

MOBY DICK

by

Jacques Bailhé

based on the novel

by

Herman Melville

Jacques Bailhé
10950 Chalon Road
Los Angeles, CA
90077-3208
310-476-6957
jbailhe@bailhe.net

FADE IN:

A grotesquely arthritic finger taps on an armchair, trying to keep time for a halting, squeaking violin. Like a striking Cobra, the finger shoots out.

The CADAVER of an old woman screeches from the armchair.

CADAVER

Non, Non! Detaché! Detaché! Is it
not marked detaché?

A ten year-old boy, ISHMAEL WOODESON, shakes in foppish 1830's clothes. Incomprehensible notes and symbols swirl before his eyes. Rain pelts the windows of this, his violin teacher's musty house. Fearfully, he lays bow to string to try again --

The door bursts open, spilling a panicky CLERK into the room -
- out of breath -- head and coat dripping.

CLERK

Forgive me for disturbing you here,
Mr. Woodeson, sir, but you had
better come quickly. Captain Ahab
refuses to follow your chart.

Ishmael's FATHER, dressed in the stern black of a wealthy merchant, irritably looks up from his account ledger.

FATHER

For God's sake man, I can't take my
son to the docks.
(the idea is revolting)
It will have to wait.

CLERK

He sails on this morning's tide.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Horse hooves pound down a muddy street.

TITLE: 1834 -- NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

In dark gray light, Father's carriage roars to a stop in front of a three story brick building. Above the door, a simple black sign with gold letters: WOODESON TRADING.

Father hurries from the carriage with Ishmael in tow. The rain has stopped. The panicky clerk scampers along behind.

CLERK

We were lucky to get him. He is the most profitable Captain in New Bedford. Perhaps a compromise may be found.

INT. WOODESON TRADING

Dark as hell. Father hauls Ishamel through rows of high desks -- clerks toiling at journals leap to their feet to bow obsequiously. Father passes in fury -- stops at the rear door -- looks down at Ishmael.

FATHER

This is a place of wretched, vile men. You will close your eyes and ears to their curses and sinful ways. Is that clear?

He throws the door open and leads Ishmael from the dark to --

EXT. NEW BEDFORD DOCKS

Sunlight breaks the clouds. Great sailing ships crowd the wharf.

Men swarm like angry bees. Cargo nets -- barrels -- fly overhead. Crates are stacked high as mountains. Huge winches groan -- turned by men with rippling muscles -- all races -- all cultures.

Ishmael's spirit takes flight in this strange and fantastic world he's never been allowed to see.

A fight -- a Chinaman and a turbaned African -- foreign curses -- it's quickly broken up.

Father strides to the gangway of a ship.

FATHER

Captain Ahab! I will see you now.

Ishmael sees -- high above at the ship's railing -- the sun explodes around Ahab's windblown hair -- can't see his face in the blinding light.

The screech of sea gulls gives way to a calm voice -- each vowel and consonant precisely articulated.

AHAB

Good day, Mister Woodeson.

FATHER

This ship will sail today, Captain Ahab, and she will sail the course I command her to sail. Is that clear?

A cargo net swings overhead -- blocks the sun -- Ishmael now clearly sees --

CAPTAIN AHAB -- strongly built -- rigid -- a white streak in his jet-black hair runs to a grotesque scar across his forehead and right eye. He doesn't respond, doesn't move. His eyes suddenly dart and land on Ishmael --

-- the force of his stare sends Ishmael stumbling backward over a coil of rope. Father pulls him to his feet.

AHAB

Whaling ships sail the course commanded by whales, not by men, Mr. Woodeson.

FATHER

The course I charted takes her directly to the richest whaling grounds, and that is where she is bound.

AHAB

Thou art not a seafaring man, sir. I will pardon thy ignorance. A third mate can follow a chart. It takes a Captain to find a whale.

FATHER

I know you want the white whale, the whale they call Moby Dick, and I know why, but I did not provision and crew this ship to finance your vengeance. I demand your solemn promise to sail the course I charted.

AHAB

I promise this hold will be filled with oil, but I will not lie to thee. If whales do not follow thy chart, neither will I.

FATHER

You are relieved of command, Captain Ahab.

All work on the ship abruptly stops. Ishmael sees crewmen glare at his Father.

AHAB
(cold - dead)
Would that be thy son?

FATHER
It is.

AHAB
And if he were taken by a whale,
would thee not want to rip the
heart from that beast with thine
own hands? I will avenge my son,
Mr. Woodeson. On this ship or
another.

FATHER
Then it will be another. My clerk
will pay you for the days you've
worked. You may collect it now.

Father turns without hesitation and hauls Ishmael away.
Ishmael looks back.

AHAB
He took my son. Can't thee
understand?

FATHER
(to his Clerk)
Strike his name from our list.
Never again will he captain for
this company. Replace him
immediately. This ship will sail
today as scheduled. Is that clear?

CLERK
Yes, sir.

AHAB
(yelling after Father)
I will not forgive thee, Mr.
Woodeson.

INT. DINNING ROOM - WOODESON HOUSE - EVENING

Father talks with a pasty-faced dinner guest -- a CLERIC --
seated beside Ishmael's MOTHER. Ishmael watches intently.

FATHER

He refused my order. Riffraff
seamen. I tell you, they are
mongrels of the lowest possible
kind.

CLERIC

The plague of the whaling business.
May God preserve us. Some of the
beastly devils have actually come
to our church.

A face like Santa Claus, Ishmael's GRANDFATHER chuckles,
pours himself a full glass of wine.

GRANDFATHER

Beastly they may be, but without
those seafaring devils, we'd have
no business, would we? Nor would we
have New Bedford. And you would
have no flock. It was seafaring men
discovered America.

CLERIC

I only meant that our church is
here to serve a different class,
that's all. Perhaps the boy's too
young for this sort of
conversation.

This infuriates Ishmael. Grandfather leans toward him.

GRANDFATHER

Perhaps he's too young to know his
church was built by the poor devils
he no longer serves.

FATHER

I think that's enough about all
this, Father.

ISHMAEL'S MOTHER

(to the Cleric)

Dessert?

(aside)

He does not mean to offend.

GRANDFATHER

(laughs)

Well, he does offend. The very
altar in his church was brought
from Germany by seafaring men.

(MORE)

GRANDFATHER (CONT'D)

These China plates, this French wine, the frock he wears, all these things are borne here by seafaring men. Even violins.

(winks at Ishmael)

Finest men I've ever known. Our bonds of friendship and trust were forged pure and unbreakable by the heat of mortal danger and adventures too many to tell. Why in India I saw Hindus walk on fire. In Java I saw men stick needles clean through their cheeks and it left no scar. All kinds of strange, inscrutable men make up this worldclerics too. But seafaring men are the boldest brutes. And so it must be. Takes bolder and braver men than most to sail the seven seas and live to tell.

YOUNG ISHMAEL

How old were you when you went to sea, grandfather?

GRANDFATHER

Not much older than you. My brothers and I left England as deckhands. I landed here a First Mate. Three years later, I bought the ship. And one day soon I'll go to sea again.

YOUNG ISHMAEL

Can I go with you Grandfather?

FATHER

Please don't fill the boy's head with these wild ideas. You will be a merchant, like me, son.

CLERIC

Or a man of the cloth, should God and fate command.

FATHER

Yes, quite right. Quite right.

The thought crushes Ishmael.

GRANDFATHER

What say you help me off to bed?

INT. ENTRY HALL

Ishmael climbs the stairs with a candle -- leading Grandfather past portraits of stern and pious ancestors.

GRANDFATHER

Fate, my ass. You choose what kind of man you want to be in this life, my boy. And whether you want to or not, you, like every other man, will make that decision for yourself.

A searing crack of lightning flashes -- illuminating a grand spiral staircase that descends like a whirlpool.

Grandfather slowly dissolves like a ghost as his voice continues.

GRANDFATHER

Just remember, making the decision is easy. Living through the consequence is what makes the man.

Ishmael, now a tall, skinny, teenager -- stares at his Grandfather's portrait in the flickering candle light -- shifts the rucksack on his shoulder.

Blinding lightning illuminates Ishmael at the front door. He stops -- disappears into the darkness of the parlor.

TITLE: CHRISTMAS EVE - 1841

Ishmael emerges with his violin case -- looks at the huge spiral staircase ascending up into darkness -- blows out the candle.

EXT. NEW BEDFORD DOCKS - NIGHT

Pitch black. Freezing rain. Ishmael hurries through heavy fog. Not a soul in sight until --

The Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse appear like apparitions in the fog -- seamen wearing heavy oilskins.

ISHMAEL

Excuse me, gentlemen, could you direct me to a hotel?

The seamen are stunned by Ishmael's refined speech -- notice his elegant clothes. CABACO, a hulking Spaniard, laughs -- breath misting in the cold air.

CABACO

A hotel?

A vermin of a man steps forward. This is ARCHY.

ARCHY

(kindly)

No hotels on the wharf, me boy.
There's inns and taverns, but
they's pricey. Do ye have money?

ISHMAEL

Oh yes, sir. Certainly.

ARCHY

Well then, gentlemen. Let's show
the lad to a proper bed.

Ishmael sees their missing teeth -- leering eyes -- backs away.

An arm jerks round his neck. A knife blade flashes.

Ishmael tries to break loose -- a fist smashes into his face.

Archy digs through Ishmael's pockets. Ishmael pathetically tries to punch -- then swings his fine wooden violin case into Archy's face with all his strength. It ain't much, but it makes Archy's nose bleed.

Archy laughs. Rips the violin from his hands and stomps it to pieces. Ishmael bolts.

They're after him along the foggy wharf. Ishmael is fast -- puts some distance between them -- turns a corner -- nothing but oily black sea -- realizes he's at the end of a pier.

The seamen are on him.

ARCHY

Hang the little bugger on the
piling! I'm gonna skin him alive!

Archy flashes a huge knife. A rope digs into Ishmael's neck.

A seaman tosses a loop around the top of a piling. A huge hand grabs his throat.

THE PILING MOVES! Lifts the seaman into the air and hurls him into the sea.

Archy and Cabaco gape --

It's no piling. It's the silhouette of a seven foot tall monster of a man in a stove pipe hat -- QUEEQUEG.

The seamen drop Ishmael -- draw their knives.

Queequeg unsheathes his tree-sized harpoon and thrusts.

Cabaco grabs hold, his bulk freezing the harpoon.

CABACO

Get him!

Archy lunges for Queequeg -- knife flashing.

Cabaco suddenly flies through the air on the end of Queequeg's harpoon --

-- slams into Archy -- sending them both sprawling into Queequeg's sea chest -- spilling the contents before stunned Ishmael.

Archy expertly throws his knife -- it whistles through the air -- sticks into the shaft of Queequeg's harpoon.

Queequeg yanks it out -- a blood curdling battle cry -- heaves his harpoon --

-- pins Archy to a piling by his oilskin coat, just missing his ribs. Archy struggles out of his coat -- runs for his life after the other seamen.

Lying on the pier, Ishmael's bloodied face stares at a ghastly shrunken head right in front of him. He rolls away and comes face to face with --

Queequeg -- ornate scrolls and designs -- black-green tattoos cover his face and shaved head. He thrusts Archy's huge knife into Ishmael's face.

QUEEQUEG

You want?

ISHMAEL

No.

Queequeg flips the knife -- THWACK! -- into the wharf right beside Ishmael.

QUEEQUEG

Queequeg. Harpooneer.

ISHMAEL

Harpooneer I understand. What's queequeg?

QUEEQUEG
 (slapping his chest
 proudly)
 Queequeg Queequeg.

ISHMAEL
 My name is.... Call me Ishmael.

Queequeg tenderly lifts his shrunken head, straightens its hair.

ISHMAEL
 Why do you keep such a thing?

QUEEQUEG
 Good luck. First man I kill.

He lays it back in his sea chest gently, gathers up his pipe, sharpening stone.

Ishmael holds out five gold coins.

ISHMAEL
 Thank you.

QUEEQUEG
 Money no good. Nothing to buy.

ISHMAEL
 You could buy a new harpoon.

QUEEQUEG
 Make harpoon.

ISHMAEL
 Food then. Must be something you
 want?

QUEEQUEG
 Whale. Want whale.

ISHMAEL
 I'm going whaling too.

Queequeg regards Ishmael -- feels his biceps and pectorals -- genuinely sorry about Ishmael's pitiful physique.

QUEEQUEG
 You no whaleman.

Queequeg heads off down the wharf. Ishmael gathers up his violin and rucksack -- scrambles after him.

EXT. DECK OF A WHALING SHIP - MORNING

Rigging frosted ghostly white. Snow swirls around a line of men on deck, hoping to sign on. The FIRST MATE nips from a flask -- belches.

Queequeg steps forward. The First Mate is aghast at his tattooed face.

FIRST MATE

We'll have no blaspheming' savage
aboard this ship. Away with you.

Queequeg turns back down the gangway. The First Mate eyes Ishamel's fancy clothes,

FIRST MATE

Ye look like no seaman I ever seen.

-- grabs Ishamel's hands, looks at his palms.

FIRST MATE

These never worked a day. They'd be
so blistered and cut the first week
out you'd bleed to death.

ISHMAEL

I can read and write.

FIRST MATE

Oh, can ye now? And what can ye
read?

ISHMAEL

Well...books, sir.

FIRST MATE

Books be no use fer whalin'. Can ye
read the clouds? Can ye read the
sea?

ISHMAEL

You must keep ledgers and accounts.
I'm proficient in algebra,
geometry, and calculus.

FIRST MATE

What?

ISHMAEL

Mathematics. Addition? Subtraction?
Numbers.

FIRST MATE

Numbers! Why didn't ye say so, boy.
Put your mark here. We need a
steward.

-- jabs his finger on the ship's manifest scrawled with
childish signatures -- strange symbols -- florid X's.

Ishmael signs with a beautiful hand: Ishmael Woo....Stops.
Realizes he better not reveal his last name. Finishes it to
read Wooster -- points to Queequeg standing on the wharf.

ISHMAEL

He goes with me.

FIRST MATE

Well, he don't go with me. Heathen
cannibal.

-- spits grotesquely toward Queequeg.

ISHMAEL

That was unpardonably rude, sir.

FIRST MATE

Cast off fancy pants, and go to
hell. Next!

Ishmael grabs his gear -- strides down the gangway.

Queequeg thrusts out his hand. Ishmael shakes it, but
Queequeg pulls him close -- presses their foreheads together.

QUEEQUEG

You friend. We sail same ship. Eat
same food. Kill same whale. All
same.

ISHMAEL

Friends we shall be. All same.

INT. WODESON HOUSE - MORNING

Ishmael's Mother wracked with worry, paces at the window.
Father throws on his coat.

FATHER

No ships sail on Christmas day.
We'll check every manifest, every
hold. We'll find him, mother.

EXT. DECK OF THE RACHEL

TWO OLD MEN -- long gray beards and flat brimmed, black Quaker hats -- hover over their manifest on this beautiful ship -- white hulled, everything in perfect order. They see Queequeg's stove pipe hat and harpoon rise into view, then his fantastically tattooed face.

TWO OLD MEN

- Good Lord!
- Stop there, savage!
- Off with thee now. Away!

Queequeg and Ishmael head back down the gangway.

The Rachel's pleasantly rotund CAPTAIN GARDNER recognizes Ishmael.

CAPTAIN GARDNER

Are ye not the son of Isaac Woodeson? Hold there, lad. Ishmael, isn't it? Ishmael Woodeson.

Ishmael turns his face -- hurries along the wharf.

Gardner warmly puts his arm around his twelve-year-old son.

CAPTAIN GARDNER

Was that not Ishmael Woodeson?

GARDNER'S SON

I didn't see him, father.

EXT. NEW BEDFORD DOCKS

Queequeg and Ishmael make their way along the busy, icy wharf -- snow swirling in the wind.

A cheery voice --

SPLICER (O.S.)

Seekin' a whale-ship, mates?

Ishmael sees the SPLICER in a dark stall -- gigantic piles of coiled rope behind him -- splicing rope as thick as his arms.

ISHAMEL

Can you recommend a ship for us?

SPLICER

Recommend? (laughs) No. No. That's been all predetermined. Rigged and set.

(MORE)

SPLICER (CONT'D)

Pulls ye now to her sure as this
hawser were 'round yer waist.

ISHAMEL

What ship is that?

SPLICER

Why, that'd be yer ship, lad.

He stands -- crippled, disfigured -- his spine crooked --
right leg drags lifelessly behind him.

SPLICER

Go that way. Or the other way.
Makes no difference. The Indian
maiden will find you.

ISHAMEL

Is that her name? Indian Maiden?

Ishmael holds out a coin for the poor man.

SPLICER

I've done nothin' that's not
already done. Are ye hoping that
one thin coin, yer pathetic
charity, might cut Fate's rope?
(laughs)
That's rope so thick it binds the
very stars in heaven.

Ishmael pulls Queequeg away, down the wharf.

ISHMAEL

The man's damaged in the head.

The Splicer shambles after them like a goblin -- alternately
cheery, grief-stricken, lustful, weeping.

