

"What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World but Loose-Fish? What all men's minds and opinions but Loose-Fish? What is the principle of religious belief in them but Loose-Fish? What to the ostentatious smuggling verbalists are the thoughts of thinkers but Loose-Fish? What is the great globe itself but a Loose-Fish? And what are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too?" Chapter 89, pg. 336

There is a law in England that states the following: when a whale is captured off the coast of England, the head must go to the King, and the tail to the Queen. There is a story of a group of men capturing a whale off of Dover. Instead of profiting from their catch, the dead whale went to the Duke of the town as a Fast-Fish, and he sold it for his own profit.



Chapter 91 - 92

Chapter 91 - 92

The Pequod Meets the Rosebud/Ambergris

A few weeks after the previous chapter, the Pequod is sailing slowly when it comes across an awful smell; eventually, another ship is seen in the distance. This ship has two dead whales on it, but both of them were picked up after they were dead, hence the smell. One of them was killed by the men of the Pequod during the attack on the herd earlier, but the other died of seemingly natural causes. Whales like this are called "blasted whales," and whalers do not pick them up, usually, because they contain no oil; however, the one that died of natural causes might contain ambergris, a valuable substance that can be sold to druggists.

Stubb, seeing an opportunity, takes a boat over to the other ship, called the Rosebud--a French ship. He first asks if anyone speaks English; one man answers, and Stubb asks him if they've seen Moby-Dick. The man says no, and Stubb relays this information back to Ahab. He then asks why the Rosebud is wasting time with the two dead whales; the man says their captain is a fool, and refuses to believe that such whales have no oil. With Stubb's help, the man manages to convince the captain, who does not speak English, that the ship is in danger of catching the plague from the dead whales.

The Rosebud drops its corpses, and Stubb pulls the one he wants over to the Pequod. He excavates the skull, and finds six handfuls of ambergris.

Ambergris is a soft, waxy, spicy smelling substance that can be used in perfumes and precious candles, and it is found in the bowels of sick whales.

There is a charge made against whaling that whales smell bad, but this charge is a wholly false one.



Chapter 93 - 95

Chapter 93 - 95

The Castaway/The Squeeze of a Hand/The Cassock

Not all men go aboard the boats when a whale is spotted; some few stay behind. Pip, a young, joyous black man, highly intelligent, was one of these, due to a slightly fearful nature. However, Stubb's oarsman sprained his hand, so Pip was forced to take his place on the boat.

While pursuing a whale, a noise frightens Pip so badly that he jumps out of the boat, and gets caught in the whale line. This forces them to cut the line, and lose the whale, which makes no one happy; Stubb tells Pip never to jump from the boat again, because if he does, Stubb won't come back to pick him up.

Next time the boats are lowered, though, Pip jumps again, and Stubb holds true to his word. Pip is left alone in the ocean for a long period of time; Stubb had thought one of the boats behind him would pick Pip up, but the other boats had not seen Pip. Eventually the Pequod herself picks him up, but Pip has gone insane.

"The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul."
Chapter 93, pg. 349

The whale Stubb killed is taken aboard, and done with as is the usual. When Ishmael is squeezing lumps out of the sperm, he finds himself transported to a level of peace and happiness that he had never before known; he forgets about the oath of the crew, and can't help but be affectionate with the men around him.

The whale is cut apart into sections to prepare it.

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 12

The sailor takes a piece of the whale to make himself a protective apron to cover himself with while he minces the blubber.



Chapter 96 - 98

Chapter 96 - 98

The Try-Works/The Lamp/Stowing Down and Clearing Up

The try-works is a large furnace on the largest part of the deck, kept running by the remains of the whale, in order to melt its substance into oil. The smoke that issues from it is horrible to smell, and impossible to avoid.

In the forecabin of the ship, where the men who are off-duty sleep, a number of lights are kept lit; for while merchant sailors are not provided with much oil, whalers provide their own with a successful hunt, and light their own way.

