**Moby Dick**

**Context**

Herman Melville (1819-1891) was a popular writer of sea narratives before he wrote Moby-Dick (1851). What was to become his best known novel, The Whale; or Moby-Dick, received good reviews when it appeared in England, but the first American edition, coming out a month later in New York, received mixed reviews. It was not a financial success and bafied American critics until the 20th century, when it began to be considered a classic.

Melville was not recognized as a genius in his time; his most famous works today{Moby-Dick, short stories like "Benito Cereno," and Billy Budd{were not widely read or heralded in the 19th century.

Melville's America was a tumultuous place. In the North, rapid industrialization was changing social patterns and giving rise to new wealth. In the South, the cotton interest was trying to hold onto the system of black slavery.

America was stretching westward, and encountering Native American tribes, as travel by train, road, sea, and canal become easier than before. Politicians appealed to the masses as the idea of "democracy" (versus republicanism) took hold. Nationalism was high in the early nineteenth century, but as national interconnectedness became more feasible, the deep divisions in society began to grow. Soon, sectionalism, racism, economic self-interest, and bitter political struggle would culminate in the Civil War.

Against this backdrop, Melville sailed off on his first whaling voyage in 1841. This experience became the material for his first book, Typee (1846), a narrative that capitalized on exotic titillation about natives in the Marquesas Islands. Becoming well known for his earthy, rowdy stories of faraway places, he quickly followed his initial success with Omoo (1847) and Mardi (1849).

But after Mardi, Melville's writing career started to level off. Though Melville had once thought he could be a professional writer, Moby-Dicks poor reviews meant that Melville would never be able to support himself by writing alone. Melville was always firmly middle-class, though his personas in books always seemed working-class. He had a distinguished pedigree: some of his ancestors were Scottish and Dutch settlers of New York who played leading roles in the American Revolution and commercial development. But Melville often felt like the "savage" in the family, which may have explained why he was not afraid to tackle such risky topics as slave revolt (in "Benito Cereno") or the life-sucking potential of offce jobs ("Bartleby the Scrivener").

Throughout his life, Melville was an avid reader. Much of his information for Moby-Dick comes from printed sources. The number of refer

ences to difierent texts (intertextuality) in Moby-Dick testifies to the importance of books in Melville's life. In particular, he admired Nathaniel Hawthorne, whom he befriended in 1850 and to whom Melville dedicated the novel. Melville admired Hawthorne's willingness to dive to deep psychological depths and gothic grimness, traits for which he would also be praised.

The works of Shakespeare and stories in the Bible (especially the Old Testament) also in uenced Moby-Dick. Moreover, Melville's novel was certainly not the first book on whaling. Whaling narratives were extremely popular in the 19th century. In particular, Melville relied on the encyclopedic Natural History of the Sperm Whale by Thomas Beale and the narrative Etchings of a Whaling Cruise by J. Ross Browne. He also used information from a volume by William Scoresby, but mostly to ridicule Scoresby's pompous inaccuracy. One final note: many editions of Moby-Dick have been printed. Check your edition before using this guide, because "abridged" or "edited" versions may be difierent.

Characters

Ishmael { Ishmael is the narrator of the story, but not really the center of it. He has no experience with whaling when he signs on and he is often comically extravagant in his storytelling. Ishmael bears the same name as a famous castaway in the Bible.

Ahab { The egomaniacal captain of the whalingship Pequod; his leg was taken off by Moby Dick, the white whale. He searches frantically for the whale, seeking revenge, and forces his crew to join him in the pursuit.

Starbuck { This native of Nantucket is the first mate of the Pequod. Starbuck questions his commander's judgment, first in private and later in public.

Queequeg { Starbuck's stellar harpooner and Ishmael's best friend, Queequeg was once a prince from a South Sea island who wanted to have a worldly adventure. Queequeg is a composite character, with an identity that is part African, Polynesian, Islamic, Christian, and Native American.

Stubb { This native of Cape Cod is the second mate of the Pequod and always has a bit of mischievous good humor.

Moby Dick { The great white sperm whale; an infamous and dangerous threat to seamen like Ahab and his crew.

Tashtego { Stubb's harpooneer, Tashtego is a Gay Head Indian from Martha's Vineyard.

Flask { This native of Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard is the third mate of the Pequod. Short and stocky, he has a confrontational attitude and no reverence for anything.

Daggoo { Flask's harpooneer, Daggoo is a very big, dark-skinned, imperial-looking man from Africa.

Pip { Either from Connecticut or Alabama (there is a discrepancy), Pip used to play the tambourine and take care of the ship. After being left to oat on the sea alone for a short period of time, he becomes mystically wise{or possibly loses his mind.

Fedallah { Most of the crew doesn't know until the first whale chase that Ahab has brought on board this strange "oriental" old man who is a Parsee (Persian fire-worshipper). Fedallah has a very striking appearance: around his head is a turban made from his own hair, and he wears a black Chinese jacket and pants. Like Queequeg, Fedallah's character is also a composite of Middle Eastern and East Asian traits.

Peleg { This well-to-do retired whaleman of Nantucket is one of the largest owners of the Pequod who, with Captain Bildad, takes care of hiring the crew. When the two are negotiating wages for Ishmael and Queequeg, Peleg plays the generous one. He is a Quaker.

Bildad { Also a well-to-do Quaker ex-whaleman from Nantucket who owns a large share of the Pequod, Bildad is (or pretends to be) crustier than Peleg in negotiations over wages.

Father Mapple { The preacher in the New Bedford Whaleman's Chapel. He delivers a sermon on Jonah and the whale.

Captain Boomer { Boomer is the jovial captain of the English whalingship Samuel Enderby; his arm was taken off by Moby Dick

Introduction

Summary

These prefatory sections establish the groundwork for a new book about whaling. Melville quotes from a variety of sources, revered, famous, and obscure, that may directly address whaling or only mention a whale in passing. The quotations include short passages from the Bible, Shakespeare, John Milton's epic poem Paradise Lost (1667), other well-known poems, dictionaries, whaling and travel narratives, histories, and songs. The Etymology section, looking at the derivations of "whale," is compiled by a "late consumptive usher to a grammar school," and the Extracts section, a selection of short quotations describing whales or whaling, by a "sub-sub-librarian."

Melville's humor comes through in these sections, both in the way he pokes fun at the "poor devil of a Sub-Sub" and mentions even the tiniest reference to a whale in these literary works.

Chapters 1-9

Summary

The story begins with one of the most famous opening lines in literary history: "Call me Ishmael." Whatever Ishmael's "real" name, his adopted name signals his identification with the Biblical outcast from the Book of Genesis.

