



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

By Nathaniel Philbrick

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Adapted from *In the Heart of the Sea*, soon to be a major motion picture starring Chris Hemsworth, Cillian Murphy, Ben Wishaw, and Brendan Gleeson, and directed by Ron Howard.

On November 20, 1820, the whaleship *Essex* was rammed and sunk by an angry whale. Within minutes, the twenty-one-man crew, including the fourteen-year-old cabin boy Thomas Nickerson, found themselves stranded in three leaky boats in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with barely any supplies and little hope. Three months later, two of the boats were rescued 4,500 miles away, off the coast of South America. Of the twenty-one castaways, only eight survived, including young Thomas. Based on his *New York Times* best-seller *In the Heart of the Sea*, Nathaniel Philbrick recreates the amazing events of the ill-fated *Essex* through the sailors own first-hand accounts, photos, maps, and artwork, and tells the tale of one of the great true-life adventure stories.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For older readers, *Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex* by Nathaniel Philbrick describes a tale worthy of Ahab: on November 20, 1820, an angry sperm whale took vengeance on the men who would slay it for oil. Adapted from Philbrick's bestselling title for adults, *In the Heart of the Sea*, the narrative draws from primary sources, including the account of cabin boy Thomas Nickerson, who joined the crew at age 14. Ages 7-12.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 6-10-Philbrick has carefully adapted and abridged his adult title, *In the Heart of the Sea* (Viking, 2000). He tells the story of the Nantucket whaleship Essex, which sank in the Pacific in November 1820, after being deliberately rammed twice by an apparently enraged sperm whale. Three months later, five emaciated men were rescued from two small boats filled with the bones of their unlucky companions. The whale's attack on the Essex gave Herman Melville the idea for the climactic scene in *Moby-Dick*. The abridging is primarily accomplished by limiting descriptive passages and focusing more tightly on the narrative elements. However, sufficient description is retained to give readers an understanding of both whaling and life in Nantucket in the early 19th century. Other than these elisions, the text is largely unchanged from the original, although in a few places a simpler synonym replaces a more evocative word; likewise, in passages where he had assumed background knowledge, Philbrick skillfully supplies context and explanation. The lengthy section of notes following the text has been omitted, and the extensive bibliography has been replaced by a short, briefly annotated list of related reading. Useful maps, diagrams, and other illustrations have been retained. The story of the Essex crew is a compelling saga of desperation and survival that will appeal to young people. The grisly details of cannibalism necessary to the telling of the story may provoke shivers but should not give anyone nightmares. Walter Brown's *Sea Disasters* (HarperCollins, 1981) includes a brief chapter on the Essex, but there is nothing else for young readers on the subject. With this masterful adaptation, Philbrick's work fills a void.

Elaine Fort Weischedel, Franklin Public Library, MA

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Review

"With this masterful adaptation, Philbrick's work fills a void. A compelling saga of desperation and survival." -*School Library Journal*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Allen Mullinax:

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