After the oil is boiled down, it is sealed into casks, and put into storage. The oil cleans the deck as it is made; a ship, which three days ago was covered in blood and whale parts, can look completely clean. Also, it is not unusual for a cry of a new whale to go out moments after the last one has been completely taken care of.

"Oh! my friends this is man-killing! Yet this is life. For hardly have we mortals by long toilings extracted from this world's vast bulk its small but valuable sperm; and then, with weary patience, cleansed ourselves from its defilements, and learned to live here in clean tabernacles of the soul; hardly is this done, when- There she blows!- the ghost is spouted up, and away we sail to fight some other world, and go through young life's old routine again." Chapter 98, pg. 361

Topic Tracking: Nature of Whaling 13



Chapter 99 - 101

Chapter 99 - 101

The Doubloon/Leg and Arm/The Decanter

As mentioned before, Ahab would often take to pacing up and down the deck of ship; he also would look ever so often at the doubloon he had hammered into the mast of the ship. One morning, he stares at it, and speaks to it, finding in it signs of himself, and his interminable will.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 11

Starbuck observes him, and sees dark omens in the coin after Ahab has gone below. Stubb sees him, and tries to find portents in the coin, and is unable. He sees Pip approaching, and leaves, unable to deal with the boy's madness.

The Pequod meets another ship, the Samuel Enderby of London. Ahab asks if they have any news of Moby-Dick, and in response, the captain, Captain Boomer, shows that one of his arms is an ivory rod with a hammer head on the end. Ahab immediately lowers and boat and goes to other ship; because of his ivory leg, a blubber hook must be lowered over the side to lift him up. Once aboard, he shakes Boomer's ivory arm with his ivory leg.

Boomer tells that they saw Moby-Dick on the Line, last season. They had harpooned one whale when Moby-Dick came out of nowhere and freed the fast-fish. The captain tried to capture Moby-Dick instead; in the violence that followed, he was flung from his boat, receiving a vicious wound on his arm. The ship's doctor, a man called Banger, was unable to heal the wound, and his arm was removed.

Ahab reveals that he is hunting the White Whale; Banger observes that Ahab's temperature is exceedingly high, but Ahab roars at him, and gets the directions that he wants from Boomer. He returns to the Pequod.

The Samuel Enderby hailed from London, and was named after the late Samuel Enderby, a merchant of the city, and originator of the famous whaling house Enderby and Sons. Enderby and Sons fitted out the first English ships to go whaling. English whalers are known for their good cheer, with lots of good meat and beer in their storeholds.



Chapter 102 - 104

Chapter 102 - 104

A Bower in the Arsacides/Measurement of the Whale's Skeleton/The Fossil Whale

Ishmael wishes to set down a description of a whale's skeleton. He was able to study one from a baby Sperm Whale that was killed on a whaling expedition, and also from the remains of a full grown whale kept as a sort of church by a tribe in the Arsacides, whose ruler he befriended. He has the measurements tattooed onto his arm.

A Sperm Whale of the largest size is about eight-five to ninety feet in length, and weighs at least ninety tons. The whale loses about a fifth of its length in death, leaving its skeleton about seventy-two feet in length. The skull and the jaw comprise twenty feet, leaving fifty of plain backbone; attached to the backbone, for a little less than a third of its length, are the ribs. There are ten ribs on each side. The spine has forty or so vertebrae in it.

Fossil remains of the whale have been found in a wide variety of places, from the base of the Alps to the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, indicating that the whale has been on earth for a long, long time.



Chapter 105 - 107

Chapter 105 - 107

Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish?- Will He Perish?/Ahab's Leg/The Carpenter

It is wondered if the whale's size has decreased over the long course of his existence; however, it can be seen that whale's size has actually increased from certain ancient times, although it is possible that it's gotten smaller since the time of Adam. Some whalers have worried that the hunting of whales could lead to their extinction, but due to the enormous number of them, and the relatively small amount that are killed, this doesn't seem to be a problem.