He explains that he went to sea because he was feeling a "damp, drizzly November in [his] soul" and wanted some worldly adventure. In the mood for old-fashioned whaling, Ishmael heads to New Bedford, the current center of whaling, to catch a ferry to Nantucket, the previous center of whaling.

After wandering through the black streets of New Bedford, he finally stumbles upon The Spouter-Inn, owned by Peter Coffn. First passing by a large, somewhat inscrutable oil painting and a collection of "monstrous clubs and spears," Ishmael walks into a room filled with "a wild set of mariners." Because the inn is nearly full, Ishmael learns that he will have to share a room with "a dark complexioned" harpooner named Queequeg. At first, Ishmael decides that he would rather sleep on a bench than share a bed with some strange, possibly dangerous man. But, discovering the bench to be too uncomfortable, he decides to put up with the unknown harpooner, who, Coffn assures him, is perfectly fine because "he pays reg'lar." Still, Ishmael is worried since Coffn tells him that the harpooner has recently arrived from the South Sea and peddles shrunken heads. When the Queequeg finally returns, the frightened Ishmael watches Queequeg from the bed, noting with a little horror the harpooner's tattoos, tomahawk/pipe, and dark-colored idol.

When Queequeg finally discovers Ishmael in his bed, he ourishes the tomahawk as Ishmael shouts for the owner. After Coffn explains the situation, they settle in for the night and, when they wake up, Queequeg's arm is affectionately thrown over Ishmael. Ishmael is sorry for his prejudices against the "cannibal," finding Queequeg quite civilized, and they become fast, close friends.

The chapters called The Street, The Chapel, The Pulpit, and The Sermon establish the atmosphere in which Ishmael sets out on his whaling mission.

Because of its maritime industry, New Bedford is a cosmopolitan town, full of difierent sorts of people (Lascars, Malays, Feegeeans, Tongatabooans, Yankees, and green Vermonters). In this town is the Whaleman's Chapel, where the walls are inscribed with memorials to sailors lost at sea and the pulpit is like a ship's bow. The preacher in this chapel, Father Mapple, is a favorite among whalemen because of his sincerity and sanctity. Once a sailor and harpooner, Mapple now delivers sermons. His theme for this Sunday: Jonah, the story of the prophet swallowed by "a great fish." (Today we talk about "Jonah and the Whale.") Mapple preaches a story about man's sin, willful disobedience of the command of God, and ight from Him. But, says Mapple, the story also speaks to him personally as a command "To preach the Truth in the face of Falsehood!" with a confidence born from knowing God's will.

Chapters 10-21

Summary

In these chapters we learn more about the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg. Upon third consideration, Ishmael develops a great respect for his new friend. Although still a "savage," Queequeg becomes, in Ishmael's mind, "George Washington cannibalistically developed." Furthermore, after having intimate chats with him in bed, Ishmael admires Queequeg's sincerity and lack of Christian "hollow courtesies." Quick friends, they are "married" after a social smoke. The chapter called Biographical gives more information on Queequeg's past, detailing the harpooner's life as a son of a High Chief or King of Kokovoko. Intent on seeing the world, he paddled his way to a departing ship and persisted so stubbornly that they finally allowed him to stow away as a whaleman. Queequeg can never go back because his interaction with Christianity has made him unfit to ascend his homeland's "pure and undefiled throne" and so, says Ishmael, "that barbed iron [a harpoon] was in lieu of a sceptre now."

Together, they set off with a wheelbarrow full of their things for Nantucket. On the packet over to Nantucket, a bumpkin mimics Queequeg.Queequeg ips him around to punish him, and is subsequently scolded by the captain. But when the bumpkin is swept overboard as the ship has technical dificulties, Queequeg takes charge of the ropes to secure the boat and then dives into the water to save the man overboard. This action wins everyone's respect.

Melville then writes a bit about Nantucket's history, about the "red-men"who first settled there, its ecology, its dependence on the sea for livelihood.

When the two companions arrive, they have a pot of the best chowder at the Try Pots. Charged by Yojo (Queequeg's wooden idol) to seek a ship for the two of them, Ishmael comes upon the Pequod, a ship "with an old fashioned claw-footed look about her" and "apparelled like any barbaric Ethiopian emperor, his neck heavy with pendants of polished ivory." But the Pequod is not just exotic to Ishmael; he also calls it a "cannibal of a craft" because it is bejeweled with whale parts. On board, he makes a deal with Peleg and Bildad, the Quaker owners of the ship, characterized as conniving cheapskates and bitter taskmasters. Evaluating Ishmael for his lay (portion of the ship's proffts, a whaleman's wage), Peleg finally gives him the 300th lay. (This, Bildad says, is "generous.") At this time, Ishmael also learns that the ship's captain is Ahab, named after a wicked and punished Biblical king. Although Ahab has seemed a little moody since he lost his leg to the white whale Moby Dick, Bildad and Peleg believe in his competence. Ishmael does not meet the captain in person until much later.

Returning to the inn, Ishmael allows Queequeg a day for his "Ramadan" ceremonies and then becomes worried when his friend does not answer the door in the evening. When the panicking Ishmael finally gets the door open, he finds Queequeg deep in meditation. The next day, they return to the Pequod to sign Queequeg up. Though the owners object at first to Queequeg's paganism, the Kokovokan impresses them with his skill by hitting a spot of tar on a mast with a harpoon. They give him the 90th lay, "more than ever was given a harpooneer yet out of Nantucket." Although Bildad still tries to convert Queequeg, Peleg tells him to give up. "Pious harpooneers never make good voyagers { it takes the shark out of 'em; no harpooneer is worth a straw who aint pretty sharkish."

Just after signing the papers, the two run into a man named Elijah (a prophet, or just some frightening stranger) who hints to them about the peril of signing aboard Ahab's ship. They disregard him. For several days, there is preparation for the dangerous voyage. When they are near the ship, Ishmael thinks that he sees some "shadows" boarding the ship, but then dismisses the idea. Elijah warns them again just before they board.

Chapters 22-31

Summary

At Christmas, the ship finally heaves off from the port and Ishmael gets his first taste of the rigors of whaling life. As the boat sails away from civilization, Bulkington, a noble sailor that Ishmael saw at the Coffn inn, appears on the Pequod's decks, and makes Ishmael wax sentimental about the heroism in sailing into the deeps.

In the chapter called The Advocate, Ishmael defends the whaling profession in a series of arguments and responses. Whaling is a heroic business, he says, that is economically crucial (for the oil) and has resulted in geographical discovery. He finds the utmost dignity in whaling: a subject of good genealogy, worthy enough for Biblical writers and also educational. These, he says, are facts. He can't praise sperm whaling enough and even suggests that sperm oil has been used to anoint kings because it is the best, purest, and sweetest.

