

Unit 4: Fished Out: Our Empty Oceans

Moby Dick

Keywords

ancestor
rational

biodiversity
shallow

biologist
stabilize

continent
treaty

degrade
widespread

Chapter 1: Ishmael Sets Sail

Ishmael, feeling a mix of hope and adventure, decided to leave his usual life behind and step into the unknown world of whaling. He arrived at a busy port filled with ships, sailors, and the salt air of the sea. With a heart full of wonder but feeling a touch nervous, he walked among the tall ships, their sails dancing in the wind like giant wings.

He chose the Pequod, a ship that seemed to whisper tales of the ocean with every sound of its wooden frame as it rocked in the water. As he stepped on board, he was greeted by a crew as varied as the many seas: rough sailors with hands as tough as the ropes they handled, wise men with deep-set eyes, and others who smiled, hiding their own stories.

Ishmael found his place among them, a small room with a wooden bed and a small window that looked out to the never-ending water. He lay there at night, listening to the sounds: the wind's song, the waves' rhythm, and the ship's steady heartbeat.

Each day brought new lessons: how to tie knots that held firm like promises, how to read the sky's mood, and how to feel the ship lean and turn with his own body. Ishmael listened, watched, and learned; his mind as open as the ocean before him.

The sailors, each with their own language of the sea, shared their knowledge with him, their words simple but filled with the depth of experience. Ishmael began to see the world through their eyes, a world vast, full of mystery, and alive. He came to see the sailors as his new family and the sea as their common **ancestor**, uniting them in their venture. And as the Pequod sailed further from the **shallow** waters near land, Ishmael realized he was no longer just a visitor in this world. He was part of the ship, part of the sea, and part of the grand, unknown adventure of life on the ocean.

Chapter 2: Captain Ahab

In the heart of the Pequod, amid the vast, rolling sea, stood Captain Ahab, a man whose very presence commanded attention. His eyes, deep and dark, seemed to hold the storms of the ocean within them, reflecting a soul consumed by a single purpose: to find and challenge Moby Dick, the great white whale.

Ahab's passion was no secret among the crew. They whispered tales of the fateful encounter that had left the captain with a wooden leg and a heart filled with vengeance. It was more than a hunt; for Ahab, it was a personal battle against a creature he saw as a symbol of all the world's ill will and hate. Day after day, Ahab stood at the helm, his gaze fixed on the horizon, searching, always searching. The crew felt the weight of his passion, a silent force that drove them forward through calm seas and wild storms. They watched as their captain, a figure both inspiring and frightening, paced the deck, his wooden leg tapping a steady beat that echoed the beating of their own hearts.

Even in moments of peace, when the ocean's beauty was revealed in sunsets or the dance of dolphins, Ahab's focus never changed. His determination was as deep as the sea, a thirst for revenge that consumed not only him but all who sailed with him. Ahab's single-minded

pursuit of Moby Dick was seen by the crew as lacking **rational** thought, driven more by passion than reason.

To Ishmael and the others, Ahab was a living mystery, a man who walked the line between genius and madness. They saw in him the power of human will, the depth of human sadness, and the danger of a heart blinded by hate. In the shadow of Ahab's challenge, they sailed on, toward a fate as mysterious and vast as the ocean itself.

Chapter 3: The Pequod and its Crew

The Pequod was like a floating world of its own, a small wooden universe with sails, crewed by men from every **continent** of the world. Each sailor brought a piece of his homeland onto the ship, their languages, customs, and stories mixing like the winds that pushed them forward. Among them was Queequeg, a harpooner from a distant island, his skin painted with detailed and frightening tattoos, each a chapter of his life's story. He shared his space with Ishmael, who quickly learned that the sea was a great teacher, uncaring and vast, yet filled with lessons. Queequeg pointed out to Ishmael the schools of fish that moved as one, a silver mass that changed direction as if they shared one mind. "See the flying fish," he'd say, and Ishmael would gaze in wonder at the tiny creatures flying above the water's surface.

Starbuck, the first mate, was a man of quiet strength, his steady eyes reflecting a mind always at work, navigating not just the ship but the moods of its captain and the mood of the ocean. He would often remark on the variety of whales they encountered, noting their size and the way they sent up a mixture of water and air from the top of their heads. "Each whale is a book," he'd say, "and we're here to read them." And then there was Stubb, the second mate, whose laughter and good nature made the burdens of their journey lighter, his happy smile as constant as the North Star. Stubb delighted in the dolphins racing the ship. He'd joke that they were the Pequod's guide through the vast ocean, and their leaps were a performance for the crew's benefit.