SPLICER

Oh, yes. Damaged, I am. Seen the
ocean red with blood. Bathed in it,
I have. Seen into the eye of the
whale. Eaten his eye. These things
and more. Much more have I
(to an invisible
bystander)
No, I can't tell him. He must
choose what kind of man he wants to
be. Every...man...makes...that
decision...for himself.

Hearing his Grandfather's words stops Ishmael cold.

SPLICER

Yes! Mark these words, boy. When the sea grows calm like a mirror of gold, when ye smell land where there be no land. On that day, thy Captain shall rise from the dead. Resurrected. A hemp line in his dead man's grip to bind your fate with his own. He shall beckon and ye shall follow. All shall follow to his grave.

ISHMAEL

A man makes his own way. That's what I believe. Come, Queequeg.

The Splicer calls after them.

SPLICER

A man? I see no man. I see a boy. And Fate tows him with a hemp line more final than a hangman's noose. Mind the line, lad.
(laughs)
Mind the line.

A dark and brutal ship takes on stores -- a wreck compared to the others -- black stern is badly in need of paint, sails stained, battered.

Ishmael looks closer. The railings are decorated with whale teeth, some seven inches high and weighing two pounds.

QUEEQUEG

No good, this ship. We go there.

Queequeg points out a soaringly beautiful, white hulled bark in pristine condition with gold painted details.

But Ishmael is transfixed by the battered ship before him. The name board reads: PEQUOD.

ISHMAEL

This is the ship for us.

Queequeg reluctantly follows him up the gangway. Hidden from their view by stacks of crates -- beneath the bowsprit is the rough hewn figurehead --

-- an Indian maiden.

EXT. THE PEQUOD - MORNING

A Moslem harpooner in a turban -- FEDALLAH -- steps up to a chalk line on the deck -- groans -- heaves a harpoon with all his strength at a crate painted with a white cross. The harpoon hits close to the mark -- dangles -- falls to the deck.

MR. STUBB, the Pequod's Second Mate -- for whom all of life is good sport -- steps forward.

STUBB

Better than many! What say ye, Mr. Starbuck?

MR. STARBUCK is First Mate. His fine featured face and crisp black clothes are out of place among the multiracial misfits, brigands, and gnarled seamen on deck --

STARBUCK

Come and make thy mark.

Stubb notices Ishmael come aboard.

STUBB

We have a cabin boy, lad.

-- points to a young black boy, PIP, in a Bowler hat, scraping ice from the railing.

STUBB

We've no need of two. Away now!

ISHMAEL

I can read and write. I can keep a ledger.

STUBB

The Pequod wants only whalemén,
strong men.

His jaw drops as seven foot tall Queequeg steps on board in his stove pipe hat.

STUBB

Well now, that is a pretty peacock.

ISHMAEL

Best harpooner in New Bedford.

STUBB

Tashtego's the best, boy.

TASHTEGO, a massive American Indian with shoulder length hair, hefts a harpoon -- steps to the chalk line and throws. Like a bullet -- his harpoon buries into the heart of the white cross and holds firm.

Stubb spits, smiles -- looks at Queequeg.

Queequeg hands his hat to Ishmael -- drops his oilskin coat right there at the gangway -- and 30 feet back from the chalk line -- hefts his monstrous harpoon and lets fly.

BOOM! The whole damned crate explodes, shards and contents spray across the deck. Twenty feet past the demolished crate, the harpoon vibrates like a tuning fork in the foremast.

Stubb can't believe it. The crew is awestruck.

An emotionless voice comes from nowhere -- a voice we recognize for its precise elocution.

AHAB (O.S.)

Sign the painted man, Mr. Starbuck.

Ishmael spins around -- sees Ahab standing on the quarterdeck, gazing out to sea. His voyages have taken their toll: right leg replaced by a whalebone peg-leg, face gaunt, and worn.

STUBB

(in awe)

Make your mark, my good man!

Queequeg draws a whale in the manifest. Ishmael steps forward to sign.

STARBUCK

(to Ishmael)

Not you, boy. Away with you.

QUEEQUEG

Boy no go. I no go.

STUBB

The Pequod's no place for this child.

ISHMAEL

Go on, Queequeg. I'll find another ship.

QUEEQUEG

Boy no go. I no go. We friend. Eat same food. Hunt same whale. All same.

Ahab watches a group of men hurry down the wharf and board a ship. In the lead is Ishmael's Father.

AHAB

Sign the boy, Mr. Starbuck. Find him some work below deck.

Ishmael signs the manifest.

STARBUCK

See the cook, lad. Down you go.

AHAB

(coolly)
Cast off Mr. Starbuck. Make haste.

STARBUCK

(startled)
It's Christmas Day, Captain. We've not finished loading. And there's a ice yet to clear.

AHAB

Set sail, Mr. Starbuck. I give orders just once.

Starbuck wheels around.

STARBUCK

Cast off! Mr. Stubb! Hoist the jib!

Ishmael is stunned by the speed of the crew -- casting off lines, scrambling up the icy rigging, heaving at winches.

Ishmael now sees his Father coming down the wharf.

AHAB

(gazing out to sea)
Get thee below, boy. You've no place on deck.

A huge piece of ice falls and explodes beside Ishmael. He scurries down the steps in the hatch -- stops part way and watches. The rigging creaks as sails drop and begin to fill with wind. Ice falls and crashes everywhere.

Above him, Starbuck yells orders from the quarterdeck.

The huge ship maneuvers away from the wharf. Looks like it's disintegrating -- or breaking out of a chrysalis of ice.

Ishmael hears yelling from the dock.

FATHER (O.S.)
 Ahoy! The Pequod! Captain Ahab!
 Have you seen a boy? My son?

Ishmael can see Ahab gazing out to sea, pretending not to hear.

FATHER (O.S.)
 Ahoy! Captain Ahab! My son has run
 off! For the love of God, man, have
 you seen him?

Ahab turns -- breeze in his hair -- tips his head to Father.

AHAB
 Merry Christmas to you, sir. May
 God be with you.

Ahab turns away.

Ishmael hears his Father calling -- his voice fading away.

BOOM! The wind snaps the Pequod's sails rigid. She heels over violently.

Ishmael is thrown down the steps.

On the quarterdeck, the helmsman leans into the lavishly decorated whale bone tiller as the Pequod races toward the open sea.

AHAB
 See to the whaleboats, Mr.
 Starbuck. Strip them down. Make
 them lightning quick.

STARBUCK
 Aye, Captain. Mr. Stubb! Come aft
 Mr. Stubb.

Ishmael scrambles up from below.

ISHMAEL
 If I may, sir, I would like to give
 you my sincere thanks.

Ahab's peg-leg is no hindrance as he comes down the steps from the quarterdeck.

AHAB
 My action serves only my purpose. I
 did not want thee. It was the
 harpooner I hired.

Ahab disappears through the doors to the mates' quarters.

STUBB

(laughing)

We be usin' ye fer ballast.

ISHMAEL

(angered by the insult)

I can work as well as any man.

STUBB

Ye are no man, boy. Within the week, you'll beg to be put ashore and I'll gladly do it.

ISHMAEL

Oh, no, sir. I want to see the voyage through.

STARBUCK

Know thee any one thing about the ways of a whale-ship? I can plainly see not.

Stubb grabs him by the ear and drags him to the hatch.

STUBB

First thing to learn is to follow orders. Now get below and find the cook. And be quick about it.

Shoves him down the steps with a kick in the ass and laughs.

EXT. A GREEN SEA - DAY

The Pequod in full sail -- bounding through the waves and white-caps.

INT. BELOW DECKS - THE PEQUOD

Ishmael stumbles down the steps. The work here is as frantic as on deck -- stowing gear -- tying off stores and equipment.

Ishmael is slammed from behind by two crewmen carrying a crate. He hurries out of the way along the passageway, not seeing the two crewmen are Archy and Cabaco.

Archy nods to Cabaco look.

INT. THE GALLEY

A knife blade flashes at blinding speed, quartering potatoes. Ishmael comes to the door of the tiny space -- steam rises from pots.

ISHAMEL

I've been asked to lend you a hand.

FLEECE, the cook, razor-thin and old, looks him up and down.

FLEECE

I doubt that. There's no asking on the Pequod.

ISHAMEL

I'm Ishmael.

Offers his hand to shake, but Fleece slaps the potato peeler into his palm.

FLEECE

Peel them potatoes.

Ishmael drops his rucksack and violin and begins, but obviously doesn't have any idea what he's doing -- too careful.

FLEECE

Good Lord in heaven, boy. They be expectin' dinner tonight, not next week.

-- shoves him out of the way and peels with blinding speed, a flurry of peels fly into the air.

FLEECE

Empty that slop over the side.

Ishmael picks up a heavy bucket of slop and struggles his way through the busy passageway and up to the deck.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD

Ishmael heaves the slop over the rail -- the wind blows it right back in his face and hair. It's all over the railing. He madly tries to brush it off before anyone sees.

Mr. Stubb bellows.

STUBB

Now that's just embarrassin'. Mr. Starbuck, I can't stand the shame of havin' a useless greenhorn like this on my deck.

STARBUCK

Then send him up, Mr. Stubb. He's got eyes in his head.

STUBB

Know what a whale looks like, boy?

ISHMAEL

I do.

STUBB

Sir! I do, sir! Or you'll be lickin' the dirty spoons fer yer dinner! Now, see that wee speck atop the mainmast?

Ishmael looks up into the mainsail rigging looming endlessly into the sky. Atop the mainmast -- against racing clouds -- the tiny speck of the masthead, the lookout's perch.

STUBB

If ye lose yer grip, jump for the water.

(laughs)

Might break yer legs, but the deck's harder.

Ishmael musters his courage -- starts to climb.

STUBB

Now, if ye sees a whale, call out loud as can be, "Thar she blows." And if ye sees spots before yer eyes, tie off to the mast.

STARBUCK

Prepare to come about, Mr. Stubb!

In the shrouds -- Ishmael climbs. His breath clouds in the freezing cold. The deck now far below, he climbs past crewmen walking the lower yards with the ease of monkeys in a tree.

Wind pounds into the sails. Reef lines fly helter-skelter, snapping like whips at Ishmael's ears. Sea Gulls and Terns swoop through the rigging -- screeching warnings.

On the masthead -- a seagull perches on the weathered rail. Ishmael's face appears -- white with fear and strain. The seagull screeches at him, flies off -- shits on him.

He pulls himself up, struggling for balance in the howling wind.

STARBUCK (O.S.)
Come about, Mr. Stubb!

Yardarms shift -- tackle groans like banshees. The Pequod turns to starboard and all quiets, then --

BOOM! BOOM! BA-BOOM! -- like a cannon barrage -- the sails explode as the wind snaps them tight.

The ship begins to heel over.

Ishmael gropes for a hold. The sky -- the ship -- the horizon -- tilt wildly. The ship is capsizing!

He whips 100 feet through the air -- everything spinning.

The motion abruptly stops as the ship bites into her new tack and Ishmael's face slams hard into the mast. Blood fills his mouth.

He regains his hold on the wildly angled masthead -- lodges himself against the railing -- fights it -- fights -- then BLAAAAHH! -- pukes violently. The wind drives his vomit and blood back into his face and hair.

EXT. THE OCEAN - LATE AFTERNOON

The Pequod in golden light, racing southeast, her bow pounding into the waves, shooting cascades of shimmering water into the air.

Gulls swoop and circle above the masts.

On the masthead -- Ishmael prostrate -- looks dead. He's lashed himself to the rail -- vomit caked on his coat -- matted in his hair -- face badly sunburned.

Pip's bowler hat and tiny black face rise into view. He shakes Ishmael.

PIP
Come now, Mr. Greenhorn. Git
shakin'.

Ishmael wakes from his stupor -- lips parched white -- hands blue with cold.

The world before him is flat and gray -- white caps run endlessly to nowhere. He looks down -- sees the deck below and dry heaves -- not even any bile left.

PIP

Ya gets used to it, Mr. Greenhorn.
Ya gets used to anythin'.

Pip pulls up a canteen from around his neck and gets some water into him.

PIP

Git below, Mr. Greenhorn. Pip be takin' over now.

Ishmael climbs down the rigging -- loses his grip --
-- falls -- groping the air -- screams.

SMACK! Twenty feet below, he lands hard in the lower topsail rigging -- struggles to get hold -- his foot tangles in ropes. He falls again and dangles upside down, the deck spinning wildly below.

A seamen plucks him up with a booming laugh.

On deck -- Queequeg watches him fumble his way down the shrouds to the rail.

Ishmael sees the crew watching -- tries to keep his dignity, but it's no good -- collapses on the deck.

INT. THE FOC'SLE

Pitch dark but for a swinging whale oil lamp. The ceiling's so low Queequeg has to stoop in half as he carries Ishmael to a bunk -- lays him down.

Harpooners watch disapprovingly. Mountainous DAGGOO -- skin so black it's blue -- huge hoop earrings glint in the darkness as he speaks with an elegantly clipped British accent.

DAGGOO

Good Lord in Heaven, man! He smells like the London sewers. Take him on deck and wash him down properly.

TASHTEGO

All white men stink.

Queequeg pays no attention, wraps shivering Ishmael in a blanket -- gives him water from a canteen.

FEDALLAH

Out! Out!

Queequeg doesn't respond.

Fedallah whips out a glittering knife.

Queequeg pays no attention -- continues tending to Ishmael.

Fedallah hurls the knife. It buries deep into the bunk rail a hair's width above Queequeg's bald head.

Queequeg doesn't flinch -- hangs the canteen strap on the vibrating knife and tends to Ishmael.

Fedallah bolts across the cabin -- grabs Queequeg's throat. In a flash, Queequeg has Fedallah on his knees in a choke hold.

QUEEQUEG

Boy my friend. You friend?

DAGGOO

Well, we are a bit touchy, aren't we. We're all friends here. Ease up before our Moslem brother leaves us for Mohammed.

Queequeg lets Fedallah slump to the floor gasping for air -- attends to Ishmael. Daggoo smile at writhing Fedallah.

DAGGOO

In future, I recommend you pick your fights with smaller beasts. Perhaps whales.

EXT. THE OCEAN - NIGHT

The moon, huge as can be over the oily black sea. The sails and yards of the Pequod glide past.

INT. FOC'SLE - NIGHT

Ishmael asleep in total darkness. An eerie, rhythmic thump, thump, thump on the deck above wakes him.

DAGGOO

They say that every night, all night, this Captain Ahab walks about like Father Time.

ISHMAEL

When does he sleep?

DAGGOO

He never does. They say he can't
bear his horrid dreams.

EXT. MAIN DECK - NIGHT

Ahab walks the deck, hair raging with the wind's fury, the
moon darting in and out of racing clouds.

EXT. MAIN DECK - THE PEQUOD - MORNING

Starbuck looks over the CARPENTER's work on a whaleboat
that's been stripped and refitted for speed.

CARPENTER

I'd say a hundred pounds lighter.
Should gain a bit of speed.

STARBUCK

Lash each sail and mast in the
stern to keep them clear.

AHAB

Remove them, Mr. Starbuck.

STARBUCK

But the safety of the crews,
Captain. If things go bad they'll
need them to return to ship.

AHAB

The crew is in my mind, Mr.
Starbuck. But it's speed they'll
need. Speed and precision will save
them. This I know.

ISHMAEL

They could rig a sail on an oar if
they carry the canvas. It doesn't
weigh much and could stow out of
the way in the bow.

MR. STARBUCK

Don't speak unless spoken to, boy.

Ahab looks him over sternly -- walks off, his peg-leg
thumping the deck.

AHAB
 Make it so, Mr. Starbuck.

Ishmael and the Carpenter strip the sail from the mast.

EXT. A PINK SEA - DAWN

Terns swoop over the bounding Pequod.

EXT. THE MASTHEAD

Wind so strong it about takes Ishmael's head off, but he's grown used to the masthead now. The Pequod is flying.

Far below, the crew strips and refits whaleboats. He longs to be there, working with the seamen. Pip sings an old sea chantey and keeps time with his tambourine.

PIP
 Boney was a warrior.
 Away! Ay-yah!
 A warrior and a whaler,
 John Franswor!
 Boney broke his heart and died.
 Away in St. Helena.
 Give her the topgallants.
 It's a weary way

Ishmael pulls a chunk of biscuit from his pocket -- gnaws into it. Tastes absolutely awful, but he's gotten used to that too.

He tosses a piece to a tern that catches it in his beak -- flies out over the sea, and there, in the distance -- near the horizon -- Ishmael sees --

-- a puff of vapor rise. He strains to focus. It's gone.

He settles back, nips at his hardtack and sees another puff. Then a tiny fountain. Narrows his eyes. Another tiny fountain rises again -- then another -- and another.

ISHMAEL
 (uncertain)
 Mr. Stubb? Mr. Stubb?!

-- gets to his feet.

ISHMAEL
 (bellowing)
 Mr. Stubb!

Stubb looks aloft.

STUBB
(annoyed)
What is it, boy?!

ISHMAEL
I think I see whales!