In the chapter called Knights and Squires, we meet the mates and their lieutenants. The first mate, Starbuck, is a pragmatic, reliable Nantucketer. Speaking about Starbuck leads Ishmael to carry on about the working man and democratic equality. The pipe-smoking second mate Stubb, a native of Cape Cod, is always cool under pressure and has "impious good humor."

Third mate Flask, a native of Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard, is a short, stocky fellow with a confrontational attitude and no reverence for the dignity of the whale. He is nicknamed "King-Post" because he resembles the short, square timber known by that name in Arctic whalers. Already introduced, Queequeg is Starbuck's harpooner. Stubb's "squire" is Tashtego, "an unmixed Indian from Gay Head" (Martha's Vineyard). Flask's harpooner is Daggoo, "a gigantic, coal-black negro-savage" from Africa with an imperial bearing.

The rest of the crew is also mostly international. But, says Ishmael, all these "Isolatoes" are "federated along one keel" and unified by accompanying Ahab. Ishmael also makes small mention of Pip, a poor Alabama boy who beats a tambourine on ship.

Ahab finally appears on deck and Ishmael observes closely. He sees Ahab as a very strong, willful figure, though his encounter with the whale has scarred him. Certainly, Ahab seems a bit psychologically troubled. Ahab's relationship to others on the boat is one of total dictatorship. When Stubb complains about Ahab's pacing, Ahab calls him a dog and advances on him.

Stubb retreats. The next morning, Stubb wakes up and explains to Flask that he had a dream that Ahab kicked him with his ivory leg. (The title of this chapter, Queen Mab, refers to Shakespeare's tragedy Romeo and Juliet, in which the character Mercutio talks about weird dreams.)

Chapters 32-40

"Cetology," as Ishmael explains, is "the science of whales." In the Cetology chapter and subsequent cetology- like chapters in the book, Ishmael tries to dissect whales scientifically. After including some quotations from previous writers on the whale, Ishmael says he here attempts a "draught" (draft) of a whale classification system that others can revise. He divides the whales into books and chapters (like today's Linnaean system that includes genus and species). His first subject is the sperm whale. At the end of the chapter, he pronounces it a "drought of a draught." The Specksynder is another cetology-like chapter in that it tries to dissect the whaling industry. Beginning with trivia about the changing role of the specksynder (literally, "fat-cutter"), who used to be chief harpooneer and captain, Ishmael moves on to a discussion of leadership styles, particularly that of royal or imperial leaders.

The chapter called The Cabin-Table returns to the plot, showing the ship's offcers at dinner. This is a rigid afiair over which Ahab presides. After the offcers finish, the table is re-laid for the harpooneers. Then Ishmael discusses his first post on the mast-head watching for whales. He writes a history of mast-heads and their present role on a whaling ship. Ishmael, who can rarely stick only to one subject or one level of thinking, discusses metaphorical meanings of what he sees. Then, in the chapter called The Quarter-Deck, he returns to narrative plot, dramatizing Ahab's first offcial appearance before the men. Ahab's call and response tests the crew, checking whether they know what to do, and unites them under his leadership.

Presenting a Spanish gold doubloon, he proclaims. "Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; whosoever of ye raises me that while-headed whale, with three holes punctured in his starboard uke - look ye, whosoever of ye raises that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!" The men cheer. Ahab then confesses, in response to Starbuck's query, that it was indeed this white whale Moby Dick who took off his leg, and announces his quest to hunt him down. The men shout together that they will hunt with Ahab, though Starbuck protests.

Ahab then begins a ritual that binds the crew together. He fills a cup with alcohol and everyone on the ship drinks from that agon. Telling the harpooners to cross their lances before him, Ahab grasps the weapons and anoints Queequeg, Tashtego, and Daggoo "my three pagan kinsmen there -yon three most honorable gentlemen and noble men." He then makes them take the iron off of the harpoons to use as drinking goblets. They all drink together while Ahab proclaims, "God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby Dick to his death!"

Another chapter beginning with a stage direction, Sunset is a melancholy monologue by Ahab. He says that everyone thinks he is mad and he agrees somewhat. He self- consciously calls himself "demoniac" and "madness maddened." Even though he seems to be the one orchestrating events, he does not feel in control: "The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run." Dusk is Starbuck's monologue. Though he feels that it will all come out badly, he feels inextricably bound to Ahab.

When he hears the revelry coming from the crew's forecastle, he laments the whole, doomed voyage. First Night-Watch is Stubb's monologue, giving another perspective on the voyage. Midnight, Forecastle is devoted to the jolly men who take turns showing off and singing together. They get into a fight when the Spanish Sailor makes fun of Daggoo. The onset of a storm, however, stops their fighting and makes them tend to the ship.

Chapters 41-47

Summary

Ishmael is meditative again, starting with a discussion of the white whale's history. Rumors about Moby Dick are often out of control, he says, because whale fishermen "are by all odds the most directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing in the sea; face to face they not only eye its greatest marvels, but, hand to jaw, give battle to them." It is easy to attach metaphorical meaning or make up legend about dangerously intense, life-threatening experiences. Ishmael is skeptical, though, about assertions that Moby Dick is immortal. He admits that there is a singular whale called Moby Dick who is distinguished by his "peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high, pyramidical white hump" and that this whale is known to have destroyed boats in a way that seems "intelligent." No wonder Ahab hates the white whale, says Ishmael, since it does seem that Moby Dick did it out of spite.

Intertwined with Moby Dick's history is Ahab's personal history. When the white whale took off Ahab's leg, the whale became to Ahab "the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung."

Ahab's reaction was to magnify the symbolism of the whale: the whale didn't just take off his leg, but represents everything that he hates and everything that torments him. Ahab went crazy on the trip home, says Ishmael, though he tried to appear sane.

The Whiteness of the Whale turns from what Moby Dick means to Ahab, to what it means to Ishmael. Above all, he says, it is the whiteness of the whale that appalls him. (Note Ishmael's pun{the root of the word "appall" literally means to turn white.) Ishmael begins his cross-cultural discussion of "whiteness" by saying how much it has been idealized as virtue or nobility.

To him, however, the color white only multiplies terror when it is attached with any object "terrible" in itself.

After a short dramatic scene (Hark!) where the sailors say to each other that they think there may be something or someone in the after-hold, Ishmael returns to an examination of Ahab in The Chart. Because Ahab believes that his skill with charts will help him locate Moby Dick, Ishmael discusses how one might scientifically track a whale. In The Afidavit, Ishmael explains in organized form "the natural verity of the main points of this afiair." He realizes that this story seems preposterous in many ways and wants to convince the reader that his story is real by listing the "true" bases for this story in quasi-outline form (first, personal experiences, then tales of whale fishermen or collective memory, and finally books). He then looks at why people may not believe these stories. Perhaps readers haven't heard about the perils or vivid adventures in the whaling industry, he says. Or maybe they do not understand the immensity of the whale. He asks that the audience use "human reasoning" when judging his story.

