



The Wreck of the Whaleship Essex

Owen Chase

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On the morning of November 20, 1820, in the Pacific Ocean, an enraged sperm whale rammed the Nantucket whaler Essex. As the boat began to sink, her crew of thirty had time only to collect some bread and water before pulling away in three frail open boats. Without charts, alone on the open seas, and thousands of miles from any known land, the sailors began their terrifying journey of survival. Ninety days later, after much suffering and death by starvation, intense heat, and dehydration, only eight men survived to reach land. One of them was Owen Chase, first mate of the ill-fated ship, whose account of the long and perilous journey has become a classic of endurance and human courage. The elements of his tale inspired Herman Melville (who was born the year the Essex sank) to write the classic Moby Dick. A gallant saga of the sea, this riveting narration of life and death, of man against the deep, will enthrall readers.

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