STUBB
Well, do ye or no?!

ISHMAEL
Yes, sir! Whales, sir!

STUBB
Then what do ye say, boy?

ISHMAEL
(remembers)
There she blows! There she blows!

STUBB
Where away?

ISHMAEL
There, sir. Over there!

STUBB
Useless, cursed, greenhorn! Port or
starboard?!

ISHMAEL
(madly trying to remember
which is which)
Port. Off the port bow, sir!

STUBB
How many, boy?

ISHMAEL
Four! Seven. No. More! Fifteen or
twenty, I can't count them all!
There must be a hundred!

STUBB
Fool boy's delirious.

STARBUCK
(extends his spyglass)
Get him down from there.

Through Starbuck's spyglass -- indeed, there must be a
hundred.

STARBUCK
Good God in heaven.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Lockers fly open -- harpoons and lances pour out.

Stubb shouts commands.

Crewmen leap into the whaleboats hanging from their davits.

Ishmael clumsily hurries to climb down from the masthead.

ISHMAEL
Mr. Stubb! Mr. Stubb!

STUBB
Get back up there, boy! A
whaleboat's no place for you!

Starbuck's boat lowers away and hits the water -- the Pequod running at full speed.

Third mate, MR. FLASK's boat hangs crooked from a jammed davit, its crew yelling and arguing about how to free the jam.

STUBB
Well, are ye whalemens or no?! It's
the lanyard there. The forward
block!

-- whips out his knife -- cuts the lanyard -- dropping the whaleboat 20 feet to the bounding sea. The crew tumbles, two fall overboard.

STUBB
Best to stay in the boat, ladies.
There'll be sharks about today!

On the sea -- whale flukes -- heaving up spray.

Stubb at the tiller of his boat -- pipe clenched in his teeth -- smoke pouring from his nose -- the whales spout majestically before him.

STUBB
Oh, boys, what a glorious sight I
see! Must be the Gardens of Tivoli!
Pull now, and make yourselves rich!
Pull I say, and we'll be bathin' in
brandy with two women each.

(MORE)

STUBB (CONT'D)

These fish will have us home in a week. Pull with all yer strength!

The Pod of whales -- spouting -- lazily swimming along.

Flask maneuvers his whaleboat to close on a whale.

FLASK

Stand up harpooneer! Give it to her solid!

Daggoo expertly lodges his knee in the clumsy-cleat notch at the bow -- watches the whale before him -- cruising through the waves. The whaleboat pulls close -- closer still -- the whale in arm's reach!

Like Colossus, Daggoo rises up and plunges the harpoon deep.

FLASK

Hove in!

Flask's crew instantly shifts oars and scrambles to straddle the centerboard box as the whaleline begins to whistle and whip between their legs like it's alive. The whaleboat slows in the water as the whaleline pays out.

A crewman pours water on the smoking loggerhead -- heating up from the whaleline.

Flask watches, then --

FLASK

Make fast the line!

A crewman yanks the whaleline tight on the loggerhead. The boat leaps out of the water and races off on a Nantucket Sleigh Ride.

Stubb's boat closes on a whale.

STUBB

Stand up harpooneer! Strike deep in his lungs.

Queequeg rises in the bow and lets fly. A small whale, a calf, rises between the boat and its mother -- the harpoon deflects off its back.

STUBB

Cut it loose!

Queequeg slashes the whaleline with a hatchet and grabs another harpoon from the jack. The crew rows harder -- closing on the whale.

Queequeg lets fly -- the harpoon holds. Whaleline streaks out of the boat in a blur.

STUBB

Hove in!

The crew fumbles badly trying to ship oars and straddle the centerboard box.

STUBB

Come now, ladies. You'll have to learn to dance better than that.

The whaleline whistles between their scrambling legs and feet.

STUBB

Mind the line! Mind the line!

In a flash -- whaleline tangles around a crewman's foot -- yanks him forward -- screaming -- jams his shin between the seats at the bow and snaps it. The boat lurches -- skids over the water sideways -- out of control as the whale races off.

Another crewman is hurled overboard. They're going so fast, the man skids along the surface like a skipping stone.

The crew works furiously to get the mangled man's leg loose, but there's too much strain on the whaleline.

STUBB

(annoyed with the delay)

Well, cut him loose! Cut him loose!

Queequeg's hatchet chops the line and the boat sags to a stop. The man's foot dangles from his leg -- shin bone protruding from the skin -- blood spurting.

Starbuck's boat -- flying over the water behind a whale -- Starbuck sees Stubb wave off as he pulls his overboard man into his boat and rows for the Pequod.

Ishmael on the masthead -- this unbelievable scene before his eyes -- behemoth whales raging through the blue water, dragging the tiny whaleboats like toys.

Starbuck's boat hits a wave and bounds out of the water -- flies through the air -- tilts -- nearly spilling the crew --

-- lands and races off through the thick whale pod -- so thick Starbuck must steer wildly to avoid hitting them.

STARBUCK
 (cool and quiet)
 Pull in now, lads. Let's finish
 him.

The crew heaves hand over hand on the whaleline -- pulling the boat closer to the tiring whale.

Starbuck climbs to the bow and changes places with Tashtego (lancing being the customary right of officers) -- takes up a lance, and now, nearly touching the huge whale, plunges the lance deep -- works it back and forth -- searching for the lungs. Pulls it out and plunges it in again.

STARBUCK
 Come now, fair beauty. Give us your
 bounty.

A shower of blood shoots from the whale's spout.

From the Pequod's masthead, Ishmael sees the sea turn red. Starbuck's whale flurries (death throes). Spouting crimson, it smashes its tail into the water -- a huge spray. It rolls on its side and expires.

Below, Ishmael sees Stubb's boat come alongside. The mangled man is hauled on deck. Ship-keepers (crew not assigned to whaleboats) tend to him.

AHAB
 (yelling aloft)
 Can thee handle an oar, boy!

ISHMAEL
 Yes, sir!

AHAB
 Be quick now!

Ishmael grabs a rope and expertly slides down to the deck, sees Ahab standing over the mangled man.

AHAB
 It must come off, man.

Ishmael -- scared -- excited -- climbs over the rail -- down the side to Stubb's boat.

AHAB
 Today is thy baptism, boy! May God
 keep you.

Ishmael fumbles to get his oar in the oarlock -- doesn't recognize Cabaco and Archy sitting behind him -- rowing hard to rejoin the hunt.

Ishmael's oar bites the water -- slams into his chest.

STUBB

See that line, greenhorn?

ISHMAEL

Yes, sir!

STUBB

That's what took his foot off. Now mind the line, or you'll be thumpin' around like old Ahab.

ISHMAEL

Is that how the Captain lost his leg?

STUBB

He didn't lose his leg! He knows right where it is. It's inside Moby Dick, boy, and the Captain'll have it back one day. You can be sure of that!

CABACO

Not on dis voyage, Santa Madre.
(crosses himself)
I don't want dis Mocha Dick.

STUBB

He's just a whale. A mountainous big whale, I give ya that, but he's just a whale.

ARCHY

Not as I hear it, sir. He's sunk three ships, a hundred whaleboats, and wears harpoons in his back like victory medals.

IRISH CREWMAN

Killed more than forty men, he has. Rammed a Navy frigate just to see how it tasted. They say he's the devil incarnate.

STUBB

Old lady's gossip! Hear what you like, but the Captain knows his measure.

(MORE)

STUBB (CONT'D)

They say old Ahab crawled right into his mouth! Going after his son, he was. Tried to reach down in Moby Dick's gut, but the brute bit off his leg and spit him out. Whales eat the inky giant squid and ugly whales eat whaleboats. But no whale eats a thing as sour as Captain Ahab. Now pull, ladies! Pull!

A deafening roar -- a landslide! Ishmael looks over his shoulder -- a whale's back arches before him.

STUBB

Eyes astern, boy! Keep yer back in that oar. I do all the lookin' here. Stand up harpooneer! And give it to her solid!

Queequeg lets fly. Crewmen -- now in better coordination -- leap from their seats and straddle the whaleline.

Ishmael fumbles to keep up.

With the whale -- Stubb's boat falls back -- slows. The whaleline pays out -- twenty yards -- thirty yards.

STUBB

Make fast the line!

The boat leaps into the air -- bounds and swerves over the water.

Ishmael is thrown down -- whaleline whistles past his head -- snaps like a whip into his face -- nipping a bite of flesh.

The boat jumps around so violently he can't get to his feet. The whaleline rips into his head, snatching a clump of hair.

STUBB

(laughing at him)

Mind the line, boy. Mind the line!

Ishmael claws his way to his feet and straddles the whaleline -- grabs hold of his seat to steady himself as the ocean rushes by in a blur.

Stubb climbs over Ishmael -- steps on his fingers -- changes places with Queequeg to lance.

STUBB

Come on! Pull in, now!

Ishmael and the crew pull on the whaleline to bring the careening boat closer to the whale. In the bow, Stubb raises a lance -- strikes for the lungs.

STUBB

Show me yer color fishy!

The whale spouts blood, showering the boat -- drenching Ishmael. He's horrified.

STUBB

He's going to flurry! Free the line!

Queequeg shoves Ishmael sprawling out of the way -- frees the whaleline from the loggerhead. The boat sags to a stop.

The whale flurries. Its huge tail -- bigger than the whaleboat -- raises up -- thunders down -- missing the boat, but swamping it.

STUBB

(apparently enjoying it)
Bail us out, ladies!

The crew madly bails. Ishmael sees shark fins circling everywhere. A leering shark -- drunk with blood -- gnaws into the gunwale right next to him.

STUBB

Well, hit him, boy.

ISHMAEL

(astounded)
What?

STUBB

Sharks has got weak noses.
(gestures with his fist)
Hit him in the nose!

Ishmael gathers up his courage and slams his fist into the shark's nose. The beast lets go and slides into the water, leaving three teeth stuck in the gunwale.

STUBB

Good luck, they is. We all need a bit of luck, now, don't we?

Ishmael pulls the shark's teeth from the gunwale.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - SUNSET

A red sun sinks into crimson water.

Starbuck's boat tows a whale toward the Pequod, Queequeg standing on the whale's back.

Crewmen in spiked boots stand on whales, rolling them like loggers.

Others dance on narrow cutting stages slung over the side above whales lashed to the Pequod's hull.

Flensing knives, fifteen feet long, cut blanket pieces of blubber -- four and five yards long and eighteen inches wide. They're hoisted onto the deck.

Ishmael, spattered with blood, face black with the oily smoke rising from try pots (giant vats on brick fireplaces), hacks at a smaller horse piece, cutting it into even smaller Bible loaves. He carries them to a try pot -- throws them into the boiling brew.

The mangled man cries out.

MANGLED MAN

Oh dear God, no! Not my leg! I
curse this ship! I curse you all!

Ishmael sees him laid out on a bloodied workbench. Seamen hold him down.

Ahab, without so much as a blink, saws through the man's shinbone.

Ishmael is shaken.

PIP

Ya gits used to it, Mr. Greenhorn.
Ya gits used to anythin'.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - NIGHT

Dante's Inferno. It could be no place on God's earth. Try pot fires burn bright. Thick black smoke twists up like witches in hellish fire light. Massive slabs of blubber hang in the air. Blood everywhere.

Ishmael sees Flask and Stubb hacking the eye from a whale's huge head.

STUBB

Come here, boy.

Other seamen circle around, hooting and yelling.

Flask holds up the whale eye -- big as a grapefruit!

STUBB

You did well, boy! You're a
whaleman now. Have a bite! It's
tradition.

Ishmael stares at the eye in Flask's hands. Seamen cheer. Pip bangs his tambourine. Thick smoke swirls past. The firelight dances on Ishmael's face, flickers in his eyes.

He faints dead away. Stubb catches him and bursts out laughing.

STUBB

Back to work, lads. Before the
sharks pick us clean. Be quick
about it.

Stubb helps Ishmael to a hatch cover, sits him down and gives him some water.

STUBB

Why don't ye see the cook for some
supper. A nice juicy whale steak'd
mend ye well.

Ishmael wretches. Stubb pats him on the back.

STUBB

It looks a mite gruesome, but
there's glory in this work. This
oil lights every lamp by which
every poet writes his verse. Why,
this oil lights the world, I'd say.
Without it, the gears of all the
world's machines would grind to a
stop. They're just fish, lad. Big
fish they are, but fish all the
same. And God made the bounty of
the sea for men to harvest, so we
do God's work in this thing. Be
proud, boy. You did well today. Get
some sleep. We've six more to
whittle down.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - PINK DAWN

The work has been going on all night. Ishmael comes on deck to the sun breaking the horizon.

STARBUCK

Ship off the port bow, Captain.

Ishmael sees Ahab snap his spyglass to his eye.

EXT. THE RACHEL - MORNING

Captain Gardner lowers down the side into a whaleboat and rows toward the Pequod.

GARDNER

(desperate)

Ahoy! Captain Ahab! Have ye seen a whaleboat adrift?

AHAB

Hast thou seen the White Whale?

GARDNER

Aye. Yesterday.

AHAB

Not killed! Thee did not kill him?!

GARDNER

No, Captain. He killed three of ours and one of our boats is lost. My own son is in that boat.

AHAB

What was his heading?

Seamen lower a rope ladder.

GARDNER

South for the Cape of Good Hope, but do not hunt the White Whale Captain Ahab, or surely you will be lost. Help me search for our boat. I beg thee. My own son.

Ahab knows this anguish -- and the result.

AHAB

I cannot help thee, Captain Gardner. Even now, I lose time.

Gardner's dingy comes alongside.

GARDNER

For God's sake, Captain. I beg thee. Let me charter your ship. I will gladly pay for it.

(MORE)

GARDNER (CONT'D)

I will roundly pay for it, if there be no other way. You must, oh, you must, and you shall do this thing.

Grabs the ladder and starts to climb, but is stopped by Ahab's icy command.

AHAB

Avast! I cannot help thee, sir. Return to thy ship. We sail for the Cape immediately. Mr. Starbuck, stow the ladder and prepare to make way.

STARBUCK

Captain. His son. His own son. We must help him. 'Tis not Christian, Captain.

GARDNER

I will not go 'till you say aye to me. Do to me as you would have me do unto you in the like case. Yes, yes, you relent. I see it.

(to Ahab's crew)

Run! Run men, now for your boats and help me search.

AHAB

Lower not one boat. Return to your ship, Captain Gardner. I cannot help thee. Only God can help thee now. Good-bye. Good-bye. I must go.

Gardner is stunned Ahab doesn't realize the gravity of his sin.

GARDNER

God will curse you for this.

AHAB

God cursed me long ago. May God bless thee, Captain Gardner.

GARDNER

May God have mercy on thee, Captain Ahab.

Gardner's dingy pathetically rows away.

AHAB

Mr. Starbuck! Cut the whales loose. We sail for Cape Horn.

STARBUCK

Will you add to this blasphemy? To kill these whales and leave them to rot, why, it's a sin against nature, Captain. God will surely strike thee.

AHAB

Then I will strike Him back!

The crew freezes. Ahab strides toward Starbuck -- then eases up and speaks with icy calm.

AHAB

I am Judge and Jury on this ship. I will decide what is sin and what is not. His son and all in that boat are lost. This I know too well. Moby Dick they fought and Moby Dick we now hunt. Look at the binnacle watch there. In three minutes from this present instant this ship will be under full sail. You have my order, Mr. Starbuck.

Starbuck is too numbed to speak. Ishmael sees the crew unable to move.

Ahab, smoke swirling in his face, moves slowly through the crew, making eye contact with each and every one, plumbing their souls as if deciding who shall live or die.

AHAB

Carpenter! Bring me your top-maul. Look, ye men. D'ye see this Spanish gold ounce!

Ahab aims the coin so it reflects a beam of brilliant gold light into their faces.

AHAB

A sixteen dollar piece, men. Whosoever raises me the white-headed whale with wrinkled brow and crooked jaw, whosoever raises me that same whale, he shall have...

-- takes the top-maul and nails the coin to the mainmast, each blow separating each of these words.

AHAB

this... gold... ounce!

The massive harpooneer, Tashtego, steps up.

TASHTEGO

The whale some call Mocha Dick?

AHAB

Aye, the same, Tashtego.

DAGGOO

Does he have a singular way of spouting, Captain? Frothy and bushy, even for a sperm whale, and not angled starboard like other spermaceti, but hard forward like a bowsprit.

AHAB

Thee hast seen him too, Daggoo.

QUEEQUEG

And he have ten, twenty, oh good many iron in him hide, all twiske-be-twisk, like...like...

AHAB

Like corkscrews! Aye, Queequeg. Harpoons lie wrenched and broken in his flanks. Three from this, mine own hand.

FEDALLAH

They say Moby Dick took Captain leg? Took Captain son.

AHAB

Aye. Aye. Was Moby Dick took my son. Then back he came to carve this face anew. And came he yet again to cripple me with this dead stump I stand on now. Aye. Aye! It was that accursed whale that made a poor pegging lubber. And I'll chase him round Good Hope, round the Horn, round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is why I chose ye brave men! To hunt the White Whale over all sides of this earth till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave.