The chapter called Surmises returns the focus to Ahab, considering how the captain will accomplish his revenge. Because Ahab must use men as his tools, Ahab has to be very careful. How can he motivate them? Ahab can appeal to their hearts, but also he knows that cash will keep them going.

Ahab further knows that he has to watch that he does not leave himself open to charges of "usurpation." That is, he has to follow standard operating procedure, lest he give his offcers reason to overrule him.

The Mat-Maker returns to the plot. Ishmael describes slow, dreamy atmosphere on the ship when they are not after a whale. He and Queequeg are making a sword-mat, and, in a famous passage, likens their weaving to work on "the Loom of Time." (The threads of the warp are fixed like necessity.

Man has limited free will: he can interweave his own woof crossthreads into this fixed structure. When Queequeg's sword hits the loom and alters the overall pattern, Ishmael calls this chance.) What jolts him out of his reverie is Tashtego's call for a whale. Suddenly, everyone is busied in preparations for the whale hunt. Just as they are about to push off in boats, "five dusky phantoms" emerge around Ahab.

Chapters 48-54

Summary

These chapters return us to the action of Moby-Dick. We meet Fedallah for the first time, described as a dark, sinister figure with a Chinese jacket and turban made from coiling his own hair around his head. We also meet for the first time the "tiger-yellow ... natives of the Manillas" (Ahab's boat crew) who were hiding in the hold of the Pequod. The other crews are staring at the newly discovered shipmates, but Flask tells them to continue doing their jobs{that is, to concentrate on hunting the whale.

The Pequod's first lowering after the whale is not very successful. Queequeg manages to get a dart in the whale but the animal overturns the boat.

The men are nearly crushed by the ship as it passes looking for them, because a squall has put a mist over everything.

The chapter called The Hyena functions as a mooring of sorts{a self-conscious look back that puts everything in perspective. In this chapter, Ishmael talks about laughing at things, what a hyena is known for. Finding out that such dangerous conditions are typical, Ishmael asks Queequeg to help him make his will.

Ishmael then comments on Ahab's personal crew. Ahab's decision to have his own boat and crew, says Ishmael, is not a typical practice in the whaling industry. But however strange, "in a whaler, wonders soon wane" because there are so many unconventional sights in a whaler: the sheer variety of people, the strange ports of call, and the distance and disconnectedness of the ships themselves from land-based, conventional society. But even though whalemen are not easily awe-struck, Ishmael does say "that hair- turbaned Fedallah remained a mufied mystery to the last." He is "such a creature as civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see in their dreams, and that but dimly."

Ishmael then focuses on Fedallah. On the masthead one night, the Parsee thinks he sees a whale spouting. The whole ship then tries to follow it, but the whale is not seen again until some days later. Ishmael calls it a "spirit-spout" because it seems to be a phantom leading them on. Some think it might be Moby Dick leading the ship on toward its destruction. The ship sails around the Cape of Good Hope (Africa), a particularly treacherous passage.

Through it all, Ahab commands the deck robustly and even when he is down in the cabin, he keeps his eye on the cabin-compass that tells him where the ship is going.

They soon see a ship called "The Goney," or Albatross, a vessel with a "spectral appearance" that is a long way from home. Of course, Ahab asks them as they pass by, "Have ye seen the White Whale?" While the other captain is trying to respond, a gust of wind blows the trumpet from his mouth.

Their wakes cross as both ships continue on. The Pequod continues its way around the world, Ishmael worries that this is dangerous{they might just be going on in mazes or will all be "[over]whelmed." Ishmael then explains that these two ships did not have a "gam." A gam, according to Ishmael, is "a social meeting of two (or more) Whale-ships, generally on a cruising-ground; when, after exchanging hails, they exchange visits by boats' crews: the two captains remaining, for the time, on board of one ship, and the two chief mates on the other."

The Town-Ho's Story is a story within the larger story of Moby-Dick. During a gam with the ship Town-Ho (which they encounter after the Goney), a white sailor on the Town-Ho tells this story to Tashtego who shares it with all the men in the forecastle. Ishmael announces at the beginning of the chapter that he is telling us what he once told it to some friends in Lima. The basic story concerns Radney, a mate from Martha's Vineyard, and Steelkilt, a sailor from Bufialo who have a con ict on board the Town-Ho, a sperm whaler from Nantucket. Steelkit rebels against Radney's authority, assaults the mate (after the mate attacks him), and starts a mutiny. The mutineers are punished and released, but Steelkilt wants revenge. The ship runs into Moby Dick and, in the process of trying to harpoon him, Radney falls out of the boat. Moby Dick snatches him in his jaws. Ishmael's listeners don't necessarily believe him, but he swears on a copy of the Four Gospels that he is telling the truth.

Chapters 55-65

Summary

Here, Melville describes poor representations of whales. To a whaleman who has actually seen whales, many historical, mythological, and scientific sources seem inaccurate. As a result, says Ishmael, "you must needs conclude that the great Leviathan is the one creature in the world which must remain unpainted to the last." The only solution Ishmael sees is to go whaling yourself. The next chapter tries to find some acceptable depictions. To Ishmael's taste the only things that are anywhere close are two large French engravings from a Garneray painting that show the Sperm and Right Whales in action. The following chapter tries to expand the discussion of representations of whales to include whales in various media. Ishmael then talks about how whalemen have been known to make scrimshaw. Whalemen who deal with whales so much start seeing whales everywhere, which is why he mentions stars.

The Brit chapter brings back the encyclopedic cetology chapter type. Brit is a minute yellow substance upon which the Right Whale largely feeds. Ishmael uses the chapter as a platform on which to talk about contradictory views of the sea (frightening "universal cannibalism") and the earth ("green, gentle, and most docile" land). Past the field of Brit in the water, Daggoo thinks that he sights Moby Dick. It is a false alarm, however, and it is only a giant squid.

In preparation for a later scene, says Ishmael, he will explain the whaleline. Made of hemp, this rope is connected to the harpoon at one end and free at the other so that it can be tied to other boats' lines. Because it whizzes out when a whale is darted, it is dangerous for the men in the boat.

We then return to more action, where Stubb kills a black sperm whale. Ishmael vigorously describes the gore to us. In The Dart, Ishmael backtracks, describing what a harpooneer does and how he uses a dart. Freely giving his opinion on whaling technique, Ishmael says that mates should throw both the dart and the lance because the harpooneer should be fresh, not tired from rowing. Then, to explain the crotch mentioned in the previous chapter, Ishmael backtracks again to describe the notched stick that furnishes a rest for the wooden part of the harpoon.