The crew, without training or education, had knowledge of the sea and its creatures beyond any **biologist**. They knew well the sea's creatures and their **biodiversity**. They recognized the signs of a coming storm in the behavior of the birds and felt the little changes in the water that signaled the presence of larger creatures below. It was a daily lesson in the fragile balance of the ocean, the Pequod a classroom that floated upon the very subject it studied, rich in life and lessons at every turn.

As the Pequod cut through the waters, her crew worked as one, their tasks in tune like a dance to the music of ropes and sails, waves, and wind. Their daily tasks were performed together, each action a step in a well-practiced routine. The ship itself, a strong wooden structure, began to show signs of wear from the constant blows of the sea, and the Pequod's wooden structure began to be **degraded**.

The crew worked hard to fix the damage. While they worked, they told stories under the stars and broke bread together, their meals of hard bread and salt meat fueling the labor of their hands. When violent storms rose, they stood shoulder to shoulder, facing the ocean's anger. Their hands worked without rest to preserve the strength of their floating home. It was then that the crew gathered, under the careful eyes of Starbuck and Stubb, to **stabilize** the Pequod. With tools in hand, they repaired weak spots, put loose boards back into place, and secured the ropes and sails. The task was never easy, as they fought not just to repair, but to restore the Pequod's ability to face the challenges of the sea.

Ishmael watched and learned, the ship teaching him the ways of the sea. He was amazed at how the crew, like a skilled team of workers, would rush to repair a broken mast or a ripped sail. They would put their backs against the ship's side, pushing with all their might to

stabilize a board or go down into the lowest part of the ship, holding on as the ship leaned, to do repairs. Through the efforts of the crew, the Pequod was kept floating, her injuries tended to with care and craft. The act of repairing the ship became as much a part of the voyage as the hunt for Moby Dick itself.

Chapter 4: Ahab's Obsession

Every day and night, Captain Ahab stood on the deck, his eyes burning with a determination that never changed. The crew watched him, some with praise, others with fear, as he gazed out at the sea, searching for the white whale, Moby Dick. This was not just a mission for Ahab; it was his life's passion, consuming every thought and dream. Stories of this giant white whale, Moby Dick, were **widespread**, reaching the crew's ears long before they even spotted the whale.

In the vast area of the ocean, the crew of the Pequod followed a **treaty** with the sea. This agreement was not written on paper but was understood by every man on board. They would take from the sea—the whales that were their living—but they also gave back respect and understanding for the ocean's might and mystery. They honored the sea's creatures, from the smallest fish that swam beneath the waves to the grand whales they pursued. It was a give-and-take, a balance of taking only what they needed and acknowledging the sea's power over them. But as Captain Ahab's passion with Moby Dick grew, it was clear that this **treaty** was at risk. The captain's anger toward the great white whale meant pushing the crew and the Pequod to their limits, risking the balance they had maintained with the sea. As the Pequod sailed on, the rest of the crew began to feel the strain of a **treaty** being broken, wondering if the sea would soon demand a price for Ahab's defiance.

The ocean, vast and full of mystery, held many wonders and dangers, but for Ahab, it held only one purpose: the hunt for Moby Dick. He spoke of the whale with a mix of anger and respect, as if the creature were not just an animal but a force of nature that had wronged him personally. To the crew, the pursuit without end began to feel like a journey into madness. They sailed through storms and calms, past islands and ice, always following Ahab's strict command. The captain rarely slept, and when he did, it was with one eye open, always ready, always waiting for the moment he would face his enemy.

Even when they stopped for supplies or repairs, Ahab's mind was never at rest. He would stand on the shore, staring out at the water, as if he could call the whale to come with his will alone. And when they were at sea, he was always on deck, scanning the water, plotting their course, driven by a need for revenge that none of them could truly understand. For Ishmael and the others, the voyage became more than a whaling expedition; it was a lesson in human nature, a view into the depths of passion and the price it demands. As they sailed under Ahab's command, they realized they were part of a story that was as much about the human heart as it was about the hunt for the great white whale.

Chapter 5: The Meeting

As the Pequod sailed the endless blue sea, it encountered other ships, bringing moments of connection in the vast empty ocean. These encounters were like brief meetings where two roads met, with each ship sharing news and tales from far away. For the crew, these moments were a break in their routine, a chance to hear voices from outside their own world.