The violent manner in which Captain Ahab departed from the Samuel Enderby and returned to the Pequod causes him to do some damage to his ivory leg. The pain in the leg seems connected to all his woes with the world.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 12

He calls the carpenter over, and orders him to make a new leg, out of the ivory that had been gotten on the trip.

The carpenter is proficient in a thousand different minor skills that are necessary to keep the Pequod running smoothly. He has a vice bench, on which he does all his work. He considers all things equally; he is generally stolid with occasional bursts of humor, but he is not the most intelligent of men. In fact, he functions almost as a tool. But there is something unique about him, in his unknowing devotion to duty.



Chapter 108 - 109

Chapter 108 - 109

Ahab and the Carpenter/Ahab and Starbuck in the Cabin

Ahab has the carpenter measure his leg for the new ivory; while he's doing so, Ahab goes into a rant about the fire of life, and Prometheus, which baffles the literal minded carpenter, who hands him a lantern.

"Oh, Life! Here I am, proud as a Greek god, and yet standing debtor to this block-head for a bone to stand on!" Chapter 108, pg. 397

The next morning, the men are pumping water when a large amount of oil comes up with the water. This means a leak has sprung in the caskets. Starbuck goes down below to tell Ahab, who he finds poring over charts of the area.

Ahab is unconcerned of the news, and when Starbuck tells him they need to stop and fix the leak, Ahab explodes at him in anger. Starbuck tries to reason with the captain, but Ahab points a pistol at him, declaring himself the god of the Pequod. Starbuck holds his ground a moment longer.

"Thou hast outraged, not insulted me, sir; but for that I ask thee not to beware of Starbuck; thou wouldst but laugh; but let Ahab beware of Ahab; beware of thyself, old man." Chapter 109, pg. 399

He goes back up top. But Ahab, affected by his words, soon follows. He apologizes to Starbuck, and has the ship halted.



Chapter 110 - 112

Chapter 110 - 112

Queequeg in his Coffin/The Pacific/The Blacksmith

The casks are removed from the hold, and it is discovered that the leak is buried deep inside; almost everything has to be brought up. While this is going on, Queequeg takes violently ill with fever; everyone is sure he will die. He asks that a coffin be made for him, like the canoe-coffins he heard about in Nantucket. The carpenter is called over, and he takes Queequeg's measurements, and builds him a coffin. The thing is brought over to Queequeg, who puts his harpoon and some biscuits inside, and then climbs in it himself. While he's lying there, Pip comes over and rants at him; he is soon led away. But now that he is in his coffin, Queequeg's health improves, and the fever breaks. When asked how he got better, he says that he thought of something he needed to finish on land. He keeps the coffin, and uses it as a sort of sea-chest.

The Pequod passes into the beauty of the Pacific Ocean. Ishmael wonders at it, but Ahab doesn't notice it at all, focused only on tracking Moby-Dick.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 13

Perth, the blacksmith, after bringing his forge out to work on the buckle of Ahab's new leg, stays on deck. Over the course of time, his sad story is learned. He was once a successful man, with a wife and family, but one night a burglar came into his house and stole everything he had. His wife and children soon died, and the blacksmith was called to sea.

Topic Tracking: Fate 14



Chapter 113 - 115

Chapter 113 - 115

The Forge/The Gilder/The Pequod Meets the Bachelor

Ahab approaches the blacksmith at night while he's working. He asks Perth if he can fix any seam or dent; when Perth says he can, Ahab shows him his brow:

"If thou could'st, blacksmith, glad enough would I lay my head upon thy anvil, and feel thy heaviest hammer between my eyes. Answer! Can'st not smoothe this seam?"

Chapter 113, pg. 408

Ahab has brought out a bag of hard iron, the strongest available, and with Perth's help, he fashions it into a harpoon. He has Queequeg, Tashtego, and Daggoo come over, and with their agreement, uses their blood to baptize the blade. A pole is found and a rope attached, and Ahab strides the deck with his new weapon.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 14

The Pequod goes further into Japanese cruising grounds, and the men are often after whales, with little success. When they are out on the water, the heaves of the waves have a calming affect, as if the sea was a rolling prairie.