Ishmael then returns to the plot: Stubb wants to eat the freshly killed whale, although most whalemen do not. (Usually the only creatures that eat whale meat are sharks.) He calls on the black cook Fleece to make his supper and make the sharks stop eating the whale esh. In a sermon to the sharks, the cook tells them that they ought to be more civilized. Stubb and the cook get into a folksy religious discussion. He then likens Stubb to a shark. Ishmael then feels that he must describe what whale is like as a dish. Doing a historical survey of whale-as-dish, Ishmael remarks that no one except for Stubb and the "Esquimaux" accept it now. Deterrents include the exceedingly rich quality of the meat and its prodigious quantities.

Furthermore, it seems wrong because hunting the whale makes the meat a "noble dish" and one has to eat the meat by the whale's own light. But perhaps this blasphemy isn't so rare, says Ishmael, since the readers probably eat beef with a knife made from the bone of oxen or pick their teeth after eating goose with a goose feather.

Chapters 66-73

Summary

These chapters get into the minutiae of whaling technique. The Shark Massacre describes how sharks often swarm around dead whale carcasses, forcing whalemen to poke them with spades or kill them. Even when sharks are dead, they are often still dangerous: once, when Queequeg brought one on deck for its skin, it nearly took his hand off. There's no sacred Sabbath in whaling, since the gory business of cutting in occurs whenever there is a kill. Cutting in involves inserting a hook in the whale's blubber and peeling the blubber off as one might peel off an orange rind in one strip. Discussing the whale's blubber, Ishmael realizes that it is dificult to determine exactly what the whale's skin is. There is something thin and isinglass-like, but that's only the skin of the skin. If we decide that the blubber of the whale (the long pieces of which are called "blanket-pieces") is the skin, we are still missing something since blubber only accounts for 3/4 of the weight of the blanket-pieces. After cutting in, the whale is then released for its "funeral" in which the "mourners" are vultures and sharks. The frightful white carcass oats away and a "vengeful ghost" hovers over it, deterring other ships from going near it.

Ishmael backtracks in The Sphynx, saying that before whalers let a carcass go, they behead it in a "scientific anatomical feat." Ahab talks to this head, asking it to tell him of the horrors that it has seen. But Ahab knows that it doesn't speak and laments its inability to speak: too many horrors are beyond utterance.

The chapter about the Jeroboam (a ship carrying some epidemic) also backtracks, referring back to a story Stubb heard during the gam with the Town-Ho. A man, who had been a prophet among the Shakers in New York, proclaimed himself the archangel Gabriel on the ship and mesmerized the crew. Captain Mayhew wanted to get rid of him at the next port, but the crew threatened desertion. And the sailors aboard the Pequod now see this very Gabriel in front of them. When Captain Mayhew is telling Ahab a story about the White Whale, Gabriel keeps interrupting. According to Mayhew, the Jeroboam first heard about the existence of Moby Dick when they were speaking to another ship. Gabriel then warned against killing it, calling it the Shaker God incarnated. They ran into it about a year afterwards and the ship's leaders decided to hunt it. As the mate was standing in the ship to throw his lance, the whale ipped the mate into the air and tossed him into the sea. Nothing was harmed except for the mate, who drowned. Gabriel, the entire time, had been on the mast-head and said, basically, "I told you so." When Ahab confirms that he intends to hunt the white whale still, Gabriel points to him, saying, "Think, think of the blasphemer - dead, and down there! - beware of the blasphemer's end!" Ahab then realizes that the Pequod is carrying a letter for the dead mate and tries to hand it over to the captain on the end of a cutting-spade pole. Somehow, Gabriel gets a hold of it, impales it on the boat-knife, and sends it back to Ahab's feet as the Jeroboam pulls away.

Ishmael backtracks again in The Monkey-Rope to explain how Queequeg inserts the blubber hook. Ishmael, as Queequeg's bowsman, ties the monkey-rope around his waist as Queequeg is on the whale's oating body trying to attach the hook. (In a footnote, we learn that only on the Pequod were the monkey and this holder actually tied together, an improvement introduced by Stubb.) While Ishmael holds him, Tashtego and Daggoo are also ourishing their whale-spades to keep the sharks away. When Dough-Boy, the steward, offers Queequeg some tepid ginger and water, the mates frown at the in uence of pesky Temperance activists and make the steward bring him alcohol.

Meanwhile, as the Pequod oats along, they spot a right whale. After killing him, Stubb asks Flask what Ahab might want with this "lump of foul lard." Flask responds that Fedallah says that a whaler with a Sperm Whale's head on her starboard side and a Right Whale's head on her larboard will never afterwards capsize. They then get into a discussion in which both of them confess that they do not like Fedallah and think of him as "the devil in disguise." In this instance and always, Fedallah watches and stands in Ahab's shadow. Ishmael notes that the Parsee's shadow seemed to blend with and lengthen Ahab's.

Chapters 74-81

Summary

The paired chapters (74 and 75) do an anatomic comparison of the sperm whale's head and the right whale's head. In short, the sperm whale has a great well of sperm, ivory teeth, long lower jaw, and one external spout-hole; the right whale has bones shaped like Venetian blinds in his mouth, huge lower lip, a tongue, and one external spout- hole. Ishmael calls the right whale stoic and the sperm "platonian." The Battering-Ram discusses the blunt, large, wall-like part of the head that seems to be just a "wad." In actuality, inside the thin, sturdy casing is a "mass of tremendous life." He goes on to explain, in The Great Heidelberg Tun (a wine cask in Heidelberg with a capacity of 49,000 gallons), that there are two subdivisions of the upper part of a whale's head: the Case and the junk. The Case is the Great Heidelberg Tun since it contains the highly-prized spermaceti. Ishmael then dramatizes the tapping of the case by Tashtego. It goes by bucket from the "cistern" (well) once Tashtego finds the spot. In this scene, Tashtego accidentally falls in to the case. In panic, Daggoo fouls the lines and the head falls into the ocean. Queequeg dives in and manages to save Tashtego.

In The Prairie, Ishmael discusses the nineteenth-century arts of physiognomy (the art of judging human character from facial features)and phrenology (the study of the shape of the skull, based on the belief that it reveals character and mental capacity). By such analyses, the sperm whale's large, clear brow gives him the dignity of god. The whale's "pyramidical silence" demonstrates the sperm whale's genius. But later Ishmael abandons this line of analysis, saying that he isn't a professional. Besides, the whale wears a "false brow" because it really doesn't have much in its skull besides the spermy stufi. (The brain is about 10 inches big.) Ishmael then says that he would rather feel a man's spine to know him than his skull, throwing out phrenology. Judging by spines (which, like brains, are a network of nerves) would discount the smallness of the whale's brain and admire the wonderful comparative magnitude of his spinal cord. The hump becomes a sign of the whale's indomitable spirit.

