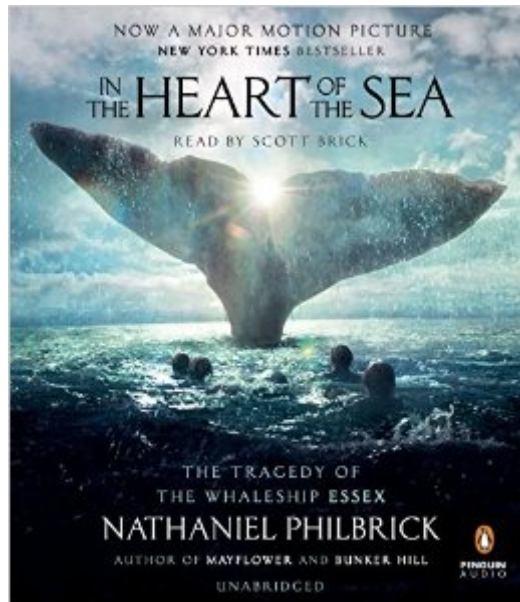


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In The Heart Of The Sea: The Tragedy Of The Whaleship Essex (Movie Tie-in)



Synopsis

From the author of the forthcoming book, *Valiant Ambition*, the riveting and critically acclaimed bestseller, soon to be a major motion picture starring Chris Hemsworth, directed by Ron Howard, premiering on December 11, 2015 Chris Hemsworth, Cillian Murphy, Ben Whishaw, and Brendan Gleeson will star in a new film based on this National Book Award-winning account of the true events behind *Moby Dick*. In 1820, the whaleship *Essex* was rammed and sunk by an angry sperm whale, leaving the desperate crew to drift for more than ninety days in three tiny boats. Nathaniel Philbrick uses little-known documents and vivid details about the Nantucket whaling tradition to reveal the chilling facts of this infamous maritime disaster. In the Heart of the Sea and now, its epic adaptation for the screen will forever place the *Essex* tragedy in the American historical canon. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

There have been many great stories of survival and tragedy on the seas, and this book is one of the best of them. At one time the story of the Whaleship *Essex* was well known in America, but gradually that story faded into memory. Nathaniel Philbrick brings that memory back to life again with his very well written book. The main events in this book took place in the time period of 1819-1821. The *Essex* was based on Nantucket Island, and in the first part of the book there is a very interesting history of Nantucket and the Whaling Trade. Enough information is given so that we understand the world that the men of the *Essex* lived in, and the ordeal that lay before them. The *Essex* was believed to be a lucky ship, but that reputation of good luck would soon be overwhelmed

at sea. After several months at sea, the Essex was attacked and rammed by an eighty-five foot whale. It is fascinating to read about the attack of the giant whale on the ship, and to realize that the attacking whale was the actual basis for the whale in "Moby Dick". The Essex was severely damaged and in danger of sinking after the whale attack, and the crew faced the grim prospect of a desperate journey in open boats across the Pacific Ocean. The story of their battle for survival with little food or hope of rescue will grip your heart. Terrible choices of survival had to be made, and there are graphic accounts of starvation and cannibalism in the book. This is truly the story of a great tragedy at sea, but there is also the hope and endurance that can sometimes be found even in the darkest moments. There are moments of wonder with thoughts and descriptions of whales and the ever changing sea. I recommend this book to everyone that loves the history of the Sea, and the spirit of survival against all odds.

In 1819 the whaleship Essex was rammed and sunk by a very large sperm whale. The ship sank and the crew was forced to sail across thousands of miles of the Pacific ocean fighting thirst and starvation. This was the story that inspired Melville's Moby Dick. It is absorbing, well researched, and reads like a good adventure novel, only it is true. It is elegant from start to finish and I say elegant because of its restraint. Philbrick had every chance to play this one for the bleacher seats, but didn't. We could have gotten a long saga of castaways dying of thirst and starvation with all of the drama of a potboiler. He could have given us a day by day description of the sea trek, but instead the trek is mercifully taken up in 90 pages. (Don't fret, you will get the anxiety wobbles during this phase of the book.) Philbrick has fully researched the physiology of dying of starvation and thirst and spares us none of the details. To survive, the crew resorted to the drawing of lots, execution and cannibalism. We learn about the history, quite plentiful in fact, of survival cannibalism from the Raft of the Medusa to the Andean plane crash. It is not a book for the squeamish. It is also a book about Nantucket, whaling, men at sea, celestial navigation, maritime commerce, and more. Never are the facts crammed down us like so many notecards in the author's collection, but are deliciously laid out in the context of the story. It is not a long book, but it doesn't seem to short either. Like most good books, it made me want to learn more about the subject, in this case the fascinating history of whaling.

All too often a book telling a story may also require that the equipment or the vessel used to be described. Much less frequent is the help of illustrations to let a reader who may know little to nothing about the construction (in this case) of a Whaling Vessel, understand the explanations and

gain further enjoyment from the book. A further tribute to the Author is that the detail given of the ship The Essex and the implements of the Whaling Trade were of an appropriate length. Too long and the reader would have been lost in a maze of technical jargon, too little and understanding all that happened would not have been possible. For anyone desirous of going much deeper into the History of Nantucket, or of Whaling, there are 39 pages of notes written in prose form at the end of the book. They are organized by chapter, and they are further supplemented by a Bibliography. Mr. Philbrick clearly is a man qualified to relate this tale which records one of the more miserable tales of human suffering. It would have been easy and disappointing to let this story turn into a lurid 93 day telling of decisions and actions that no person should ever be forced to make. The Author maintained a scholarly approach, together with objectivity on some points of contention/speculation, of the events and how they may or may not actually have happened. He also offers insight into how these massive creatures communicate, and how that could have played a role in the collision. The Author also relates modern day medical study and facts about what physical and emotional torments the survivors endured. I thought this was a welcome addition to the understanding of just how horrible this experience was. This is the only book I have read on the History of the Essex. The book is readable even if your knowledge of ships, like mine, is near zero. And the story told without embellishment is both terrifying and amazing. A very enjoyable book.

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