A few weeks after Ahab made his weapon, the Pequod passes the Bachelor. The ship is full, and heading back home to Nantucket; the men aboard are joyous and dance over the deck. Ahab asks the captain if they've seen Moby-Dick; the captain says no, and invites Ahab aboard to enjoy the party. Ahab refuses.



Chapter 116 - 120

Chapter 116 - 120

The Dying Whale/The Whale Watch/The Quadrant/The Candles/The Deck Towards the End of the First Night Watch

The day after they met the Bachelor, the Pequod manages to kill four whales. Watching them, Ahab watches one die, and it seems to reveal wonders to him.

Of the four whales killed, one is too far away from the ship, and Ahab's boat spends a night watching. Ahab wakes up and speaks with Fedallah, who tells him that he, Ahab, will not die until he sees two hearses on the sea: the first, not made by mortal hands, and the second, made of wood from America. Fedallah predicts he will die before Ahab, and that rope will be what kills Ahab. Ahab takes all these as signs of his immortality, and laughs.

Topic Tracking: Fate 15

The Pequod approaches the Line, and Ahab gives orders to point the ship towards the equator. He uses a quadrant, a kind of viewer, to check his place with the sun, then curses the thing for not being able to tell him what will come of the future, and destroys it.

The Pequod is tossed into a Typhoon. Starbuck sees this as an ill omen, because the storm is directly in their path; they would not have hit it if Ahab had not steered this way after Moby-Dick. Lightning strikes down and lights the tops of the masts on fire. Ahab stands before them and calls for a blessing to hunt the whale.

Ahab's harpoon is lit on fire as well. Ahab blows out the blaze, but the crew shrinks away from him in fear.

Starbuck tells Ahab they need to take things down, but Ahab refuses, and orders him to lash everything in to ride out the storm.



Chapter 121 - 123

Chapter 121 - 123

Midnight.- The Forecastle Bulwarks/Midnight Aloft.- Thunder and Lightning/The Musket

Stubb and Flask are working on the ship. Stubb, ever since witnessing his encounter with the lightning, now believes Ahab invincible; Flask is not so quick to agree.

Tashtego is bothered by the lightning.

The storm abates, enough so that Starbuck and Stubb can cut down the damaged sails and replace them with new ones. The helmsman steers the ship back into its regular course, and they are met with a good wind, which cheers the crew.

Starbuck goes down below to tell Ahab the news, and finds the captain is sleeping. The loaded musket which Ahab had pointed at Starbuck earlier is hanging from the wall; Starbuck takes it down, and for a moment contemplates shooting Ahab with the gun, to save himself and the rest of the crew. Before he can make a decision, Ahab shouts out in his sleep at Moby-Dick.

Starbuck returns to the deck, and tells Stubb to go down below and wake the captain.



Chapter 124 - 126

Chapter 124 - 126

The Needle/The Log and Line/The Life-Buoy

The Pequod sails onward, and Ahab stands at her stern. By the compass, they are going east, but Ahab soon realizes that the sun is in the wrong place for them to be going east. The compasses were depolarized in the storm. Ahab takes his bearing from the sun, and changes the course. Then, in order to impress the men, he makes a new compass from some steel, and has the men look at it pointing in the right direction.

"One after another they peered in, for nothing but their own eyes could persuade such ignorance as theirs, and one after another they slunk away. In his fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his fatal pride." Chapter 124, pg. 432

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 15

One method of keeping direction, the log and the line, is generally discounted when a ship is sailing by compass correctly; this is true of the Pequod. However, since the compasses had broken, Ahab has two men come over and lift the log out to the sea. One of the men, the old Manxman, tells Ahab that he doesn't think the rope will hold. Ahab disagrees, and the log is thrown into the ocean. Only a few moments after, the rope holding the log snaps.