HARPOONEERS

Aye! Aye!

STUBB

The lance for Moby Dick!

AHAB

God bless ye. God bless ye, men.
Cook. Draw the great measure of
rum! But what's this long face, Mr.
Starbuck? Art thou not game for
Moby Dick?

STARBUCK

I am game for his crooked jaw, and
for the jaws of death, if that
fairly comes the way of our
business. But I came here to
harvest whales, not my commander's
vengeance. How much will it yield
even if thou obtains it? It will
not fetch much in New Bedford's
market.

AHAB

New Bedford's market! Hoot! Come
closer Starbuck. Money's not the
measure, man. Have the accountants
made this world their great
counting-house, girdling it with
guineas? No, Mr. Starbuck. This
world and all men in it are ruled
by passion and my vengeance will
fetch a great premium. Here!

-- pounds his fist on his heart.

STARBUCK

(fear shaking him)

To lust for vengeance against one
of God's creatures that acted only
out of natural instinct, why it's
unnatural.

AHAB

Moby Dick struck me, do ye not
plainly see? Is it not natural for
me to strike back?

STARBUCK

No! That alone and only that
separates man from animal.

(MORE)

STARBUCK (CONT'D)

Man can rise above his base nature
and wrongful desires. Man can give
himself up to God's will.

AHAB

Can he? Can he, now? Cut that rope
that binds our fate? Then perhaps I
am not a man. What about you,
Starbuck? Thy face reddens with
passion. My heat has ignited
anger's glow in thee. But look, ye,
Starbuck, what is said in heat,
that thing unsays itself. I meant
not to incense thee. Let it go!
Look! The crew, man. The crew! Are
they not one and all with Ahab in
this hunt? See Stubb! He laughs!
See the Moslem! He snorts to think
of it. Can thee stand alone in this
hurricane? And what is it I ask?
Only to hunt a whale.

(to the crew)

No wondrous feat for brave
Starbuck, the finest First Mate out
of all New Bedford. Why a thousand
whales he's killed. Speak,
Starbuck. Let them know your
courage.

STARBUCK

God keep me. May God keep us all!

AHAB

Where is the rum! Bring it here!
Drink and pass it round! Round with
it! Round! Short draughts, long
swallows, men. 'Tis hot as Satan's
hoof. It spirals in thee and sets
fire to thee, now. Well done. Cook!
Fill us again! Mates, flank me with
your lances. Harpooneers, stand
there with your irons, and ye,
stout mariners, ring me in that I
may revive a noble custom of our
fisherman fathers. Advance ye
mates. Cross your lances before me.
Let me touch the axis.

Stubb and Flask cross lances. Ahab jams one in Starbuck's
hand, joins his lance with the others.

Ahab grasps the axis and jerks -- his fiery eyes locking with
Flask, Stubb -- but Starbuck looks away.

AHAB

D'ye feel it? The binding sets and
we are joined. Down lances! And
now, ye harpooneers. My pagan
kinsman. Honorable, noble
gentlemen. Cut your seizings and
draw the poles.

The harpooneers detach the iron ends of their harpoons and hold them barbs up.

AHAB

Cant them over!
(laughs)
Know ye not the drinking end! Turn
up the socket!

Ahab fills each harpoon socket with rum.

AHAB

Now stand shoulder to shoulder and
commend these murderous chalices,
ye who are now parties to this
indissoluble league. Drink
harpooneers! Drink and swear! God
hunt us all if we do not hunt Moby
Dick! Death to Moby Dick!

The crew swarms like angry bees to drink from the harpoon sockets.

THE CREW

Death to Moby Dick!

Ishmael gulps rum -- sees Starbuck skulking away.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - DUSK

Racing south in rising seas -- wind roaring. Stubb on the quarterdeck with Starbuck.

STUBB

The wind rises, Mr. Starbuck. Will
ye have us reef royals and
topgallants?

Starbuck doesn't respond.

STUBB

Searching for the lost boy would be
for naught. You know that as well
as the Captain. They are lost.

(MORE)

STUBB (CONT'D)

Gone to Heaven we can pray, but
lost all the same.

STARBUCK

(morose whisper)

'Tis not the loss of the boy or
good men that so vexes me now. I
fear a darker thing.

STUBB

A whale's a whale, Mr. Starbuck.
Gray, blue, or white.

STARBUCK

I do not fear the white whale. Nor
do I fear Ahab. I fear God. For we
who join in Ahab's lustful
vengeance do join a hellish sin. I
fear God will abandon all who
follow Ahab.

STUBB

He's the Captain!

STARBUCK

(resigned whisper)

Reef royals and topgallants.

STUBB

(lusty bellow)

All hands aloft! Reef royals and
topgallants!

The crew scurries into the rigging. Ahab flies from his
cabin.

AHAB

Reef no sail! I say!

STARBUCK

The wind, Captain. It's too much.

AHAB

Take the last bit of slack from
every stay. We slow for nothing,
Mr. Starbuck!

STUBB

Up you go, my dancin' lads!

Ishmael leaps onto the mainmast shroud.

STUBB

Boy! Come with me.

Ishmael climbs down and follows Stubb forward.

A scream -- a crewman falls to the deck in front of them. His head bursts open, spewing blood and brains.

SICILIAN CREWMAN

A sign of evil.

The crew stops work. Gathers over the body.

AHAB

Give him a proper burial, Mr. Starbuck. Then set the crew to work.

Crewmen lift the body onto a plank -- rest one end on the gunwale. Pip softly taps his tambourine in steady rhythm. Starbuck reads from the Bible.

The crewmen tilt the plank and the body drops into the racing sea.

EXT. OCEAN - DAWN

The Pequod bounds through white caps under full sail -- the sun rising.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - DAY

Stubb, sweating in the heat, neatly coils a four inch thick hawser. Ishmael helps him.

ISHMAEL

Is it true, Mr. Stubb? Is Moby Dick truly white?

STUBB

White as Mount Everest, only bigger.

ISHMAEL

The crew fears we're bound to be eaten by the beast. They say the man fell because the Captain has blasphemed and brought a curse upon the Pequod.

STUBB

I care not a twit for Voodoo or Christian curses. I know not what may come, but be what it will, I'll go to it laughing. I've no fear.

(MORE)

STUBB (CONT'D)

Come what may, it's all predestinated.

ISHMAEL

Is it, Mr. Stubb? I was climbing aloft, perhaps to fall and die. Was it fate that stopped me, or you, Mr. Stubb?

STUBB

(irritated)

You knot my brow, boy. What I know is this. Ahab's Captain of this ship and it's Ahab what makes our fates. If ye wants to believe in somethin', believe in him, boy. It's Ahab that makes us rich and Ahab that keeps us safe.

ISHMAEL

Does he believe in fate?

STUBB

(laughs hard)

If ye have the balls to ask him, let me know.

EXT. THE PEQUOD - NIGHT

A crewman climbs the mainmast to relieve Ishmael who deftly swings down on a rope and finds Queequeg lying on the deck.

ISHMAEL

Why are you sleeping, here?

QUEEQUEG

Hot below.

Ishmael decides it's not a bad idea -- finds a coil of rope for a pillow -- lays down beside Queequeg -- looks aft --

Ahab dozes, sitting on his whale bone stool on the quarterdeck. His head suddenly jerks up. He holds perfectly still.

AHAB

Lookouts! What do ye see?!

LOOKOUTS (O.S.)

-- All's well.

-- A fair sea, Captain.

Ahab scans the water, jumps up, moving like a caged animal.

AHAB

Look sharp, now! He is here, I say.
I feel him near.

Ishmael looks out to sea -- sees nothing.

LOOKOUT (O.S.)

Thar she blows!

AHAB

Where away?!

LOOKOUT (O.S.)

By the moon, Captain!

From the yellow moon, a streak of light runs across the placid water directly at the Pequod.

Ishmael looks at the moon breaking the horizon -- strains his eyes -- still nothing. Queequeg looks. Other crewmen gather -- all silent.

The sea explodes. Moby Dick rises into the sky. His massive body obliterating the moon, then falls to the sea exploding water into the air.

The crew stands silent.

CAPTAIN AHAB

Which way does he head?!

LOOKOUT (O.S.)

I can't see him, Captain. Do I get the doubloon?

AHAB

Not this time. Was he that found us.

Everyone watching, waiting.

Slowly, Moby Dick's gnarled, stark white brow rises out of the water 300 feet away. Like a buoy, he bobs vertically in the moonlit water, his tiny eye staring back at the crew.

STUBB

Now there's a cocky fish. Damned whale is takin' our measure!

PIP

That be no whale. That be a great white spirit.

Ishmael sees Ahab standing perfectly still, staring back at Moby Dick -- strangely calm.

AHAB
(a whisper)
Lower the boats.

MR. STARBUCK
At night, sir? Not at night.

AHAB
Lower the boats.

The crew watches Moby Dick swim off toward the moon, his back forested with lances and harpoons. His huge wake glistens in the moonlight.

Flask backs away from the bulwark as in a trance, then sprints for the harpoon locker -- rips it open -- pulls out lances and harpoons by the armful, fumbling, dropping them on the deck with loud clattering.

The crew is dumbfounded.

MR. STUBB
Well, let's after him! Blast, men!
Do ye not see?!

IRISH CREWMAN
Aye, Captain. We all see, but that
don't mean it's real.

The crew moves slowly, filled with dread, taking lances, climbing into the boats.

Ahab strides for his boat.

AHAB
Helmsman. Keep the ship close.

HELMSMAN
Aye, Captain.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Moby Dick comes right at us -- monstrous brow covered with masses of rocky barnacles. His eye passes -- his gigantic body roars by -- leaves us looking at the Pequod -- tiny in the distance. But smaller yet are the four whaleboats rowing after him.

Ishmael pulls at his oar, watching Ahab -- weirdly calm and peaceful.

Stubb -- pipe jammed in his mouth -- smoke pouring from his nose -- devoid of his usual banter -- oars squeak.

ARCHY

No song tonight, Mr. Stubb?

STUBB

Just pull, lads. Pull in now.

On Starbuck's boat --

STARBUCK

Harder now. We close on him.

On Ahab's boat -- Ahab watches Moby Dick's massive back rise to cover the moon.

AHAB

(a whisper)

See how he swims so weakly? He grows tired in his old age. Rise up now, Queequeg. Pull, boys. Faster. Pull.

Ahab's crew heaves into the oars -- the little boat flying across the water -- faster -- faster.

AHAB

Strike now!

Queequeg arches his back -- facing the mountainous side of Moby Dick -- lets fly with a blood curdling cry. The harpoon plunges deep. Moby Dick is unfazed and continues to glide through the water.

AHAB

Ship oars!

His boat slows in the water.

Fedallah, Tashtego, and Daggoo heave their harpoons in quick succession.

In perfect sync with the crew, Ishmael straddles the centerboard box. The whaleline leisurely pays out between their legs.

ICELANDER

He don't run from us. He don't even feel them harpoons.

AHAB

Make fast the line!

Ahab yanks hard on his whaleline and it jerks to a stop around the loggerhead.

Moby Dick tows the boats toward the moon at a quickening pace. The water begins to roar louder.

Starbuck looks back and sees the Pequod shrinking behind them.

STARBUCK
(whispers to the ship)
Stay close.

Ishmael sees the water begin to spray from the bow of his boat. They're flying now.

AHAB
Pull in! Pull in, now!

Ishmael and the crew pull on the whaleline, drawing the boat closer to Moby Dick. His massive tail knives into the now churning wake behind him and kicks up a ton of water as it breaks the surface.

Starbuck's boat pulls in, but Moby Dick whips his tail and catches Starbuck's whaleline. The boat flips into the air, dumping crew and gear into the roiling water.

Ahab's boat flies over the water.

AHAB
The lance, Queequeg. Strike deep
for his lungs!

-- pulls alongside Moby Dick -- Queequeg rears back -- plunges the lance into him.

Flask's boat closes and he drives his lance home.

On Stubb's boat -- Stubb moves to the bow -- readies a lance as they rip over the water.

STUBB
Pull in! Pull in!

He raises up to strike, then -- what's this?

Starbuck's capsized boat right in front of him, crewmen screaming in the water.

Stubb's boat slams into the overturned hull. Stubb and his crew hang on. Their boat flies into the air -- slams onto the water and races off behind Moby Dick.

Stubb looks back at Starbuck's smashed boat, wondering how in hell they could hit it when it should be behind them, then suddenly understands.

The Pequod is right in front of them! Moby Dick circled and now heads straight for the ship.

On the Pequod -- shipkeepers panic -- Moby Dick rages through the sea, coming at the ship like a locomotive.

On Ahab's boat --

AHAB

Cut the line! Cut the line!

Queequeg reaches for the hatchet. TOO LATE! Moby Dick's massive body sinks under the ship. Ahab and his crew dive for the water, but one man is too slow. He and the boat smash into the hull.

On Stubb's boat --

STUBB

Jump!

The crew leaps overboard. Stubb's boat explodes into pieces as it slams into the hull. Flask's boat is right behind.

On the Pequod -- shipkeepers hang on as the ship quakes and shivers.

Underwater, Moby Dick grinds his back into the keel with horrid groaning sounds -- snapping off old harpoons.

The helmsman sees him surface on the other side, smack his tail, and head off dragging pieces of whaleboats.

HELMSMAN

Lower the sails! Get lines over the side!

In the black sea -- boat crews flail in the water trying to get hold of the Pequod as she glides past.

The moon is swallowed by a cloud and all goes black.

Ishmael swims for the man who slammed into the hull -- rolls him over -- his head's smashed in.

Pandemonium on the Pequod. Ship-keepers help boat crews onto deck. They're exhausted, shaking with fear.

The black sea -- Ahab, Ishmael and Stubb treading water, scanning for survivors.

STUBB

I don't see Starbuck or his crew.

AHAB

Make torches! Lower two boats!

Torches flame in the darkness.

Two boats pull through the water. Torch light dances on the black sea -- the lights of the Pequod in the distance.

Ahab and others climb into the boats. Ahab scans the water. A piece of Starbuck's hull floats past.

AHAB

Starbuck! Call out, man! Where are thee?

A VOICE (O.S.)

Here! Over here!

Ishmael raises a torch and sees a body.

ISHMAEL

There! See him?!

Ahab steers for the body. It floats face down. Ishmael and others lean over the side -- grab his arms and pull him up.

It's Fedallah, but only his torso - his legs are gone.

A shark fin slices the water beside Ishmael.

BASQUE CREWMAN

Sharks!

Stubb hears splashing.

STUBB

Quiet now! Hear that? Over there!
Call out man! Where are ye?!

The two boats steer for the splashing. An injured crewman appears in the torchlight, laboring to swim to them.

SICILIAN CREWMAN

There!

In a flash, the gaping jaws of two sharks rip into him and thrash him to pieces. They're gone in a second.

Silence.

STUBB
Starbuck! Call out!

STARBUCK (O.S.)
Here! Over here!

The boat crews scan the water -- Ishmael catches a glimpse of a hull.

ISHMAEL
There! Look!

Both boats row like mad.

A shark lunges up at Ishmael's oar.

Starbuck fights to balance on the wrecked bow of his boat which jerks and bobs as a shark bites into it and gnaws maniacally. Starbuck tries to kick him in the head. Another shark rips into the hull -- Starbuck nearly falls.

Stubb's boat reaches Starbuck first. Ishmael bashes at the sharks with his oar. They swim off.

Starbuck leaps in -- white with fear.

On Ahab's boat --

AHAB
Call out, men! Where are ye!

In silence, the crew scans for others. They hear more splashing and thrashing. Then it stops and all is dead silent.

Nobody says a word. The only sound, the snap and pop of the torch flames.

AHAB
God save them all. Back to the ship. Back to the ship, men.

On the Pequod -- shipkeepers watch the torches come toward the ship like funeral barges. Ahab howls like a wounded beast in the darkness.

AHAB
Raise sail! I will not lose him now!

Starbuck in Stubb's boat, shaking uncontrollably with fear.

STARBUCK
He will kill us all.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - NIGHT

Crewmen climb from the boats like zombies. The Carpenter helps Ahab.

CARPENTER

She's breached, Captain. We're taking water in the hold.

AHAB

(furious)

Mr. Stubb! Pump us dry. Helmsman? Bring us about.

(moaning in despair)

We head north to Dakar for repair.

EXT. PORT OF DAKAR, SENEGAL - DAY

Among the clippers, schooners and whaling barks, the Pequod under repair.

Two crewmen carry the mangled man who lost his leg on a stretcher to the gangway. Mr. Starbuck grips his hand.

AHAB

Safe passage home. God be with thee, man.

Ahab gives him a pouch of coins.

On the bow, four crewmen work at the bow -- look around nervously, then quick as a wink -- dash along the bowsprit rigging -- dangle from the martingales -- swing onto the dock and disappear into the hubbub on the wharf.

The Pequod's Carpenter devours an orange -- sees the crewmen dash away -- says nothing.

Ishmael fits a new loggerhead into a whaleboat. It won't fit, so Ishmael starts to whittle it down.

