



Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex

By Nathaniel Philbrick

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Adapted for young people from the New York Times Best-Seller *In the Heart of the Sea*.

In 1819, the *Essex*, a Nantucket whaleship carrying a crew of 20, began what all thought would be a normal, two-year voyage. Instead, after a year and a half of near-disasters, the ship was rammed by a sperm whale and sank in the Pacific. All hands got off in three whaleboats and were at sea for three unbearable months of short rations and little fresh water, leading to the death by starvation of some and the killing of others to provide food. One boat disappeared and the two remaining eventually became separated. When rescued off the coast of Chile, only five men were still alive, including the captain and first mate, as well as three rescued later from an island. Philbrick brings the era to life, giving readers a rounded picture of the whaling industry and its society. Relying mainly on two survivors' detailed accounts, one of which has just recently been found, he fleshes out the tale in an exciting manner that sweeps readers along. He includes modern medical knowledge of the physical and mental effects of starvation on humans. The book concludes with tales of other shipwrecks, a description of how the survivors lived the rest of their lives, and an introduction to the recent work of the Nantucket Whaling Museum. The contrast between today's touristy island paradise and yesterday's hard life will not be lost on teens. - *Judy McAloon, Potomac Library, Prince William County, VA*

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Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex By Nathaniel Philbrick Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #208615 in Books
- Published on: 2003-09
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Paperback
- 164 pages

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