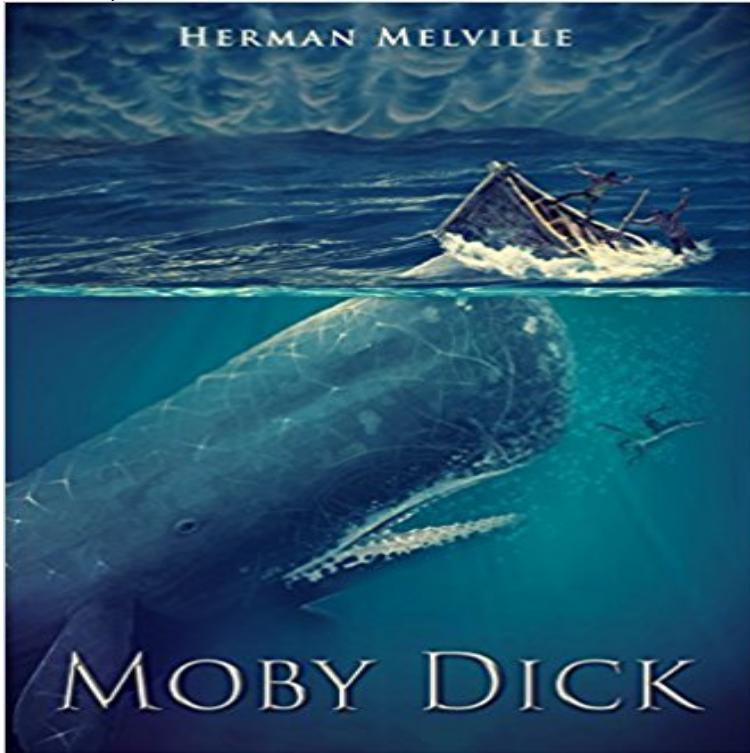


Moby Dick: Platinum Illustrated Classics (Illustrated)



Moby-Dick; or, The Whale is a novel by American writer Herman Melville, published in 1851 during the period of the American Renaissance. Sailor Ishmael tells the story of the obsessive quest of Ahab, captain of the whaler Pequod, for revenge on Moby Dick, the white whale which on an earlier voyage destroyed his ship and severed his leg at the knee. The novel was a commercial failure and out of print at the time of the authors death in 1891, but during the 20th century its reputation as a Great American Novel was established. William Faulkner confessed he wished he had written it himself, and D. H. Lawrence called it one of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world, and the greatest book of the sea ever written. Call me Ishmael is among world literatures most famous opening sentences. The narrator, who calls himself Ishmael, travels from Manhattan Island to New Bedford with plans to sign up for a whaling voyage. The inn he arrives at is so crowded he must share a bed with the tattooed Polynesian Queequeg, a harpooneer whose father was king of the (fictional) island of Rokovoko. The next morning, Ishmael and Queequeg attend Father Mapples sermon on Jonah, then head for Nantucket. Ishmael signs up with the Quaker ship-owners Bildad and Peleg for a voyage on their whaler Pequod. Peleg describes Captain Ahab: Hes a grand, ungodly, god-like man who nevertheless has his humanities. They hire Queequeg the following morning. A man named Elijah prophesies a dire fate should Ishmael and Queequeg join Ahab. While provisions are loaded, shadowy figures board the ship. On a cold Christmas Day, the Pequod leaves the harbor. Ishmael discusses cetology (the zoological classification and natural history of the whale), and describes the crew members. The chief mate is 30-year-old Starbuck, a Nantucket Quaker with a realist mentality, whose harpooneer is Queequeg; second

mate is Stubb, from Cape Cod, happy-go-lucky and cheerful, whose harpooneer is Tashtego, a proud, pure-blooded Indian from Gay Head, and the third mate is Flask, from Marthas Vineyard, short, stout, whose harpooneer is Daggoo, a tall African, now a resident of Nantucket. When Ahab finally appears on the quarterdeck, he announces he is out for revenge on the white whale which took one leg from the knee down and left him with a prosthesis fashioned from a whales jawbone. Ahab will give the first man to sight Moby Dick a doubloon, a gold coin, which he nails to the mast. Starbuck objects that he has not come for vengeance but for profit. Ahabs purpose exercises a mysterious spell on Ishmael: Ahabs quenchless feud seemed mine. Instead of rounding Cape Horn, Ahab heads for the equatorial Pacific Ocean via southern Africa. One afternoon, as Ishmael and Queequeg are weaving a mat its warp seemed necessity, his hand free will, and Queequegs sword chance Tashtego sights a sperm whale. Immediately, five hidden figures appear whom Ahab has brought as his own boat crew. Their leader, Fedallah, a Parsee, is Ahabs harpooneer. The pursuit is unsuccessful. Buy the book for the whole story---

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