CARPENTER

Blast, boy. Loggerheads must fit tight. Look here.

The Carpenter grabs the loggerhead and pounds it into place with a maul, then sees Ishmael's attention has been swept away by two seductive YOUNG GIRLS on the wharf. Light brown skin, features of mixed blood, they wave and laugh.

YOUNG GIRLS

-- Hallo, mon cher.
-- Il est très beau, non?
-- For you, three franc.

CARPENTER

Keep your frank in your pants
around here, boy. Them's is Sirens.
Just as soon leave you dead as
leave you smiling.

ISHMAEL

You don't look like the sort of man
to be so expert about ladies.

And indeed the Carpenter does not: hunched shoulders,
scraggly hair, in his 50's.

CARPENTER

I'm not, but those ain't ladies.
They be half pirate, half cannibal
and quick with a knife. I've sailed
every sea and tasted the fruit of
every port, and I could show ye a
thing or three about fittin' a
loggerhead.

STUBB

This old man fathered half the
people in the world, by his
account. He's got stories to fill a
book, he does. Why, he once sailed
on the Essex.

ISHMAEL

I know the story of the Essex.
Southeast of Hawaii she was rammed
by a whale and sank.

CARPENTER

All true. The beast made right for
us. Struck amidships with his ugly
head. Tore us clean in half.

STUBB

Only five survived. Drifted at sea
for eighty days in a whaleboat.
They say they ate the dead to stay
alive.

CARPENTER

All true.

ISHMAEL

Then you must remember my father's
cousin, Allen Bainbridge. He was
third mate.

CARPENTER

Remember him? Hell, son, I et him!

-- belches, gnaws into his orange and returns to work.
Ishmael is horrified. Stubb bursts out laughing.

STUBB

He tells tales as tall as the
mainmast. He wasn't aboard when she
went down.

AHAB

Why is there no work on the
foredeck, Mr. Stubb?

Stubb runs forward -- sees the tools abandoned -- instantly
realizes what happened.

AHAB

Get thee ashore, Mr. Stubb. Hire on
replacements.

A SLAVER CAPTAIN cracks a bull whip across the backs and of a
line of black slaves bound together with ropes around their
necks. With him are four of his crew. His First Mate notices
the Pequod and elbows the Slaver Captain -- yanks the chain
and stops the horrid procession.

SLAVER CAPTAIN

Ahoy, there! Is Captain Ahab
aboard?

Ishmael sees Ahab step to the rail.

AHAB

I am Captain Ahab.

SLAVER CAPTAIN

They say you're hell bent for the
whale they call Moby Dick.

AHAB

Hast thee seen him?

SLAVER CAPTAIN

Not three days ago. We steered
clear, though. We've no business
with whales.

AHAB

Was he headed south?

SLAVER CAPTAIN

South as south can be. To Hades,
I'd say. And you can be sure you'll
meet him there.

AHAB

What is they meaning, sir?

SLAVER CAPTAIN

They say you refused to help the
Captain of the Rachel search for
his son. Was it so?

AHAB

It was. Did thee meet the Rachel?

SLAVER CAPTAIN

Your deed is known to all. Your own
crew abandons you, as God has.

AHAB

Hast thou come to pass judgment on
my soul?

SLAVER CAPTAIN

Oh, no, sir. That wouldn't be
possible, would it? I'm told you
have no soul. It was eaten by Moby
Dick.

AHAB

It is hard to see the truth of
things, Captain. What becomes of a
slaver's soul? Will God forgive
thee?

SLAVER CAPTAIN

None will forgive Captain Ahab.

Ishmael sees Mr. Stubb come up the dock followed by four men carrying sea chests. They look more like pirates than whalemens. The fourth man is a short, stocky black man -- hair piled up on his head in a strange do -- a bone through his nose.

STUBB

(to the Slaver Captain)

Take them words back. You'll not be
insultin' my captain.

The Slaver Captain spits and heads off.

Stubb explodes in rage -- grabs his collar -- pulls him to the ground and starts pounding him. The Slaver's men jump Stubb.

Ishmael sees Mr. Flask jump over the side and into the fray. He follows -- gets flattened by a punch. The seamen Stubb hired drop their gear and beat hell out of the Slaver crew who run and crawl away.

Stubb helps bloodied Ishmael to his feet.

AHAB

Cut those men loose.

Stubb, Ishmael, and Flask cut the ropes binding them and the slaves bolt.

Stubb leads the replacement seamen on board.

STUBB

(to Ahab)

Best I could do, sir.

AHAB

And well done, at that.

(bellows to Starbuck)

Get us underway, Mr. Starbuck. And be quick about it.

EXT. OFF THE IVORY COAST - SUNSET

The Pequod races south. The crew finishes stowing supplies.

EXT. QUARTER DECK - THE PEQUOD - DAY

Ahab bursts from the hatch -- nostrils flaring, eyes flashing -- yells aloft as he climbs to the quarterdeck.

AHAB

Lookout! What do you see?!

ISHMAEL

Blue sea. Blue sky, Captain.

AHAB

I smell land! Does thee not see land?!

ISHMAEL

No. No land, Captain.

AHAB

I smell land, I tell you! Look
again! And make thine eyes sharp!

Ishmael scans the horizon. Far in the distance -- sees the
white sands of an island.

ISHMAEL

There, Captain! Right you are. Off
starboard bow. An island!

Ahab's eyes fill with strangely tender hope.

AHAB

And what be the name of this
island?!

ISHMAEL

I don't know, Captain.

AHAB

Moby Dick is its name! Moby Dick, I
say. D'ye see him, Mr. Starbuck?

STARBUCK

Three points off starboard bow,
Captain.

AHAB

Wring out the last drop of speed.
Do not lose him! Ready the boats!

The entire crew is motionless at the starboard rail,
transfixed by the awesome sight of Moby Dick -- a white
mountain against deep blue sea and sky.

AHAB

Get to thy boats, men!

Harpoon lockers burst open. Lances stream out.

Whaleboats swing on their davits as crewmen climb in and
lower away.

Ishmael scurries down to the bulwark where ship-keepers help
Ahab struggle into a boat.

AHAB

Well, Get in, boy. Get in!

Ishmael jumps in as the boat lowers away.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Starbuck's boat silent -- none of the usual banter. Starbuck sees Moby Dick rise in the distance.

Starbuck's crew sees the awe in Starbuck's face. They turn to look. Starbuck explodes.

STARBUCK

Eyes astern! Eyes astern!

The crew turns back -- horrified. Sea birds screech overhead. Then a roar, like Niagara Falls, builds in their ears.

Stubb's boat -- the crew digging oars into the sea.

STUBB

Our names'll be known round the world, lads. We are the men who killed Moby Dick!

Stubb sees his crew is numb with fear.

STUBB

Let yer fear make yer muscles strong and yer hands quick. Drink up yer fear ladies! It'll make ye men! (laughs) Drink it all up. You'll need it today.

Ahab steers his boat -- eyes perfectly still, transfixed by the sight of Moby dick.

Ahab's crew silently strains against the oars in smooth rhythm.

Ishmael watches Ahab -- the roar deafening.

AHAB

(oddly gentle)
Stand up harpooneer.

Queequeg rises -- wedges his knee in the clumsy cleat.

AHAB

Steady lads. Steady.

Ishmael can't resist a look -- over his shoulder --

A mountain! A white mountain! On Moby Dick's back, a forest of lances, harpoons, dangling whaleline.

AHAB

(quiet, calm)

Eyes astern, boy. Did ye see the lances? My lances. My harpoons.

(booming)

I am back you hoary beast and by God I will have your blood this day! Harpooneer! Strike deep to his lungs, I say!

Queequeg, so close he could touch Moby Dick, arches his back like a hunting bow -- cries out -- throws his harpoon with all his strength.

It plunges deep -- instantly followed by harpoons from the other boats.

AHAB

Ship oars!

Ahab's crew ships oars -- leap to their feet as the whaleline dances and sings between their legs.

Ishamel sees a bucket float in the air, then fly like a bullet, caught in the line. It hits the bow beside Queequeg and explodes like a bomb.

AHAB

(calm and steady)

Let him run. Let him run.

Ishamel straddles the singing whaleline -- watches Moby Dick's gargantuan tail rise before him then slam into the sea. Water cascades into the boat.

AHAB

Steady lads. Steady. Make fast the line!

The whaleline snaps into the chock pin at the bow, twanging like a guitar string. The little boat absolutely leaps out of the water, speeding off behind Moby Dick.

Thick sheets of spray fly over the bow showering Ishmael. Strange sucking sounds come from the hull. Everything is vibrating. Anything not lashed down flies into the air like there's no gravity, then vanishes.

Ishamel realizes this is no Nantucket sleigh ride, this is a ride to hell! He looks back --

Ahab struggles to steer and keep from falling overboard, spray beating into his face, hair flying in the wind.

Ishmael sees Starbuck hanging onto his tiller for dear life. His crew clings to seats and gunwales, but bounce around, unable to hold themselves steady. A man flies overboard.

Flask's boat hits a wave and cartwheels -- scattering the crew.

Ishmael sees Stubb -- the crazy son of a bitch is laughing.

STUBB
(like a cowboy)
Hooooooooo Aaaaaaahhh!!

Stubb's boat bounds and leaps, gear flying out -- suddenly bounds out of the water -- noses in -- bursts to pieces -- planks and oars fly into the air -- the shattered bow bounces along behind Moby Dick, dragged by the whaleline.

Ishmael looks for the crew -- they've vanished in the heaving white froth of Moby Dick's wake.

AHAB
Keep thy mind on thy business!

Ishmael sees Moby Dick's tail rise again and slam into the sea.

In an instant, Moby Dick vanishes!

Ahab frees the whaleline and his boat glides to a stop, bobbing gently in the waves.

DANISH CREWMAN
Where is he?!

AHAB
(calm, quiet)
Look for the birds, man.

Ishmael and the crew scan the sky.

Nothing. Silence. No birds. Only the gentle lap of waves against the hull.

Ishmael sees Starbuck standing in the stern of his boat, scanning the water. Then in the distance, flying toward the boats --

ISHMAEL
The birds!

Starbuck watches them stop and circle directly overhead. His face drops. He peers into the water beside his boat --

-- a murky haze moves deep below the surface -- now bigger -- now clear -- Moby Dick rises beneath him.

On Ahab's boat --

AHAB

He breaches!

Ishamel sees Starbuck's boat rise fifty feet in the air on Moby Dick's back.

Men leap.

Starbuck's boat tumbles down the length of Moby Dick's 150 foot long spine. His gigantic body slams into the sea -- water bursts into the sky. He vanishes.

Starbuck and his crew float among the wreckage -- coils of whaleline begin to move in the water like a snake -- ripping through the water, still attached to Moby Dick.

Ishmael sees the whaleline zinging in circles in the water -- it snaps tight around a crewman.

Ahab's crew watches the horrifying sight. It snaps the man's neck and in a flash, he disappears beneath the surface.

Whaleline pours from its tub as Moby Dick goes deeper and deeper.

AHAB

(cool as ice)

He's sounding. Mind the line. Mind the line.

The tub is nearly empty.

CABACO

That's a thousand feet of line! How deep can he go?!

ARCHY

Cut him loose! Cut him loose!

Ahab silently watches the line run out of the tub.

CAPTAIN AHAB

Affix the spare line.

Ishmael helps a crewman shove another tub to the stern. Ahab deftly ties its line to the end of what's left in the other tub. Gotta be quick or it'll take his fingers off if the first line reaches its end before he's --

WHAP! The line rips from his hands and starts pouring out of the second tub.

The loggerhead smokes. A flame leaps up. Ahab douses it with water. Steam and smoke cowl into his face.

Queequeg at the bow -- the whaleline digs into the chock pin, spews saw dust and smoke -- literally sawing through the damned hull!

IRISH CREWMAN

He'll saw the boat in two! Cut him loose!

Archy panics -- grabs a hatchet from the after-cuddy to cut the line.

Ahab grabs Archy's wrist -- stares into his eyes -- forces him to his knees. Archy drops the hatchet.

Ishmael sees the second tub is nearly empty.

ISHMAEL

More line! We need more line!

TOO LATE! The tub leaps into the air -- explodes against the smoking loggerhead -- shattering into Ahab's face. The whaleline whistles through the air -- cracks like a bull whip and disappears.

CABACO

Two thousand feet of line and he still going down fast!

Ahab slumps onto the tiller.

AHAB

(groaning in pain)
I've lost him.

ISHMAEL

We'll find him again, Captain.

Ahab is struck by Ishmael's allegiance.

AHAB

Man the oars. We row for the others.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - DAY

The helmsman steers the Pequod toward the one surviving whaleboat -- Ahab's boat -- a tiny speck in the distance.

HELMSMAN

Lower boats!

EXT. THE SEA - DAY

Starbuck and others bob in the waves -- hanging onto wreckage. Ahab's boat comes for them.

EXT. THE PEQUOD - DAY

Ahab clamors out of his boat, over the rail and onto the deck -- eyes ablaze.

AHAB

Mr. Starbuck! Raise the sails
smartly! He heads round the Cape
for the Indian Ocean. Be quick now
lads!

The crew watches Ahab hurry to his cabin. Starbuck sees the crew standing there, frozen with fear. He feels their anguish.

STARBUCK

You heard the Captain.

Ishmael sees the crew still isn't moving.

STUBB

He's just a damn whale. No phantom
of the deep. No demon. Just a
bloomin' whale. Now get on with it!

He shoves Archy and Cabaco to get them moving.

STUBB

Up you go! Step lively, now! As
soon as we're underway, there'll be
roasted chicken for supper and rum
for dessert.

EXT. OFF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE - NIGHT

Moon darting in and out of heavy clouds above the Pequod.

INT. THE GALLEY - NIGHT

Fleece gnaws at a chicken leg. Stubb leans in with Ishmael in tow.

STUBB

Take rum to the foc'sle. Have
Ishmael lend a hand.

INT. THE FOC'SLE - NIGHT

Cabaco, Archy, and others huddle around, smoking in the dim
lamp light -- gnawing on chicken.

CABACO

We be jus' one day sail off de
coast. We can make land in de
whaleboat.

ARCHY

I say we wait 'til we put in for
supplies.

Fleece and Ishmael come down the steps. The talk stops.

FLEECE

The wind blows stronger down here
than it does on deck. Yer mouths
must be dry as the desert.

Fleece passes out beakers. Ishmael fills them with rum.

ARCHY

Old Ahab's a blaspheming lunatic.
We don't need fear bein' tried for
desertion.

FLEECE

You're right about that, man.
Though I wouldn'a be headin' for
this coast 'less you don't mind
bein' boiled in a pot an
et fer dinner. No, I wouldn'a be
fearin' no court of law. It's the
cannibals what'd worry me, and if
they don't getcha, headhunters
surely will. Shrink a man's head
down no bigger than this (makes a
fist) and wear'em for decoration.

ARCHY

Tell your tales, old fool. I'll pay
any man five dollars what shows me
a shrunken head.

FLEECE

Oh, will ye, now? Five dollars.

The African seaman they picked up in Dakar, the one with the bone through his nose, ominously leans into the light and looks Archy over, then in a thick French accent --

BONE NOSE

Dis head no good. Shrunk already
too much.

He laughs wildly. Archy's about to punch his lights out.

QUEEQUEG

Five dollar?

ARCHY

What's it to you, stinkin' savage?

Queequeg pulls his tomahawk pipe from his lips and exhales a great cloud of blue smoke through his nose. The thing is a pipe at one end and a glistening, razor sharp hatchet at the other.

QUEEQUEG

Five dollar.

Queequeg whips his shrunken head from his sea chest and plops it into Archy's lap.

CABACO

Ayeee! Mia madre!

Archy flings the head back at Queequeg who straightens the hair gently. Bone Nose thinks this is a riot. Cabaco crosses himself. Queequeg puffs on his pipe -- calmly extends his open palm.

FLEECE

I'd pay the painted man if I were
you. Sleep tight, my pretties.
Sweet dreams!

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - NIGHT

Archy, Cabaco and three other crewmen come on deck and walk aft toward the quarterdeck.

ARCHY

Mr. Starbuck, sir? A word, sir?

Starbuck climbs down from the quarter-deck. The wind blows gently.

ARCHY

What's our next port, Mr. Starbuck?

STARBUCK
 (stiffly)
 That be no concern to thee.

ARCHY
 Want to send letters home, sir.

SICILIAN CREWMAN
 We have familia, senior.

Starbuck feels their fear and his own, though his comes from a far deeper place.

STARBUCK
 I will ask the Captain, but remember, each of thee signed a contract when thee boarded the Pequod. Desertion is punishable by law.

CREWMEN
 -- We're honest men, sir.
 -- God fearin' men.

INT. AHAB'S CABIN - NIGHT

A knock at his door -- Ahab lost in his charts.

AHAB
 Come ahead.

Starbuck steps in -- eases the door closed.

STARBUCK
 May I have a word with thee, Captain?
 (no response)
 The crew fears this voyage. I suspect more plan desertion.