Ahab orders the carpenter to make a new log and line, and while he's doing this, Pip comes over and starts ranting. Ahab is touched by the boy's madness, and decides that from now on, Pip will stay with him in the cabin below. They depart.

The ship moves closer to the equator, meeting no other ships and riding over mild waves. One night, near the outskirts of the Equator, a mournful crying is heard that wakes almost the entire ship. Some of the men believe it to be mermaids, and the Manxman says that it is the voices of drowned sailors. Ahab does not hear it, but the next morning, when he hears of the story, he explains that it was just the noise of seals, sobbing over dead cubs. This does not put the crew at ease.

That morning, a man climbs up to the mast-head, and with a cry, falls from it into the sea. The life-buoy is dropped in after him, but no hand reaches to grab it; because the buoy is cracked and damaged, it sinks. Starbuck is ordered to make a new one, and because of a scarceness of supplies, Queequeg volunteers the use of his coffin.



Chapter 127 - 129

Chapter 127 - 129

The Deck/The Pequod Meets the Rachel/The Cabin

Ahab comes onto the deck and sees the carpenter working on the coffin. He mocks the man, who he says was once a leg-maker and now an undertaker, just as capricious as the gods. The carpenter once again is confused by his comments.

Topic Tracking: Religion 13

The next day, a large ship, the Rachel, is seen. Ahab asks if they've seen the White Whale, and the captain responds that they saw it yesterday. He asks if they've seen a whale-boat adrift. Ahab responds no, and prepares to sail over to the other ship, when the captain comes over to the Pequod first. He tells his story: yesterday, three of the whale boats of the Rachel had been pursuing a shoal of whales, when the white hump of Moby-Dick had come into view some distance away. The fourth whale-boat, held in reserve, was immediately lowered to give chase. The other boats could not see what exactly happened, but the fourth boat eventually disappeared; when the Rachel went looking for it, it could not be found. The captain is desperate to find this missing boat, and wants the Pequod to help in the search, for his twelve-year-old son is aboard.

Ahab refuses the request, and the captain returns to his ship; the two ships separate from each other, with the Rachel still sweeping back and forth in search of its lost ship.

Ahab makes to leave his cabin below-deck, and Pip tries to follow him. Ahab tells him to stay below; there is something in Pip's madness that is too curing for the old man. Pip is terrified of being left alone, and swears he will never desert Ahab, but Ahab forces him away.



Chapter 130 - 132

Chapter 130 - 132

The Hat/The Pequod Meets the Delight/The Symphony

Now that Ahab's goal is in sight, he paces the deck more relentlessly than before. He and Fedallah stand on guard all through the day and night, without saying a word to each other. If the crew casts frightened looks Ahab's way, he looks fearfully upon Fedallah. Days pass with out sight of Moby-Dick, and Ahab becomes more and more certain that he must see the whale himself. To this end, he fixes himself a rigging of sorts, and has Starbuck hoist him up the main mast. While he's up there, a hawk circles round his head and steals his hat.

The Pequod meets the Delight. They have seen Moby-Dick, and the whale has sunk one of their boats, killing five men. The captain swears that there is not a weapon on this earth that will kill Moby-Dick, but Ahab shows him his harpoon, and has the Pequod sail on.

It is a beautiful, clear day; the weather affects Ahab for a moment:

"Slowly crossing the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side, and watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to his gaze... But the lovely aromas in that enchanted air did at last seem to dispel, for a moment, the cankerous thing in his soul... the step-mother world, so long cruel- forbidding- now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to bless. From beneath his slouched hat Ahab dropped a tear into the sea; nor did all the Pacific contain such a wealth as that one wee drop." Chapter 132, pg. 450

Starbuck comes over to him, and Ahab talks about spending forty years on the sea. He tells Starbuck not to lower with him when Moby-Dick is spotted, to avoid his death. Starbuck tries to convince Ahab to turn around and head back for home, but Ahab refuses. He is driven by something he cannot understand.