The Jungfrau (meaning Virgin in German) is out of oil and meets the Pequod to beg for some. Ahab, of course, asks about the White Whale, but the Jungfrau has no information. Almost immediately after the captain of the Jungfrau steps off the Pequod's deck, whales are sighted and he goes after them desperately. The Pequod also gives chase and succeeds in harpooning the whale before the Germans. But, after bringing the carcass alongside the ship, they discover that the whale is sinking and dragging the ship along with it. Ishmael then discusses the frequency of sinking whales.

The Jungfrau starts chasing a fin-back, a whale that resembles a sperm whale to the unskilled observer.

Chapter 82-92

Summary

Ishmael strays from the main action of the plot again, diving into the heroic history of whaling. First, he draws from Greek mythology, the Judeo-Christian Bible, and Hindu mythology. He then discusses the Jonah story in particular (a story that has been shadowing this entire novel from the start) through the eyes of an old Sag-Harbor whaleman who is crusty and questions the Jonah story based on personal experience.

Ishmael then discusses pitchpoling by describing Stubb going through the motions (throwing a long lance from a jerking boat to secure a running whale). He then goes into a discursive explanation of how whales spout with some attempt at scientific precision. But he cannot define exactly what the spout is, so he has to put forward a hypothesis: the spout is nothing but mist, like the "semi- visible steam" that proceeds from the head of ponderous beings such as Plato, Pyrrho, the Devil, Jupiter, Dante, and himself! In the next chapter, he celebrates a whale's most famous part: his tail. He likes its potential power and lists its difierent uses.

When the Pequod sails through the straits of Sunda (near Indonesia) without pulling into any port, Ishmael takes the opportunity to discuss how isolated and self- contained a whaleship is. While in the straits, they run into a great herd of sperm whales swimming in a circle (the "Grand Armada"){ but as they are chasing the whales, they are being chased by Malay pirates. They try to "drugg" the whales so that they can kill them on their own time.

(There are too many to try to kill at once.) They escape the pirates and go in boats after the whales, somehow ending up inside their circle, a placid lake.

But one whale, who had been pricked and was oundering in pain, panics the whole herd. The boats in the middle are in danger but manage to get out of the center of the chaos. They try to "waif" the whales{that is, mark them as the Pequod's to be taken later. Ishmael then goes back to explaining whaling terms, staring with "schools" of whales. The schoolmaster is the head of the school, or the lord. The all-male schools are like a "mob of young collegians." Backtracking to a reference in Chapter 87 about waifs, Ishmael explains how the waif works as a symbol in the whale fishery. He goes on to talk about historical whaling codes and the present one that a Fast- Fish belongs to the party fast to it and a Loose-Fish is fair came for anybody who can soonest catch it. A fish is fast when it is physically connected (by rope, etc.) to the party after it or it bears a waif, says Ishmael. Lawyer- like, Ishmael cites precedents and stories, to show how dificult it is to maintain rules. In Heads or Tails, he mentions the strange problem with these rules in England because the King and Queen claim the whale. Some whalemen in Dover (or some port near there, says Ishmael) lost their whale to the Duke because he claimed the power delegated him from the sovereign.

Returning to the narrative, Ishmael says they come up on a French ship Bouton de Rose (Rose-Button or Rose- Bud). This ship has two whales alongside: one "blasted whale" (one that died unmolested on the sea) that is going to have nothing useful in it and one whale that died from indigestion.

Stubb asks a sailor about the White Whale? Never seen him, is the answer. Crafty Stubb then asks why the man is trying to get oil out of these whales when clearly there is none in either whale. The sailor on the Rose-Bud says that his captain, on his first trip, will not believe the sailor's own statements that the whales are worthless. Stubb goes aboard to tell the captain that the whales are worthless, although he knows that the second whale might have ambergris, an even more precious commodity than spermaceti. Stubb and the sailor make up a little plan in which Stubb says ridiculous things in English and the sailor says, in French, what he himself wants to say. The captain dumps the whales. As soon as the Rose-Bud leaves, Stubb mines and finds the sweet- smelling ambergris.

Ishmael, in the next chapter, explains what ambergris is: though it looks like mottled cheese and comes from the bowel of whales, ambergris is actually used for perfumes. He uses dry legal language to describe ambergris and discuss its history even though he acknowledges that poets have praised it.

Ishmael then looks at where the idea that whales smell bad comes from. Some whaling vessels might have skipped cleaning themselves a long time ago, but the current bunch of South Sea Whalers always scrub themselves clean. The oil of the whale works as a natural soap.

Chapters 93-101

Summary

These are among the most important chapters in Moby- Dick. In The Castaway, Pip, who usually watches the ship when the boats go out, becomes a replacement in Stubb's boat. Having performed passably the first time out, Pip goes out a second time and this time he jumps from the boat out of anxiety. When Pip gets foul in the lines, and his boatmates have to let the whale go free to save him, he makes them angry. Stubb tells him never to jump out of the boat again because Stubb won't pick him up next time. Pip, however, does jump again, and is left alone in the middle of the sea's "heartless immensity." Pip goes mad.

A Squeeze of the Hand, which describes the baling of the case (emptying the sperm's head), is one of the funniest chapters in the novel. Because the spermaceti quickly cools into lumps, the sailors have to squeeze it back into liquid. Here, Ishmael goes overboard with his enthusiasm for the "sweet and unctuous" sperm. He squeezes all morning long, getting sentimental about the physical contact with the other sailors, whose hands he encounters in the sperm. He goes on to describe the other parts of the whale, including the euphemistically-named "cassock" (the whale's penis). This chapter is also very funny, blasphemously likening the whale's organ to the dress of clergymen because it has some pagan mysticism attached to it. It serves an actual purpose on the ship: the mincer wears the black "pelt" of skin from the penis to protect himself while he slices the horse-pieces of blubber for the pots.

Ishmael then tries to explain the try-works, heavy structures made of pots and furnaces that boil the blubber and derive all the oil from it. He associates the try-works with darkness and a sense of exotic evil: it has "an unspeakable, wild, Hindoo odor about it, such as may lurk in the vicinity of funereal pyres." Furthermore, the pagan harpooneers tend it. Ishmael also associates it with the red fires of Hell that, in combination with the black sea and the dark night, so disorient him that he loses sense of himself at the tiller. Everything becomes "inverted," he says, and suddenly there is "no compass before me to steer by."

In a very short chapter, Ishmael describes in The Lamp how whalemen are always in the light because their job is to collect oil from the seas. He then finishes describing how whale's oil is processed: putting the oil in casks and cleaning up the ship. Here he dismisses another myth about whaling: whalers are not dirty. Sperm whale's oil is a fine cleaning agent. But Ishmael admits that whalers are hardly clean for a day when the next whale is sighted and the cycle begins again.