AHAB
 Do you see, Starbuck? The gray whales move south here, along California each winter to their mating grounds off Baja. The humpbacks take this vein, to mate here in spring. The mighty spermaceti swim here through the Pacific and here through the Indian Ocean. Their numbers, their routes, their seasons, all are made plain on my charts.

STARBUCK

(genuinely amazed)

With these charts we can fill our hold in half the time.

AHAB

Gleaned from the log books of whaling ships since whaling began. From Japan whalers and Basque whalers too, have I gained these insights. And see the red lines, Mr. Starbuck? Red marks the way of Moby Dick. Around this world, in all the seas, in all seasons. I know his mind like my own. With the full moon in May, we will find him there...

(jabs his finger on the map where it says Sea of Japan)

And there I will kill him. We sail directly for the Japan Seas, Mr. Starbuck.

STARBUCK

But your chart shows we cross rich whaling grounds here in the Indian Ocean and here in Polynesia. Surely we hunt those whales, Captain.

AHAB

No. Moby Dick confirmed my chart today. The chart is true! Do you see? But I must have wind to get me there in time. Come wind. Come now and blow a mighty gale.

STARBUCK

Are we not obliged to hunt whales as we find them and fill the hold as quickly as possible? Is that not what the owners of this ship command?

Deep thunder rumbles in the distance.

AHAB

Don't prattle on at me about owners. They'll have their oil and their profits. I never fail in this, but I am not commanded by them. The only real owner of a thing is he who commands it.

(MORE)

AHAB (CONT'D)

I command the Pequod and in turn, I am commanded by this burning thing that commands me to kill Moby Dick.

STARBUCK

But to be so consumed with lust for revenge, does this not violate God's commandments?

AHAB

It is God that commands me, man! It is God who fills me with this desire to take my vengeance. And I will see His will be done!

Starbuck is forced back involuntarily by Ahab's blazing madness. Thunder rumbles.

Ahab turns quiet.

AHAB

Look ye, Starbuck. All visible objects are but as pasteboard masks. Some inscrutable yet reasoning thing puts forth the molding of their features. The White Whale tasks me. He heaps me. Yet he is but a mask. 'Tis the thing behind the mask I chiefly hate. The malignant thing that has plagued man since time began. The thing that mutilates us all. Not killing us outright, but letting us live with half a heart and half a lung, the rest consumed by defeat, by unbearable heartbreak. These pains are what torture my soul and these pains swim the seas in the form of Moby Dick. And by God, with his death I will extinguish them forever. Now what say ye, Starbuck? Are thee with me?

STARBUCK

I say calmly, sir, I am against thee.

Lightning flashes. Ahab grabs a pistol from the wall rack -- levels it at Starbuck.

AHAB

Devils, man! Dost thee dare oppose me!

STARBUCK

I do. With all my will and prayer.
But thee needn't fear Starbuck. Let
Ahab beware Ahab. Beware thyself,
my Captain.

The Pequod lurches -- the cabin door swings open.

Ishmael stands there, obviously eavesdropping.

ISHMAEL

Mr. Stubb sent me to fetch Mr.
Starbuck. A storm's come up.

Starbuck now notices the ship rolling and pitching --
lightning flashes -- hurries out. Ishmael starts to follow.

AHAB

A word with thee, young man. I kept
thy confidence the day we sailed,
did I not?

ISHMAEL

You did, sir.

Ahab, oblivious to the storm, puts the pistol back in the
rack next to Plato's Republic, Lucretius's On the Nature of
the Universe, Cuvier's Histoire Naturelle des Poissons, and
the Mariner's Almanac -- steps toward Ishmael -- stares into
his eyes.

AHAB

Seamen are a superstitious lot,
fearful of philosophical talk from
educated men. They do not reason
and wonder, but want orders, given
plain and loudly barked. What kind
of man are thee? Will thee now keep
my confidence in this matter with
Mr. Starbuck?

ISHMAEL

I will, Captain.

Ahab extends his hand and Ishmael shakes it. Green lightning
flashes through the windows.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - NIGHT

Ishmael comes on deck as a huge wave breaks across the bow
and floods the deck. He looks aloft -- sees the sails
straining in gale winds. Lightning flashes green and purple.

HELMSMAN

I can't hold it! Mr. Starbuck!

The giant whale bone tiller swings the helmsman around like a leaf in the wind, then flings him hard into the bulwark.

STARBUCK

Ishmael!

Lightning illuminates cliffs and rocks dead ahead!

Ishmael dashes to the quarterdeck -- throws himself onto the wildly swinging tiller with Starbuck -- fighting to steer the ship away.

STARBUCK

Stubb! Stubb!

Stubb and two crewmen rush aft on the pitching deck and heave the tiller, but the ship doesn't respond.

Lightning flashes. The rocks are right there! They're going to wreck!

The bow slams into a rock towering from the sea. The Pequod groans -- grinds on the rocks -- slips off and turns out to sea.

STARBUCK

Bring her on course, Mr. Stubb.

Stubb peers at the compass in the binnacle, the whale oil lamp flickering and spitting -- the needle spins wildly in circles.

HELMSMAN

The devil's taken the compass!

Ishmael and Starbuck look.

CREWMAN

God in heaven! Save us all!

Ahab is suddenly standing next to them, calm and relaxed.

AHAB

(to Ishmael)

Is it the devil who takes this compass?

ISHMAEL

It's the storm, Captain. The electric charge disrupts the magnet.

AHAB

You see? It's no God we need to save us. Reason will do the trick neatly.

Ahab opens the binnacle and brings an iron latchkey toward the needle. A blue-green spark leaps to the key and the needle stops spinning.

AHAB

Head due East, Helmsman. Keep her close to the wind. I want all the speed you can get. Mr. Starbuck, see if the bow's been damaged. Mr. Stubb, bring the whaleboats on deck before the sea steals them away.

Starbuck, Stubb, and Ishmael head forward to the mainmast where crewmen are madly lashing everything down. Forks of lightning strike the sea, illuminating the ship with ghostly light.

A wave explodes over the bow. Men and gear are sent sprawling.

STUBB

To the foc'sle, boy. Raise the crew.

Ishmael fights his way forward to the foc'sle hatch and yells.

ISHMAEL

All hands on deck!

A wave crashes down on him and floods the stairwell.

Crewmen struggle to haul whaleboats on deck -- waves explode. A whaleboat smashes into the bulwark -- pieces fly in the gale.

Starbuck sees the massive anchor slam into the bow gouging into the planking.

STARBUCK

Mr. Stubb! The anchor!

STUBB

I need all hands on these boats.

STARBUCK

Damn the boats! Stay the anchor before it punches a hole and sinks us!

Stubb grabs Ishmael -- heads forward.

Ishmael sees huge waves lick the bottom of the bowsprit then burst over the bow. They're both knocked off their feet.

Stubb peers down at the huge anchor bashing into the hull.

STUBB

Bad piece of work this! Bad work!

Ishmael grabs a rope and starts to tie it around his waist.

STUBB

That's more like to hang you than
save you! The sea will have her
way, like all women. But we'll
steal a kiss, eh?

Stubb grabs a rope and swings over the side singing at the top of his lungs:

STUBB

Oh! Jolly is the gale,
And a joker is the whale,
A flourishin' his tail.
Such a funny sporty, gamey
Jesty, hoky-poky gal
Is the ocean!

They work their way onto the bowsprit. The Pequod plunges into a troth and they're completely swallowed by a wave.

Stubb gets the line around the anchor which smashes the hull like a battering ram.

MR. STUBB

Tie off to that cheek block. Make
it tight!

Ishmael reaches overhead for the cheek block -- gets the line around it and pulls as hard as he can, but the anchor pulls back -- it's too heavy.

STUBB

Come on, boy. Put your back into
it!

Ishmael stands on the bob-stay shackle and pulls for all he's worth -- the anchor swings -- his feet slip -- he dangles from the line -- the sea falls away, thirty feet beneath him!

Ishmael kicks his feet, trying to get hold of anything, but he's swinging too wildly and now the sea comes up at him fast and BOOM! A wave slams him into the bow -- he loses his grip and disappears!

Stubb panics -- the bow rises out of the wave -- there is Ishmael! Clinging to the Indian maiden figurehead.

Ishmael scrambles like a cat -- secures himself on the bob-stay -- gets hold of the line. They tie off the anchor.

The crew lashes the whaleboats on deck -- rigging screeches like witches.

The mizzen topgallant rips apart -- a piece flies through the air.

Lightning flashes and Cabaco sees fluorescent yellow-green light -- a ghost -- darting through the rigging overhead.

CABACO

Look! A devil phantom ride dis
wind.

Other crewmen look -- lightning flashes -- another ghost flies overhead then vanishes.

STARBUCK

She can't take this! Get aloft!
Lower royals and topgallants! Reef
topsails and mains!

The crew is dumbfounded.

IRISH CREWMAN

There's ghosts in the rigging!

Ishmael and Mr. Stubb appear.

STUBB

Either you get aloft or we'll all
be ghosts tonight.
(laughs)
Up you go! And dance a jig!

AHAB

Avast! Touch not a single line!

Another wave explodes across the bow. The mainmast lurches forward -- a starboard halyard rips treble blocks and chain plate up through the bulwark and rail, tearing a man-sized hole. Starbuck runs to inspect.

STARBUCK

She's tore loose! Cut the mainmast
halyards!

AHAB

Mr. Starbuck! Stop I say.

STARBUCK

We'll lose the main!

AHAB

I made this gale. I, Ahab. I will
be waiting when Moby Dick comes to
meet me and this gale I have called
to get me there.

Another wave explodes and sweeps Starbuck off his feet. The
torrent sweeps him right at the hole in the bulwark. He gets
his feet -- starts yanking a halyard loose.

Ahab explodes. Pulls him away. Starbuck throws him off. Ahab
falls.

Archy and Cabaco run to Starbuck with axes -- start hacking
at the halyards.

STARBUCK

Cut them all away!

Ishmael sees Ahab struggle to his feet -- yank a harpoon from
the locker and raise it above his head.

AHAB

Damn ye, Starbuck! Stop I say! I
will run thee through sure as I
breathe. One God is Lord over the
earth and one Captain is Lord over
the Pequod!

Archy and Cabaco spin around with the axes -- between them,
Starbuck glares at Ahab and yes, the thought occurs to them --
kill Ahab now! Lightning flashes. Thunder roars.

STARBUCK

This crew will not follow thee to
thy grave, old man.

Just then, behind Ahab's head, another ghost.

The mysterious light crackles and fizzes -- crawling from
rope to rope -- leaping from yard to mast -- winding around
shrouds and spars -- encircling them in a sulfurous glow.

The light leaps through the air and creeps up every line until all the rigging glows overhead like neon, crackling and fizzing.

The weird light shoots down from the rigging like a lightning bolt and strikes Ahab's harpoon -- nearly blinding everyone.

Ahab lowers the harpoon, gazing at its weird glow.

SICILIAN CREWMAN

Lightning strikes him, but he doan die.

AHAB

I know thee, thou clear spirit, and I know now thy right worship is defiance.

Wind whips Ahab's hair in every direction.

IRISH CREWMAN

Devil or God I don't know, but Ahab's no mortal man.

Lightning flashes wildly -- blinding all.

AHAB

Thou can blind, but I will then grope. Oh! Light thou be, leaping out of darkness, but I am darkness leaping out of light, leaping out of thee! There is some thing beyond thee, thou clear spirit, to whom all eternity is but a few hours and minutes, all thy creativeness mechanical. Through thee, thy flaming self, my scorched eyes do dimly see it. Leap! Leap up and lick the sky! I leap with thee. I burn with thee. I would be welded with thee! I worship thee.

Starbuck is horrified. Ahab's gone nuts. Starbuck takes his arm tenderly as if helping an invalid.

STARBUCK

God is against thee, old man. You've gone mad. 'Tis an ill voyage. Ill begun. Ill continued. Let me square the yards while we may, and make a fair wind of it homewards, to go on a better voyage than this.

Ahab sees the crew's doubt and fear. He pulls away -- brandishes the glowing harpoon and stares into their eyes, one man at a time, as he stalks among them.

AHAB

Aye, mad I am! With white hot anger for the White Whale. And heart, soul, and body, Ahab is lashed and tied to each of thee. Each of your oaths to hunt Moby Dick is as binding as mine. Now look ye here, so that ye may know to what tune this heart beats. Thus, from each of you, I blow out your last fear!

He draws his hand along the glowing harpoon and extinguishes the light.

Cabaco throws himself prostrate on the deck at Ahab's feet and prays in Spanish. Other seamen kneel, cross themselves and mumble prayers. Some faces are stupefied, others inspired, each witnesses Ahab's magic in their own way.

STARBUCK

There's no magic! He's not a god, It's harmless. It's harmless St. Elmo's fire. He's using your fear to control you. Can't you see he's gone mad?!

Above, the tattered sails flap in the wind, gentler now.

SICILIAN CREWMAN

Look!

All eyes aloft. The mysterious light in the rigging burns out. The storm settles down. The rain stops.

BONE NOSE

Ahab take de fire from de storm!

SICILIAN CREWMAN

Ahab has saved us!

CREW

Ahab! Ahab! Ahab!

AHAB

Rise up, my lads! Cut away those tattered rags! Raise new canvas! We hunt the White Whale!

The crew scrambles to work.

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - MORNING

Steel gray waves still rolling huge and strong as the Pequod leaves the storm behind.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - AFTERNOON

A clearing sky. Carpenter and crew repair the storm's damage: smashed whaleboats, broken spars, the damaged bow.

STUBB

You there. Aloft to the masthead.

AHAB

No lookouts, Mr. Stubb. I know where he is.

INT. GALLEY - EVENING

Fleece loads three plates of food on a tray Ishmael holds.

FLEECE

Off you go. Hurry now, so's they get it hot.

INT. MATE'S MESS

Starbuck, Stubb, and Mr. Flask at table -- awaiting supper.

STARBUCK

It is our task in life to kill whales and furnish up their oil for the lamps and machines of this world. If we perform that task well and faithfully, we do a service to mankind that pleases almighty God. Ahab would deny all that. He took us from our rich harvest - left it unfinished to rot and waste.

INT. PASSAGEWAY

Ishmael carries the tray down the narrow passageway to the mate's mess, hears Ahab thumping back and forth above -- then Starbuck's hushed voice.

STARBUCK (O.S.)

He drives us over the richest
whaling grounds in the world
without sending a single lookout
aloft. And he does all this to
satisfy his lust for vengeance.
Ahab is twisting that which is holy
into something dark and
purposeless. He is a champion of
darkness.

INT. MATE'S MESS

STUBB

Well now, sir, if it's like that, I
don't wonder if you, a religious
man, be a mite downcast. But I
don't much see what you can do
about it?

Starbuck flips open his Seaman's Manual and reads.

STARBUCK

A captain who for private motives
employs his vessel to a purpose
other than that intended by the
owners of that vessel is answerable
to the charge of usurpation and the
members of his crew are legally
entitled to employ whatever means
necessary in wresting command from
him.

Starbuck closes the book and lays it on the table. Flask and
Stubb are dumbfounded.

STUBB

Well, that's a mouthful. I swear.
You ain't proposin' we do any such
thing?

Starbuck's silence says he is.

STUBB

You're in dangerous waters now, Mr.
Starbuck! Helm hard over! Come
about!

The ship rolls -- they hear the clatter of dishes outside the
door.

ISHMAEL (O.S.)

Supper, Mr. Starbuck.

Starbuck flings the door open and glares suspiciously at Ishmael who keeps a poker face and lays the plates on the table. Starbuck puts his finger into his food.

STARBUCK

This food's cold, but it's a short walk from the galley. Were thee eavesdropping at this door?

(grabs Ishmael)

What did thee hear?

ISHMAEL

You're in dangerous waters, Mr. Starbuck. Helm hard over. That's what I heard.

STUBB

(laughing hard)

Right you are.

ISHMAEL

Will that be all, sir?

STARBUCK

That will indeed be all. Off with you, boy.

Ishmael leaves. Starbuck closes the door then leans his ear close and hears Ishmael's footsteps recede. Stubb digs in to his supper, but Flask is still in shock and stares in disbelief at Starbuck.

STARBUCK

(to Flask)

Do thee not see that by serving Ahab we share in his crimes? Will thee stand with me and uphold the law?

FLASK

Captains can't break the law! They is the law!

Flask picks up his plate and walks out.

STARBUCK

I am done then. You write my last will and testament.

STUBB

Aye. And do it laughing, sir. A laugh's the best answer to all the strains of life.

(MORE)

STUBB (CONT'D)

And if ye can't laugh, then eat.
That's the next best thing.

Wolfs down his food. Starbuck leaves.

INT. STARBUCK'S CABIN

Starbuck slumps into the chair at his desk -- hears Ahab thumping on deck. He writes a letter. We see only the final words:

All my love to you, dear Mary. Kiss
my son for me.

He looks at it, listening to the dead thump, thump, thump above. His face is torn with anguish. He writes another line:

May god forgive me.