Topic Tracking: Fate 16



Chapter 133

Chapter 133

The Chase- the First Day

That night, while Ahab is standing in his usual spot, he sniffs the air, and smells a whale; he changes the course to follow the smell.

The next day, all the men are roused to stand watch. Ahab is hoisted up the main mast, and is only two thirds of the way up when he sees Moby-Dick.

"There she blows!- there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby-Dick!" Chapter 133, pg. 454

Ahab shouts that the doubloon is his, and three boats (Starbuck's staying behind) are lowered. They chase after the whale, and it soon surfaces, only to attack the very center of Ahab's boat, biting his way through it. Ahab strikes at the jaws, and the boat is destroyed, leaving Ahab to float alone in the ocean. The Pequod sails up behind and sends Moby-Dick away, giving Ahab time to get aboard Stubb's boat. No men have been killed. They reboard the Pequod in order to make better chase, but the whale escapes them. Ahab tells the crew that the man to spot Moby-Dick on the day he is killed will receive the doubloon; and if Ahab himself spots the whale, ten times the amount of the doubloon will be divided among the crew.



Chapter 134

Chapter 134

The Chase- the Second Day

At day-break, the mast-heads are manned again, but for a time, nothing is seen. The ship sails in the direction Moby-Dick was seen swimming; this act of following a whale is not unprecedented in whale fishery.

A man calls out Moby-Dick and the crew, their fears gone and replaced by frenzy, jump to, but the man mistook some other thing for a whale spout. Ahab is again hoisted up the main mast, and this time Moby-Dick breaches, jumping boldly out of the water so that his entire body can be seen for a moment.

Boats are lowered, and this time Moby-Dick attacks them. They manage to stab at him a few times, but the tangle of the rope and harness forces Ahab to cut him from his boat. Moby-Dick manages to smash Stubb and Flask's boats together, and flips over Ahab's boat. Then he swims away.

The Pequod comes and picks up the men. Ahab's ivory leg has been broken into a splinter, and he must now lean on Starbuck to stand. He curses the infirmity of his body. When the men are all accounted for, it seems that Fedallah is missing; Ahab remembers the prophecy he made, and is afraid. He has the carpenter make him a new leg from the keel of one of the wrecked boats.



Chapter 135

Chapter 135

The Chase- the Third Day

Another day dawns, and the chase continues. Once again, it is Ahab who spots the whale, and the boats are lowered. While they are riding out, sharks attack their oars. Moby-Dick sounds, and while he is under, Ahab calls out his defiance.

Moby-Dick resurfaces, and destroys two of the boats, leaving Ahab's unharmed. While he is up, Fedallah's dead body is seen lashed to the whale by lines and harpoons, and Ahab realizes that this is the first hearse he must see: a hearse made by no hands of man. He orders the men from the destroyed boats to go back to the Pequod, and has his men row on. Moby-Dick is trying to escape, but Ahab will not let go.

Topic Tracking: Vengeance 16

The whale slows, and the boat pulls up alongside him, but Moby-Dick manages to dodge them again; this time, he charges the Pequod, and with one hit from his head, breaks the hull. The ship sinks, and Ahab recognizes this as his second hearse: made of wood from America. He stands up, and hurls his harpoon at Moby-Dick.

"Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake, I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! Thus, I give up the spear!" Chapter 135, pg. 477

The line runs foul; when Ahab bends to clear it, it catches him round the neck and jerks him into the sea. He is killed by hemp.

The whale-boat is pulled into the whirlpool made by the sinking Pequod. A hawk flies down to peck at the last thing above water, the top of the main-mast. The hawk gets caught in the flag of the ship, and Tashtego's arm and hammer, and is pulled to its death along with the rest of the crew.

Epilogue

Ishmael is the only man left alive from the crew. He had taken Fedallah's place on Ahab's boat, and was tossed aside from the others. After the ship sank, the life-buoy (Queequeg's coffin), popped up onto the surface, and Ishmael grabbed hold of it. Ignored by the sharks, and on his second day afloat, Ismael is picked up and rescued by the Rachel.