One day, as a ship approached, excitement ran through the Pequod. Sailors lined the deck, waiting for interaction, maybe even news from home. The approaching vessel, injured by the sea, carried its own stories, its crew waving and shouting greetings across the water. The captains exchanged news through shouted words and hand signals. They spoke of the weather ahead, the best hunting grounds for whales, and warnings of dangers like ice or storms. But

most importantly, they talked of Moby Dick. Each ship had its own tales of the great white whale, some claiming sightings, others repeating stories of ships broken in pursuit. For Ahab, these exchanges were opportunities to get information about his target. His questions were pointed, focused on Moby Dick alone. The crew watched their captain, seeing his obsession reflected in the strength of his gaze, and his hard voice.

After these meetings, the Pequod would sail on, its crew left with stories from the other ship, reminders that they were part of a larger world, a community of sailors, each on their own journey, yet all connected by the sea. For Ishmael, these encounters were lessons in the diversity of human experience, the shared hopes and fears that bind us, even in the vast and isolating space of the ocean.

Chapter 6: First Encounter

The encounter with Moby Dick, the great white whale, began with an air of suspense and anticipation. The vast ocean, usually a scene of endless waves and the sailors' routine, turned into a stage set for a dramatic battle.

It started on an ordinary day, with the lookout high on top of the mast. His shout, "There she blows! Moby Dick!" cut through the air like a thunderclap, hitting every sailor's heart with a mix of excitement and fear. The crew scrambled to their posts, eyes straining to catch a view of Moby Dick.

Captain Ahab's voice rose above the noise, commanding and fierce, as he ordered the small boat to be launched. With practiced speed, the sailors lowered the small boat into the violent sea, their movements quick but careful under the weight of the moment. The harpooners, their weapons at the ready, climbed into the boat with firm determination written on their faces.

In one of these boats, six men took their places, their muscles ready for the task ahead. Among them were the harpooners, their arms raised, ready to throw their heavy, sharp weapons against the whale.

As the small boat bounced up and down on the sea, Moby Dick emerged again, his massive form cutting through the water. The sailors rowed strongly, closing the distance between them and the whale, their oars slicing through the sea in unison.

The whale's power was extraordinary, changing the water into foam, his tail crashing down like a giant hammer. The crew's harpoons flew, some finding their mark, drawing angry responses from Moby Dick. The ship made screaming noises under the strain as if it too were battling for its life.

The battle that followed was a test of wills and strength. Moby Dick attacked, diving deep then surfacing, the small boat dancing on the giant waves he created. The sailors fought to keep him close, to wear him down, their faces set with resolve but marked by the strain of the struggle.

Throughout this violent dance, Ishmael watched from the Pequod, his heart pounding with each rise and fall of the boat. He saw in Ahab's eyes not just the fire of revenge but a mirror of Moby Dick's own wild anger. The scene before him was a clear reminder of nature's raw power and the thin line between triumph and despair.

As the conflict drew to a close, with the whale disappearing into the deep and the boat returning exhausted to the ship, the crew was left to reflect on the encounter. They had faced the reality of their fears and desires, touched the edge of the world's deep mysteries, and would carry those moments with them, written into their very souls.

Chapter 7: Disaster

After the harpooners' intense battle with Moby Dick, they returned to the Pequod, their energy spent, their bodies and spirits wounded. The ocean around them fell silent as if holding its breath, and the ship seemed to float in a vast, empty world. The men were quiet, their usual conversation replaced by a heavy sense of doom.

Then, without warning, the ocean's silence was broken by the appearance of Moby Dick once again. The great whale came up from the depths with incredible force, his massive body pushing him toward the Pequod with the speed of a giant arrow shot from the sea itself. His white form was like a flash of lightning against the blue, a terrifying image of nature's power.

The sailors, caught off guard and exhausted from their earlier struggle, scrambled to their posts, but their actions felt slow and useless against the whale's attack. Moby Dick struck the Pequod with a huge impact, his body a hammer that shattered wood and sent waves crashing over the deck. The ship screamed its frame no match for the whale's might.

As Moby Dick circled and charged again, the Pequod began to break apart, its destruction now obvious. The men grabbed whatever they could, their eyes wide with fear and disbelief as their home on the sea was broken to pieces. The final charge was like the blow of a mighty hammer, sending the ship down into the dark, cold depths of the ocean.

In the middle of this chaos, only Ishmael managed to survive, finding safety on a piece of board. As he floated alone, the scale of what had happened washed over him. The silence returned, now a depressed quiet that filled the vast space around him. He was left drifting, the only witness of the tale, a tale of the power of nature and the weak attempts of man against it.

Chapter 8: A Lone Survivor

After the Pequod sank into the depths of the ocean, Ishmael was left alone, floating in the vast, empty sea. He floated on a small piece of wood, the only thing keeping him above water. Around him was silence, the kind of quiet that is deep and complete, broken only by the sound of gentle waves and the occasional cry of a distant bird.