INT. PASSAGEWAY

Starbuck -- ashen, eyes dead cold -- opens the door to Ahab's cabin --

-- stands in the doorway, looking at the pistol in the wall rack. Ahab thumps overhead.

EXT. QUARTERDECK - EVENING

Ishmael brings a plate of food to Ahab, but he refuses it.

AHAB

Do you feel the wind change? He
leads me to a windless sea. On my
desk is my chart. My sextant and
compass are in a wooden case in the
wall rack. Fetch them for me.

INT. AHAB'S CABIN

Ishmael gets the chart and compass -- goes to the wall rack and gets the sextant -- doesn't notice the pistol is missing.

EXT. QUARTERDECK

Ishmael holds the case open. Ahab takes out the gleaming brass sextant -- sees him looking at the sky.

AHAB

Will thee tell me squarely what
thee saw?

ISHMAEL

Just then? A thousand stars.

Ahab holds the sextant to his eye -- takes a bearing on a
constellation.

AHAB

Some say these constellations
determine each life's every step
and breath, that we are bound to
follow their command from birth to
death. What say thee?

ISHMAEL

The Bible says we have free will,
and yet in some things, it seems we
are like this ship and must obey
the wind.

Ahab holds the sextant out to Ishmael.

AHAB

What does it read?

ISHMAEL

Thirty-three degrees, sir.

Ahab looks at the binnacle watch, then measures on the chart
with the compass -- makes a mark.

AHAB

We are here then, at the very edge
of these winds. And what shows us
our place in this vast sea?

ISHMAEL

The stars.

AHAB

Aye, the stars. And yet without my
reasoning the stars are mute. I
sail east and yet the wind blows
west, does it not? I obey neither
stars nor the wind. I bend it to my
will and journey where I choose.

ISHMAEL

What if there is no wind, sir?

Ahab gazes at the shimmering constellations overhead.

AHAB

Then I make it.

Starbuck comes on deck. The sails flap gently.

STARBUCK

I don't like this wind, Captain.
There's something foul and dying in
it.

AHAB

In such a mild wind as this I
struck my first whale, a boy
harpooneer of eighteen. Thirty
years ago. Thirty years of whaling,
of privation, peril and storm time.
Thirty years of pitiless sea. Of
those thirty years I have not spent
three ashore. I wedded my wife and
sailed the next day. Poor girl. A
widow with her husband alive. What
a fool has old Ahab been. Why the
strife of this chase? Why weary and
palsy these arms at the oar and the
lance? How the richer or the better
is Ahab, now? Do I look old,
Starbuck? I feel deadly faint.

Ahab is white as a sheet -- slumps onto his stool. Ishmael
and Starbuck steady him.

STARBUCK

Return these to his cabin, boy, and
fetch a glass of rum.

Ishmael gathers up the sextant -- heads off quickly.

AHAB

Come close, Starbuck. Let me look
into a human eye.

Starbuck steadies the pistol tucked in his belt at his back --
kneels beside him. Ahab puts his hands on Starbuck's
shoulders -- peers deep into his eyes.

AHAB

It is better than to gaze into sea
or sky. This is the magic glass,
man. The window to the soul. Is
that your sweet wife and son who
wave to me in thine eye? Or mine?

STARBUCK

Oh, Captain. My Captain. Why should anyone give chase to that hated fish. Let us fly these deadly waters. I beg thee. Let us home. This instant, let me alter our course.

INT. AHAB'S CABIN

Ishmael puts the sextant back in the wall rack -- pours the rum and starts to go, then stops and looks at the rack -- sees the pistol is gone.

EXT. QUARTERDECK

AHAB

What hidden lord and master commands me, against all natural lovings and longings, to keep pushing and jamming myself on all the time, recklessly making me do what in my own proper, natural heart, I dare not do? Is Ahab Ahab? Is it I, God, or who that lifts this arm?

Starbuck gets up, filled with disgust, pity -- fear.

AHAB

If the great sun does not move himself, but is an errand boy in heaven, if not one single star can revolve but by some invisible power, how then can this one small heart beat, this one small brain think, unless God does that beating, does that thinking, and not I? He made the Albacore to chase and fang the flying fish? He gave the shark rapacious, murdering teeth. Is all Nature's law a bloodied claw and murderous jaw? It is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky. And yet I do smell Moby Dick's foul breath.

Starbuck pulls the pistol -- cocks the hammer -- aims for Ahab.

STARBUCK

In the name of Jesus, no more of this. Would you have us chase this murderous fish 'till he kills the last man? It's devil's madness.

Ishmael jumps him -- struggles to take the pistol.

AHAB

Avast, boy! Let him go!

Ahab rises slowly -- locks eyes with Starbuck. Ishmael lets Starbuck go.

AHAB

Ahab is forever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed. Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant! I act under orders and thee will obey mine!

Starbuck aims again -- trembles, unable to pull the trigger. Ahab, like a matador taunting a bull, turns his back to Starbuck and faces the transfixed crew.

AHAB

Stand round men. Ye see an old man cut down to the stump, propped up on a dead bone. This is Ahab, yes, but my soul's a centipede that moves on a hundred legs! I feel strained as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale. And I may look so, but when I break you'll hear me crack. And till ye hear that, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet. Believe ye men in the things called omens? Then laugh aloud, and cry "Come Again!" For drowning things will twice rise to the surface, then rise again to sink forevermore. And so it is with Moby Dick! Two times he has risen before us. And next will be the third. He'll rise once more, this time to spout his last! He murdered your brave shipmates. Will ye let him snatch their souls and go unpunished?

STUBB

(quietly)
No, says I.

CREWMEN

No. No.

Ahab strides down the quarterdeck steps.

AHAB

And what punishment befits murder
if not death! Hear this men! When
Moby Dick is dead, my Captain's
share of this voyage will be yours.
Fifteen per cent of the entire
profit of this voyage I give to
thee.

THE CREW

Death to Moby Dick!

AHAB

D'ye feel brave, men?

Ahab throws open the lockers and heaves the lances and harpoons to the deck in disgust.

AHAB

Blacksmith! Forge for these men new
lances. New harpoons. Welded hard
as the souls of murderers in hell's
great fire. Now man! Make thy forge
white hot for the White Whale!

The blacksmith begins furiously pumping the bellows. Sparks fly into the black night. Coals rage with heat.

AHAB

Make lances that will strike deep.
Double their length! And harpoons
that will hold fast. With not one,
but three barbs -- sharp as razors.
And now ye men, will thee temper
the steel with thine own strength
and fury? With thine own blood?

Tashtego drops to his knees and cuts his forearm to let it bleed. Queequeg puts a bucket under the dripping blood and cuts his own arm as the crew chants.

CREWMEN

Death to Moby Dick.

The blacksmith's hammer begins to pound.

On the quarter-deck, Starbuck raises the pistol to his own head. Ishmael takes it from him gently, easing the hammer down.

ISHMAEL

It's a mortal sin, Mr. Starbuck.
Join this great hunt.

MR. STARBUCK

Which is the mortal sin? Are their consequences not the same? Which do you choose?

ISHMAEL

If the consequence is the same, what difference can it make? I would surely rather be defeated in this great battle than lie down in defeat before the battle begins.

Firelight flickers in Starbuck's face as he watches Ahab and the crew around the blacksmith's blazing forge -- a warlock's cabal.

AHAB

Rum for these brave warriors! Rum for all!

Sparks swirl off in the wind to become lost among the stars.

EXT. JAPAN SEAS - DAWN

In the distance, the Pequod glides in dull gray light. As if being painted before our eyes, the clouds burst into purple and orange. The sun breaks the horizon and the Pequod's sails glow with golden light.

TITLE: THE JAPAN SEAS
MAY 14, 1842

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - DAWN

Starbuck comes on deck behind Ahab who's standing at the helm looking at the moon still hanging on the horizon. Then, as if eyes in the back of his head, Ahab murmurs --

AHAB

We are here, Starbuck. The moon turns full tonight. Now it begins. And now it ends. Send lookouts aloft. Each masthead. Day and night.

Starbuck is glazed -- lifeless. Speaks in a near whisper to Stubb.

STARBUCK

Lookouts aloft. Fore, Main and Mizzen.

AHAB

Fly stunsails. Take the slack from every line.

STUBB

Fly stunsails! Aloft, men! All hands!

Ishmael sees Queequeg frozen still.

ISHMAEL

Queequeg. Come on.

Queequeg stares at the sea -- it is utterly flat. In the rising sun, it shines golden like a great, huge mirror.

QUEEQUEG

Like great mirror of gold.

ISHMAEL

What?

QUEEQUEG

Day we sail. Him say this.

ISHMAEL

The lunatic man? Queequeg, prophecy is mumbo-jumbo nonsense. No man can see the future.

Queequeg sees Ishmael climb into the shrouds, like an insect caught in a spider's web -- walks off without a word.

ISHMAEL

Queequeg.

Ishmael jumps down and catches up to him. Queequeg's shivering, his lips chalky white.

ISHMAEL

Are you all right?

QUEEQUEG

Get Carpenter.

ISHMAEL

What?

Ishmael grabs Queequeg's arm -- sees panic in his eyes.

QUEEQUEG
Get Carpenter.

ISHMAEL
Carpenter! Carpenter! Come here!

The Carpenter comes.

QUEEQUEG
How much you make coffin?

ISHMAEL
A coffin?

QUEEQUEG
All dark wood like wood my home.
Make like boat. No leak. Carry me
over sea to my home, my God, Yojo.

CARPENTER
Don't charge for no man's coffin,
heathen or no.

Queequeg stares into space as the Carpenter measures him.
Ishmael shoves him away.

ISHMAEL
Stop that! Queequeg, what are you
doing?

QUEEQUEG
Queequeg die. All die.

ISHMAEL
You are not going to die. This is
superstitious nonsense. I won't
have it! Stop this!

CARPENTER
(reads his tape measure)
Six foot seven inches.

EXT. THE PEQUOD - SUNSET

Barely moving through still, golden water. No clouds. No
birds. Nothing. Only the sound of hammer striking chisel --
the Carpenter making the coffin.

The crew is prostrate in blazing heat -- blinding sun. Sails
flutter lifelessly.

IRISH CREWMAN

There's no air to breathe. Are we making way?

BASQUE CREWMAN

Poquito. De devil whale lead us here to die on de sun's anvil.

Covered with sweat, Queequeg carves a design of three palm trees on the lid to his coffin. Ishmael comes over with food and water. Queequeg pays no attention.

ISHMAEL

You've got to eat. Remember? You said, "Sail same ship. Eat same food." Remember?

QUEEQUEG

No eat. No drink. Clean spirit. Make ready to die.

Queequeg puts his top hat, tomahawk pipe, and purse inside the coffin -- rolls his coat up, makes a pillow and starts to climb in, but stops. Pulls the shrunken head from the coat and speaks to it.

QUEEQUEG

Now you protect friend.

Queequeg offers it to Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

I don't want that.

Queequeg looks him square in the eye, shakes his hand.

QUEEQUEG

Good-bye, my friend.

He lies down in the coffin -- opens the tiny leather pouch around his neck -- takes out a tiny carved jewel idol and clutches it in his hands on his chest, then stares into space -- committing himself to a deep trance.

ISHMAEL

Stop this, Queequeg. Do you hear? You're not going to die. I won't have it! Stop this at once!

CARPENTER

Seen it before with these South Sea Indians. They see death and then go into this trance. In a few days, they just up and die.

INT. CREW QUARTERS

Archy rummages through Ishmael's rucksack. Ishmael enters.

ISHMAEL
See anything you like?

ARCHY
Let's see.

-- dumps the contents on the floor. Kicks through the clothes.

Ishmael starts for him, but Cabaco steps from behind the door, gets Ishmael in a half nelson and grinds his face into the wall.

ISHMAEL
I'll report you to Mr. Starbuck.

ARCHY
You might want to think about that, boy. Now that your friend the savage is dyin'.

Cabaco kicks Ishmael's feet from under him -- slams him to the floor -- follows Archy out into the hold and disappears.

Ishmael closes the door, then quickly pops loose a board at his bunk -- reaches in and checks his money pouch. All's well.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - NIGHT

Moon above -- Ahab thumping on the quarterdeck -- crew asleep on deck.

Pip rattles his tambourine gently at Queequeg's head.

PIP
Rig-a-dig, dig. Now Queequeg die
and I'll beat yer dyin' march, will
I.

As Pip chants and rattles, Archy and Cabaco steal over to Queequeg.

PIP (CONT'D)
Pass over, Queequeg. Pass over the
river to the shady trees.

Archy takes out his knife and flashes it before Queequeg's eyes, but he doesn't even blink.

Archy puts the blade to Queequeg's chest and slices slowly across his skin. Blood seeps.

Pip stops, struck by the horror of it. Queequeg still doesn't move. Pip rattles the tambourine.

PIP

He gone, now. Queequeg gone.

ISHMAEL

(grabbing Pip)

Pip! Stop that, damn it. Get away from him.

Ishmael sees the blood on Queequeg's chest. Archy yanks the tiny jeweled idol from Queequeg's hands.

Ishmael lunges -- knocks the knife from Archy's hands. Ishmael's grown strong since their last bout and fights viciously.

But Archy gets Ishmael in a half nelson and chokes him.

Cabaco pulls his knife and slices Ishmael's chest -- raises the knife to strike again, but --

-- he's lifted into the air, whirled around, and bent backward over Queequeg's knee. Queequeg is breaking Cabaco's back.

Ishmael gets loose, belts Archy and sends him staggering -- pins him and mercilessly pounds his head into the deck -- beating his brains out.

Stubb and others pull them apart. Archy's a bloody mess. Cabaco writhes in pain.

AHAB

(voice booming)

We change course, Mr. Stubb! South.
Due South. Lower the boats. We will
row out of this dead sea!

Crewmen begin to lower boats and rig a hawser to tow the ship.

Ishmael sees Queequeg tie the idol around his neck and nail the coffin shut.

EXT. THE SEA - DAWN

Four whaleboats strain at a snails pace to turn the Pequod south.

Ishmael sits beside Queequeg, both rowing -- perspiring profusely. Ishmael is happy his friend is moving again. Happy they're all moving again even though sunburned and exhausted.

IRISH CREWMAN

Well, I for one feel merry. Moby Dick's long gone by now.

GERMAN CREWMAN

Ahab don't quit.

IRISH CREWMAN

Changed course, ain't he?

EXT. QUARTER DECK - AFTERNOON

Ahab, shirt soaked with perspiration, looks over his chart, then at the line of boats straining through the placid sea.

AHAB

Call the men back, Mr. Starbuck.
Change crews and see they have food
and rest.

Starbuck has withdrawn so far into himself, he rings the ship's bell as if hypnotized.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

The sea at dusk -- boats pull at the tow line. The Pequod inches along behind.

A school of fish leaps from the water, darting toward the Pequod.

The boat crews see more and more as they come right for them. Everyone stops rowing. Hundreds of fish, like animals running from a forest fire.

ISHMAEL

What is it?

The fish leap right over the boats. Some fall in -- the rest keep right on going. Everyone turns to watch them go.

Behind them, a hundred yards away -- with barely a sound -- up comes the wrinkled white head of Moby Dick like an iceberg.

The Basque crewman jumps as he sees Moby Dick bobbing in the still water -- his eye watching them.

BASQUE CREWMAN
He come to watch us die.

EXT. QUARTER DECK

Stubb sees Moby Dick and runs to the rail.

STUBB
Let's after him, Captain!

AHAB
No, Mr. Stubb. We've no wind to
maneuver the ship.

Moby Dick -- his eye scanning -- looking -- thinking --
plotting.

STUBB
There's the devil in that eye,
Captain. See how he mocks us?

AHAB
(to himself)
So now you hunt me. Yes, I am still
here.
(booming)
Ahab! I, Ahab! See me?! Come, you
cursed whale! Come on, I say!

Moby Dick slowly slips beneath the surface and disappears.

EXT. JAPAN SEA - DAWN

Flat and silver. The Pequod becalmed. No boats rowing.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD - DAWN

Ishmael tosses in sweaty half-sleep, lips parched white. His
hair gently blows into his face. He doesn't think anything of
it, brushes it away.

A faint creak in the rigging. Ishmael's eyes open lazily. He
sees the dried sails hanging above him absolutely motionless.
His hair blows again into his face. He brushes it away.

The rigging groans loudly now. Ishmael looks aft and sees the
sails flap gently.

ISHMAEL
(too parched to yell)
Wind.

The sails billow. Ishmael gets up.

ISHMAEL
(louder now)
Wind! The wind!

Ahab bolts up from his stool.

AHAB
Square the yards, men! Aloft,
I say!

The crew flies into the rigging as the wind picks up. The sails fill and at last, they're moving.

EXT. DECK OF THE PEQUOD

Ishmael and Queequeg stand at the bow, letting the spray cool them.

Ishmael savors the wind in his face with his eyes closed. Something strikes him. He cocks his head -- sniffs the air. His eyes snap open -- scan the sea. He breathes deep, smells the air.

ISHMAEL
Smells like a field of wheat. I
know that smell.
(yells)
Captain! The smell. Captain!