Ishmael returns to talking about the characters again, showing the reactions of Ahab, Starbuck, Stubb, Flask, the Manxman, Queequeg, Fedallah, and Pip to the golden coin fixed on the mainmast. Ahab looks at the doubloon from Ecuador and sees himself and the pains of man. Starbuck sees some Biblical significance about how man can find little solace in times of trouble. Stubb, first saying he wants to spend it, looks deeper at the doubloon because he saw his two superiors gazing meaningfully at it. He can find little but some funny dancing zodiac signs. Then Flask approaches, and says he sees "nothing here, round thing made of gold and whoever raises a certain whale, this round thing belongs to him. So what's all this staring been about?" Pip is the last to look at the coin and says, prophetically, that here's the ship's "navel"{ something at the center of the ship, holding it together.

Then the Pequod meets the Samuel Enderby, a whaling ship from London with a jolly captain and crew. The first thing Ahab asks, of course, is if they have seen Moby Dick. The captain, named Boomer, has, and is missing an arm because of it. The story is pretty gory, but Boomer does not dwell too much on the horrible details, choosing instead to talk about the hot rum toddies he drank during his recovery. The ship encountered the white whale again but did not want to try to fasten to it. Although the people on board the Enderby think he is crazy, Ahab insists on knowing which way the whale went and returns to his ship to pursue it.

In the next chapter, Ishmael backtracks, to explain why the name Enderby is significant: this man fitted the first ever English sperm whaling ship.

Ishmael then exuberantly explains the history behind Enderby's before telling the story of the particular whaler Samuel Enderby. The good food aboard the Enderby earns the ship the title "Decanter."

Chapter 102-114

Summary

Ishmael now tries another tactic for interpreting the whale. In the chapter called A Bower in the Arsacides, he discusses how he learned to measure a whale's bones. When he was visiting his friend Tranquo, king of Tranque, he lived in a culture in which the whale skeleton was sacred. After telling how he learned to measure, he goes on to tell the results of the measurements. He begins with the skull, the biggest part, then the ribs, and the spine. But these bones, he cautions, give only a partial picture of the whale since so much esh is wrapped around them. A person cannot still find good representation of a whale in its entirety.

And Ishmael continues to "manhandle" the whale, self- consciously saying that he does the best he knows how. So he decides to look at the Fossil Whale from an "archaeological, fossiliferous, and antediluvian point of view." He can't be too grandiloquent with his exaggerated words and diction because the whale itself is so grand. He ashes credentials again, this time as a geologist and then discusses his finds. But, again, he is unsatisfied: "the skeleton of the whale furnishes but little clue to the shape of his fully invested body." But this chapter does give a sense of the whale's age and his pedigree.

Ishmael finally gives up, in awe, deconstructing the whale- -now he wants to know if such a fabulous monster will remain on the earth. Ishmael says that though they may not travel in herds anymore, though they may have changed haunting grounds, they remain. Why? Because they have established a new home base at the poles, where man cannot penetrate; because they've been hunted throughout history and still remain; because the whale population is not in danger for survival since many generations of whales are alive at the same time.

Ahab asks the carpenter to make him a new leg because the one he uses is not trustworthy. After hitting it heavily on the boat's wooden oor when he returned from the Enderby, he does not think it will keep holding. Indeed, just before the Pequod sailed, Ahab had been found lying on the ground with the whalebone leg gouging out his thigh. So the carpenter, the do-it-all man on the ship, has to make Ahab a new prosthetic leg. They discuss the feeling of a ghost leg. When Ahab leaves, the carpenter thinks he is a little queer.

A sailor then informs Ahab, in front of Starbuck, that the oil casks are leaking. The sailor suggests that they stop to fix them, but Ahab refuses to stop, saying that he doesn't care about the owners or profft. Starbuck objects and Ahab points a musket at him. Says Starbuck, "I ask thee not to beware of Starbuck; thou wouldst but laugh; but let Ahab beware of Ahab; beware of thyself, old man." In cleaning out the stowed oil casks, Queequeg falls sick. Thinking he is going to die, Queequeg orders a coffn made. He lies in it and closes the cover, as Pip dances around the coffn. Soon, Queequeg feels well again and gets out. Ishmael attributes this to his "savage" nature.

In The Pacific, Ishmael gets caught up in the meditative, serene Pacific Ocean. At the end of the chapter, he comes back to Ahab, saying that no such calming thoughts entered the brain of the captain. Ishmael then pans over to the blacksmith whose life on land disintegrated. With characteristic panache, Ishmael explains that the sea beckons to broken-hearted men who long for death but cannot commit suicide. The Forge dramatizes an exchange between the blacksmith and Ahab in which the captain asks the blacksmith to make a special harpoon to kill the white whale. Although Ahab gives the blacksmith directions, he takes over the crafting of the harpoon himself, hammering the steel on the anvil and tempering it with the blood of the three harpooneers (instead of water). The scene ends with Pip's laughter.

In The Gilder, Ishmael considers how the dreaminess of the sea masks a ferocity. He speaks of the sea as "gilt" because it looks golden in the sun-set and is falsely calm. The sea even makes Starbuck rhapsodize, making an apostrophe (direct address of an absent or imaginary person or of a personified abstraction, especially as a digression in the course of a speech or composition) to the sea; Stubb answers him by surprise and, as usual, makes light of the situation.

Chapters 115-125

Summary

These chapters show how badly off the Pequod really is. The somber Pequod, still on the lookout for Moby Dick, runs into the Bachelor, a festive Nantucket whaler on its way home with a full cargo. The captain of the Bachelor, saying that he has only heard stories of the white whale and doesn't believe them, invites Ahab and the crew to join his party. Ahab declines. The next day, the Pequod kills several whales and the way that a dying whale turns towards the sun spurs Ahab to speak out to it in wondrous tones. While keeping a night vigil over a whale that was too far away to take back to the ship immediately, Ahab hears from Fedallah the prophecy of his death. Before Ahab can die, he must see two hearses, one "not made by mortal hands" and one made of wood from America; and only hemp can kill the captain. Back on the ship, Ahab holds up a quadrant, an instrument that gauges the position of the sun, to determine the ship's latitude. Ahab decides that it does not give him the orienteering information he wants and tramples it underfoot. He orders the ship to change direction.