As the sun rose and set, marking time that seemed to stretch and blur, Ishmael drifted. He was surrounded by water, a never-ending expanse that merged with the sky at the horizon, leaving him feeling small and totally alone. Despite his fear and the uncertainty of his fate, there was a sense of peace that came over him, as he gave up to the rhythm of the sea and the sky.

During the day, the sun warmed his face, and he watched the clouds, their shapes ever-changing, moving across the sky. At night, the stars shone brightly, stars making shapes he had learned to recognize during his time at sea, now his only companions. He thought about the Pequod, Captain Ahab, and the mighty Moby Dick, their story now part of the vast tapestry of the ocean's mysteries.

Eventually, Ishmael was rescued by the Rachel, a passing ship that had been searching for its own lost sailors. As he was pulled onto the ship, safe at last, he felt thanks without limit mixed with sadness for those who were lost. His journey had been long and filled with wonder, horror, and beauty, a confirmation of the power of nature and the strength of the human spirit.

Back on land, Ishmael's adventure became a story to share, a tale of survival against the odds, and a reminder of our small place in the vast, wild world. It was a story that would remain in his mind, shaping his thoughts and dreams for years to come.

Questions

1. What is the name of the ship in the story?
 - A) The Pequod
 - B) The Rachel
 - C) The Whale
 - D) The Ahab
2. Who is the captain of the ship?
 - A) Ishmael
 - B) Starbuck
 - C) Ahab
 - D) Queequeg
3. What is the captain looking for in the sea?
 - A) A treasure
 - B) A new land
 - C) A big fish
 - D) A white whale
4. Who is the first mate on the ship?
 - A) Stubb
 - B) Ahab
 - C) Starbuck
 - D) Ishmael
5. What does Ahab want to do with Moby Dick?
 - A) Save him
 - B) Feed him
 - C) Capture him
 - D) Kill him
6. What is the main goal of the ship's journey?
 - A) To find treasure
 - B) To hunt whales
 - C) To discover new lands
 - D) To carry passengers
7. What does the crew do when they see other ships?
 - A) They hide.
 - B) They talk and share news.
 - C) They race them.
 - D) They attack them.
8. What does the crew use to hunt whales?
 - A) Harpoons
 - B) Nets
 - C) Traps
 - D) Fishing rods
9. What does Queequeg use to show his home's stories?
 - A) Tattoos
 - B) Pictures

- C) Letters
- D) Songs

10. What happens to the Pequod in the end?

- A) It returns home safely.
- B) It gets lost at sea.
- C) It becomes a famous ship.
- D) It is destroyed by Moby Dick.

Vocabulary Review

ancestor: a person related to you who lived a long time ago

Example: *He came to see the sailors as his new family and the sea as their common **ancestor**, uniting them in their venture.* (Chapter 1)

biodiversity: the number and types of plants and animals that exist in a particular area or in the world generally

Example: *They knew well the sea's creatures and their **biodiversity**.* (Chapter 3)

biologist: a scientist who studies the natural processes of living things

Example: *The crew, without training or education, had knowledge of the sea and its creatures beyond any **biologist**.* (Chapter 3)

continent: one of the seven large land masses on the earth's surface, surrounded, or mainly surrounded, by sea

Example: *The Pequod was like a floating world of its own, a small wooden universe with sails, crewed by men from every **continent** of the world.* (Chapter 3)

degrade: to cause something to become worse

Example: *The ship itself, a strong wooden structure, began to show signs of wear from the constant blows of the sea, and the Pequod's wooden structure began to be **degraded**.* (Chapter 3)

rational: showing clear thought or reason

Example: *Ahab's single-minded pursuit of Moby Dick was seen by the crew as lacking **rational** thought, driven more by passion than reason.* (Chapter 2)

shallow: not very deep; having only a short distance from the top to the bottom

Example: *And as the Pequod sailed further from the **shallow** waters near land, Ishmael realized he was no longer just a visitor in this world.* (Chapter 1)

stabilize: to become fixed or stop changing

Example: *It was then that the crew gathered, under the careful eyes of Starbuck and Stubb, to **stabilize** the Pequod.* (Chapter 3)

treaty: a formal written agreement between two or more countries

Example: *In the vast area of the ocean, the crew of the Pequod followed a **treaty** with the sea.* (Chapter 4)

widespread: existing or happening in many places or among many people

Example: *Stories of this giant white whale, Moby Dick, were **widespread**, reaching the crew's ears long before they even spotted the whale.* (Chapter 4)