Ahab on the quarterdeck -- snaps his spyglass to his eye and scans the sea -- nothing ahead.

Crewmen scan the waves starboard and port.

Ishmael sees Moby Dick surface behind the Pequod. He glides past her -- harpoons and lances in his gnarled back -- lines dangling.

The crew is dumbfounded.

AHAB
Lower the boats! Lower away!

Boat crews run for their boats.

Archy pulls out his knife and slices the palm of his hand.

Ship-keepers hand the glistening new lances and harpoons over the side.

Stubb sees Archy --

STUBB

Come on, man!

ARCHY

Cut my hand, sir.

(shows it)

Don't think I'd be much good on an oar.

Stubb grabs his hand and looks -- knows Archy did it himself. Disgusted, Stubb heads for the boats.

Starbuck and Ishmael start for a boat --

AHAB

Stop, I say. Not thee, Starbuck. I've felt strangely moved to thee ever since that hour we both saw, thou knowest what, in one another's eye. This hazard shall not be thine. Take the helm. I need you there. Keep the ship away from the boats, but keep her near. Lower away!

Ahab clamors over the bulwark and into a boat. Ishmael works the davit line, lowers to the racing water.

Starbuck on the quarterdeck -- great waves roll ten feet high and swallow the little whaleboats, then heave them up to the sky as the crews dig into the water with their oars.

STARBUCK

Bring her leeward, helmsman. Follow the boats.

Archy works his knife and pries the gold doubloon loose from the mast.

STARBUCK

You man! Aloft now. Keep the whale in sight.

Archy shoves the doubloon in his pocket -- climbs into the rigging and sees the three whaleboats pulling in the distance.

Moby Dick's white back glides through the deep blue water, his spout shooting into the air.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

On Ahab's boat --

AHAB

Pull steady, boys.

Stubb in his boat -- teeth gritting into his pipe stem, smoke pouring from his nostrils.

STUBB

Long and strong, now, boys. Break
your backs in it!

A massive wave wells up before Ahab's boat and hides Moby Dick from view, then the boat rides up on the wave and Ahab sees Moby Dick's flukes.

The boat crests the wave and skids down its back. An oar catches in the water and slams a crewman in the chest, knocking him off his seat and causing the boat to veer sharply.

AHAB

Wake up man!

Stubb's crew -- fear in their eyes as they hear the growing roar of Moby Dick powering through the water.

Cabaco crosses himself.

STUBB

(yelling over the roar)
Pull! Pull, I say!

Moby Dick's behemoth flank -- bent lances and broken harpoons dangling.

Behind -- the three whaleboats row over the crest of a wave, then disappear.

Flask's boat -- Tashtego rises in the bow, his long black hair flying behind him -- hefts his harpoon. Its shiny new triple barbs glisten. The boat pulls in close.

FLASK

Now! Give it to him!

Tashtego calmly waves for Flask to bring the boat closer.

FLASK

Pull! Pull with all your strength,
boys.

Ishmael watches Flask's boat closing. Tashtego arcs like a bow and hurls the harpoon. It rips into Moby Dick and holds firm.

FLASK

Ship oars!

The crew straddles the centerboard box as whaleline pays out, but Moby Dick lunges into the air.

FLASK

Look out!

The whaleline flies up between their legs. Two crewmen are thrown overboard. Tashtego sees Moby Dick's massive tail directly over the boat.

FLASK

Jump!

It happens too fast! Moby Dick slams his tail down and crushes the men and the boat, then disappears.

Stubb and Ahab try to see survivors in the huge waves.

ISHMAEL

There!

Two crewmen swim for Ahab's boat.

On the Pequod, Starbuck yells aloft.

STARBUCK

Which way the whale?

Archy on the masthead.

ARCHY

I don't see him.

On Ahab's boat, Ahab desperately trying to see.

ISHMAEL

Lift me up, Queequeg.

Ishmael climbs onto Queequeg's gigantic shoulders -- sees nothing.

On Stubb's boat --

CABACO

Where is he?!

STUBB

Come ye bastard fish.

On the Pequod -- Archy atop the masthead sees a white form under the water, bigger than the Pequod, flying through the water ahead of the whaleboats, coming right at them.

ARCHY

Look out! He's coming back!

On Stubb's boat --

STUBB

What'd he say?!

Ahab concentrates -- sees the birds ahead and hears an earthquake!

AHAB

Abeam! He breaches, abeam! Row men!
Row!

The crews pull madly to get out of the way. A wave swells before them. Then --

-- the gaping jaws of Moby Dick -- thirty feet of teeth.

The boats just get out of the way, nearly overturned by the tidal wave of his wake.

SICILIAN CREWMAN

(panic overtakes him)

No more, Captain. No more.

Stubb watches Moby Dick swim off.

STUBB

By God, he makes for the ship!

Archy on the masthead.

ARCHY

Mr. Starbuck! Mr. Starbuck! He's
coming for the ship!

Starbuck blanches --

Moby Dick comes dead on and slams into the bow. The Pequod nearly shakes to pieces and rolls steeply on its side.

Archy is thrown from the masthead and falls screaming to the deck.

STARBUCK

Great God in heaven, save us.

Moby Dick roars off.

STARBUCK

Get below! See if we're taking
water!

The Carpenter and shipkeepers scramble below.

In the foc'sle -- the Carpenter surveys the damage. Water
sprays through the planks of the bow like a fire hose.

On deck --

SHIPKEEPER

We take water, Mr. Starbuck.

STARBUCK

Break out the pumps!

Starbuck sees one whaleboat still on the ship.

On the sea -- Moby Dick comes back at the two whaleboats
spouting clouds of steam into the air like a freight train.

STUBB

Row, men!

Ahab stands quickly -- raises his hand.

AHAB

Avast, Stubb. He's made his fateful
mistake. The whale cannot see
forward and does not see us now.
Wait until he's close, then we part
like the Red Sea and strike from
both sides.

The boat crews clutch their oars -- knuckles white as Moby
Dick's craggy brow looms toward them.

AHAB

Come then, hoary beast! I will eat
thy jaundiced eye! Now, men! Row!

The crews row furiously, just getting out of the way.

AHAB

Stand up, Queequeg! Strike him
dead!

Moby Dick's gigantic flank is in arm's reach.

Queequeg heaves his harpoon and it rips into Moby Dick with a
horrible sound.

AHAB

Ship oars!

On Stubb's boat -- Daggoo sinks his harpoon to the hilt on Moby Dick's other side.

Ahab's boat -- whaleline whistles between the crew's legs. The loggerhead smokes furiously. A flame leaps up.

Ahab flips a loop of whaleline around the loggerhead and the boat leaps into the air sending the crew sprawling.

AHAB

Pull in! Pull in, I say!

ICELAND CREWMAN

Too close, captain! Free the line!

Moby Dick stops swimming. Thrashes the water with his tail, showering Ahab's boat in a deluge.

On Stubb's boat -- twenty yards back.

CREWMEN

--Look! He's in his death throes! --
The harpoon got his lungs.
--He flurries!

STUBB

Does he spout blood?! No, that's
angry smoke I see. He's trying to
kill old Ahab!

Ahab's boat -- Moby Dick's tail thrashing.

AHAB

Pull in or he sinks us.

Ahab's crew pulls the boat to Moby Dick's flank. They're right beside him.

AHAB

Give him the lance! The lance!
Strike for his lungs!

Queequeg plunges the lance deep -- jerks it viciously back and forth -- searching for the lungs. Stabs again -- screwing the lance till it bends.

Moby Dick's eye looks back in fury -- he dives beneath the surface.

Ahab's boat spins like a top in the water, the whaleline still fast to the loggerhead.

Queequeg cuts loose.

AHAB
He's sounding!

On Stubb's boat -- whaleline running out -- loggerhead smoking and flaming. Stubb madly throws water on it. The whaleline suddenly goes slack. The tub isn't even half empty.

STUBB
What's this?

BONE NOSE
He stop?

Stubb's confused -- nervous -- tugs on the slack line.

STUBB
Maybe the harpoon came loose.

The boats -- floating in the rolling waves -- birds screeching and screaming overhead.

AHAB
(quietly)
Give me a lance.

Ishmael hands one back to him. Queequeg hefts another harpoon. A crewman picks up another lance.

Ahab looks down into the water beside the boat.

Ishmael looks, but sees only light rays shooting down into the bottomless blue. Then a form, a ghostly blur of white -- then a shape -- then jaws rising up.

AHAB
He breaches!

Moby Dick shoots from the water with Ahab's boat in his jaws -
- rises into the air 50 feet.

Crewmen fall.

Ahab madly jabs his lance into Moby Dick's mouth.

Queequeg is crushed in the teeth as the jaws close.

Ishmael dives!

Moby Dick thunders into the sea, exploding water into the sky and swims off.

Stubb hears the Pequod's bell ringing frantically.

On the Pequod -- Starbuck flails the bell.

STARBUCK

Stop! Return to the ship! For God's
sake! Return to the ship!

On Stubb's boat -- the crew watches Moby Dick turn and come
past them.

On Moby Dick's side, Ahab struggles in a spider's web of
tangled whaleline. He pulls a lance from Moby Dick --
stabbing and plunging it in again and again.

AHAB

I spit my last breath at thee! From
Hell's heart, I curse thee whale!

Moby Dick submerges.

Silence.

Ishmael and two other crewmen swim to Stubb's boat.

ISHMAEL

Where's the Captain?!

STUBB

Drowned and dead.

Stubb's crew hauls Ishmael and the others into the boat. All
watch the waves rise and fall.

The Pequod's bell rings again and again.

STUBB

(trembling)

Back to the ship, men. I want no
more of this devil whale. Back to
the ship.

Stubb's crew rows for the ship in silence.

Thousands of minnows start jumping all around them.

They stop rowing, dreading what's coming.

PORTUGUESE CREWMAN

Mary Mother of Jesus, save us. No
more, I pray. No more.

Moby Dick rises majestically -- glides past -- his eye
leering at the tiny whaleboat.

The crew sees Ahab tangled in whaleline, lashed to Moby Dick's back. Ahab's right arm appears to beckon as it flops lifelessly. Again it beckons -- and a third time as Moby Dick swims off.

ISHMAEL
 (remembering the prophecy)
 He shall beckon and all shall
 follow.

The Sicilian slumps at Stubb's feet, shaking violently.

SICILIAN
 I can't stand it. Take me back to
 the ship.

Ishmael pulls him back onto his seat.

ISHMAEL
 Take up your oar, man! Don't you
 see he tries to sink the ship?!

The crew doesn't move.

ISHMAEL
 What kind of men are you?! We kill
 Moby Dick or he will surely kill
 us. Now row, man!

STUBB
 By God, I spit in your eye, whale.
 Death to thee, I say! Pick up your
 oars! Let's after him!

BONE NOSE
 I hunt dis whale!

DAGGOO
 Come on, then! After him!

The crew throw themselves at the oars.

STUBB
 Aye! We be comin' for ye now
 fishie. Hot as brimstone, we are!
 Fiery as the sun, itself!

On the Pequod -- below deck in the foc'sle -- Starbuck and the Carpenter. Water pours in faster than the shipkeepers can pump.

CARPENTER
 It's bad, Mr. Starbuck.

Starbuck jumps to help work a pump handle.

Moby Dick's rocky brow crushes through the waves.

Stubb's boat closes. He sees Ahab still lashed to Moby Dick's back.

STUBB

Now, we work like a clock, boys.
Well oiled. In perfect time. Yes,
now's the time! Rise up Daggoo!
Strike for his lungs!

Daggoo rises and heaves his harpoon. Instantly, the oars are shipped and the crew straddles the centerboard box in perfect unison.

STUBB

Run ye little minnow! It's Stubb
and his boys what's got ye now!

The loggerhead gushes smoke and flame. A crewman fills a bucket to put it out.

STUBB

Let it burn! Let it burn! Hold
tight, lads. We ride him to his
death!

Stubb snatches the whaleline around the flaming loggerhead and the boat races off -- leaping over the waves -- slamming down.

STUBB

Hooooooooo Aaaaaaahhhh!

Moby Dick's eye -- looking back -- he accelerates.

Stubb's boat flies -- water sprays up in great sheets on both sides. Stubb moves forward, changes places with Daggoo -- readies a lance.

STUBB

Pull in before he does his tricks.
Pull now!

The crew struggles to pull in, but they're bounding around so, they fumble the whaleline -- struggle to keep their balance.

STUBB

Pull! Pull, lads!

Closer they come. Twenty yards. Ten yards.

Moby Dick's eye looking back.

The crew pulls. They're on him.

Moby Dick launches into the air -- all 150 feet of him -- his entire body into the air -- he arches over backward coming right for the boat.

The crew leaps!

Moby Dick comes down on the whaleboat, smashing it to pieces.

Underwater, the concussion whips Ishmael around uncontrollably.

He gropes for the surface -- Moby Dick's eye looks into his soul -- glides past -- then --

Ahab's face passes in the shafts of dancing light.

Moby Dick's tail slices through the water beside Ishmael and whirls him around in the wake -- tumbling, spinning, drowning.

The surface -- pieces of the whaleboat float in the whirling water. Stubb's lifeless body. Another body. The water stills.

No Ishmael!

It takes too long, then the surface bursts.

Ishmael gasps for air -- frantically looks for survivors in the silence.

No one.

There! The Pequod!

He swims for it -- then hears the birds screaming above and he knows what's coming -- but where -- where?!

Moby Dick breaches -- rages toward the ship -- faster -- faster -- his tail thrusts and --

BOOM! Moby Dick rams straight into side of the ship. The mainmast teeters. Yards fall.

Beams and planks shatter in the foc'sle -- instantly killing the Carpenter.

Water gushes in.

Starbuck and the others scramble to get out -- the entire ship is rattling -- vibrating.

Ishmael treads water.

On deck -- Starbuck sees Moby Dick's huge body scraping the length of the hull -- lances and harpoons snapping off.

Starbuck runs aft -- the deck rolls and shakes.

STARBUCK

Steer away! Steer away!

The helmsman throws himself into the tiller --

But Moby Dick turns at the stern and grinds into the huge wooden rudder.

The tiller smashes the helmsman into the bulwark, crushing him.

Moby Dick swims off.

Ishmael swims hard for the ship -- gasping for air -- sees Moby Dick circle back.

And now, raging through the water -- churning up a great wave before his head -- he rams amidships.

The mainmast falls -- crushes a shipkeeper -- just misses Pip.

Starbuck grabs him and they run for the last whaleboat dangling from its davits.

Moby Dick rakes himself along the side of the hull -- his back high above the rail -- grinding against the hull.

Starbuck sees the last remaining whaleboat rip loose from the davits -- it's ground to pieces between the hull and Moby Dick.

Moby Dick turns around the stern.

Ishmael swims again for the ship -- sees Moby Dick appear from the other side -- around the bow -- now coming right at him.

Ishmael panics -- flails to get out of the way -- but sees Moby Dick turn. He's circling the ship!

The ship begins to spin -- groans. Pip grips Starbuck.

Ishmael sees Moby Dick circling faster -- faster.

The ship spins.

Ishmael sees Pip and Starbuck on the deck, clutching each other helplessly.

A thunderous sucking sound.

Ishmael realizes he's been pulled toward the ship by the swirling water -- fights to swim away, but it pulls him toward the ship like undertow. He flails in the froth.

The ship begins to break up. Hull planks burst loose. The foremast falls.

ISHMAEL

Jump! Jump!

Starbuck and Pip scramble to the rail -- climb up to jump -- too late!

Ishmael sees the hull split beneath them -- they fall hideously -- their bodies smashing into jagged broken planks -- gone!

Ishmael looks for them -- the ocean suddenly tilts before him -- sloping down -- down --

A whirlpool!

Bow first, the Pequod slides into the widening hole in the ocean -- grinding -- groaning -- wood flying into the air.

The whirlpool takes Ishmael -- can't keep his head above the raging current. Under he goes -- fights back up for air -- the whirlpool sucks him under.

Under the sea -- Ishmael gropes pathetically -- sees Moby Dick circling down, pulling the bottom of the whirlpool behind.

The ship spins down after Moby Dick.

On the surface -- the whirlpool is a white spiral that descends like a huge spiral staircase to the bottom of the sea.

A horrible sound -- sucking -- grinding -- the sea screams and the vortex snaps closed.

All is gone, like nothing was ever there.

Silence.

No birds. No wreckage. Nothing.

Only glimmering water.

Ishmael bursts up -- choking, gasping, puking seawater.

He's surrounded by the vast, empty ocean. He searches desperately for wreckage, anything to hang on to.

There's nothing. He realizes he will drown.

The water explodes behind him! He spins in panic.

Queequeg's coffin.

He swims to it -- crawls on top, exhausted.

EXT. THE OCEAN - AFTERNOON

Sails on the horizon. It's Captain Gardner's beautiful ship, the Rachel. From the masthead, a lookout yells --

LOOKOUT

Off the starboard bow! A man! I see
a man!

Captain Gardner sees a tiny speck in the distance.

Ishmael floats on the golden waves.

FADE OUT