The next day, the Pequod is caught in a typhoon. The weird weather makes white ames appear at the top of the three masts and Ahab refuses to let the crew put up lightning rods to draw away the danger. While Ahab marvels at the ship's three masts lit up like three spermaceti candles, hailing them as good omens and signs of his own power, Starbuck sees them as a warning against continuing the journey. When Starbuck sees Ahab's harpoon also ickering with fire, he says that this is a sign that God is against Ahab. Ahab, however, grasps the harpoon, and says, in front of a frightened crew, there is nothing to fear in the enterprise that binds them all together. He blows out the ame to "blow out the last fear. "In the next chapter, Starbuck questions Ahab's judgment again{this time saying that they should pull down the main-top-sail yard. Ahab says that they should just lash it tighter, complaining that his first mate must think him incompetent. On the bulwarks of the forecastle, Stubb and Flask are having their own conversation about the storm and Ahab's behavior. Stubb basically dominates the conversation and says that this journey is no more dangerous than any other is even though it seems as if Ahab is putting them in extreme danger. Suspended above them all on the main-top-sail yard, Tashtego says to himself that sailors don't care that much about the storm, just rum. When the storm finally dies down, Starbuck goes below to report to Ahab. On the way to Ahab's cabin, he sees a row of muskets, including the very one that Ahab had leveled at him earlier. Angry about Ahab's reckless and selfish behavior, he talks to himself about whether he ought to kill his captain. He decides he cannot kill Ahab in his sleep and goes up.

When Ahab is on deck the next day, he realizes that the storm has thrown off the compasses. Ahab then pronounces himself "lord over the level loadstone yet" and makes his own needle. Here Ishmael comments, "In this fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his fatal pride." With all the other orienteering devices out of order, Ahab decides to pull out the seldom-used log and line. Because of heat and moisture, the line breaks and Ahab realizes that he now has none of his original orienteering devices. He calls for Pip to help him and Pip answers with nonsense. Ahab, touched by Pip's crazy speeches, says that his cabin will now be Pip's because they boy "touchest [his] inmost center."

Chapters 126-132

Sailors are very superstitious. As the Pequod approaches the Equatorial fishing ground, the sailors think that they hear ghosts wailing. The Manxman (man from the Isle of Man) says that these are the voices of the newly drowned men in the sea. Ahab says nonsense. When the Pequod's life-buoy falls overboard and sinks, the sailors think it is a fulfillment of evil that was foretold. The offcers decide to replace the life-buoy with Queequeg's coffn.

Though the carpenter grumbles about having to transform the object, Ahab, who is aware of the irony of the substitution, nevertheless calls the carpenter "unprincipled as the gods" for going through with the substitution.

The Pequod encounters the ship Rachel while it is looking for Moby Dick in these waters. Captain Gardiner of the , after afirming that he has indeed seen Moby Dick, climbs aboard Ahab's ship and begs Ahab to help him find his son, whose whaleboat was lost in the chase after the white whale. Ahab refuses. Now that Ahab knows that the white whale is near, he spends a lot of time walking the decks. As Ahab goes up one time, Pip wants to follow him. Ahab tells him to stay in the captain's cabin, lest Pip's insanity start to cure his own just when he's getting close to the whale and needs to be a little crazy.

And so Ahab, shadowed everywhere by Fedallah, remains on deck, ever watchful. This continuous watch sharpens Ahab's obsession and he decides that he must be the first to sight the whale. He asks Starbuck to help him get up the main-mast head and watch his rope. When he is there, a black hawk steals his hat; Ishmael this considers a bad omen. The Pequod then runs into the miserably misnamed ship Delight. The Delight has indeed encountered Moby Dick, but the result was a gutted whaleboat and dead men. As the Pequod goes by, the Delight drops a corpse in the water and sprinkles the Pequod's hull with a "ghostly baptism."

In the chapter called The Symphony, disparage parts come together for a crescendo. The pressure finally gets to Ahab and he seems human here, dropping a tear into the sea. He and Starbuck have a bonding moment as Ahab sadly talks about his continual, tiring whaling. He calls himself a fool and thinks himself pathetic. Starbuck suggests giving up the chase, but Ahab wonders if he can stop because he feels pushed on by Fate. But as Ahab is asking these grand questions, Starbuck steals away. When Ahab goes to the other side of the deck to gaze into the water, Fedallah, too, is looking over the rail.

Chapters 133-Epilogue

Summary

Ahab can sense by smell that Moby Dick is near. Climbing up to the main royal-mast head, Ahab spots Moby Dick and earns himself the doubloon. All the boats set off in chase of the whale. When Moby Dick finally surfaces, he stoves Ahab's boat. The whale is swimming too fast away from them and they all return to the ship.

Saying that persistent pursuit of one whale has historically happened before, Ishmael comments that Ahab still desperately wants to chase Moby Dick though he has lost one boat. They do sight Moby Dick again and the crewmen, growing increasingly in awe of Ahab and caught up in the thrill of the chase, lower three boats. Starbuck stays to mind the Pequod. Ahab tries to attack Moby Dick head on this time, but again, Moby Dick is triumphant.

He stoves Ahab's ship and breaks his false leg. When they return to the Pequod, Ahab finds out that Fedallah is gone, dragged down by Ahab's own line. Starbuck tells him to stop, but Ahab, convinced that he is only the "Fate's lieutenant," says he must keep pursuing the whale.

. Still on the look out, the crew spots the white whale for a third time but sees nothing until Ahab realizes, "Aye, he's chasing me now; not I, him{ that's bad." They turn the ship around completely and Ahab mounts the masthead himself. He sights the spout and lowers again. As he gets into his boat and leaves Starbuck in charge, the two men exchange a poignant moment in which Ahab asks to shake hands with his first made and the first mate tries to tell him not to go. Dangerously, sharks bite at the oars as the boats pull away.

Starbuck, in a monologue, laments Ahab's sure doom. On the water, Ahab sees Moby Dick breach. Seeing Fedallah strapped to the whale by turns of rope, Ahab realizes that this is the first hearse that the Parsee had forecasted. The whale goes down again and Ahab rows close to the ship. He tells Tashtego to find another ag and nail it to the main masthead. The boats soon see the white whale again and go after him. But Moby Dick only turns around, and heads for the Pequod at full speed. He smashes the ship.

It goes down without its captain. The ship, Ahab realizes, is the second hearse. Impassioned, Ahab is now determined to strike at Moby Dick with all of his power: "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 coffns and all 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!" After darting the whale, Ahab is caught around the neck by the ying line. He is dragged under the sea. Tashtego, meanwhile, is still trying to nail the ag to the ship's spar as it goes down. He catches a sky-hawk in mid-hammer and the screaming bird, folded in the ag, goes down with everything else.

In the Epilogue, Ishmael wraps up the story, saying that he is the only one who survives the wreck. All the boats and ship were ruined. Ishmael survives only because Queequeg's coffn bobs up and becomes his life buoy. A day after the wreck, the Rachel, still cruising for her first lost son, saves Ishmael.