

# The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex: A Tale of Survival, Heroism, and Cannibalism

On November 20, 1820, the whaleship Essex set sail from Nantucket, Massachusetts, on a whaling expedition to the Pacific Ocean. The ship was commanded by Captain George Pollard Jr., and its crew of 20 men included first mate Owen Chase, second mate Matthew Joy, and cabin boy Thomas Nickerson.



## In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship

**Essex** by Nathaniel Philbrick

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 21988 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 338 pages



The Essex had a successful start to its voyage, catching several whales in the first few months. However, on November 20, 1821, the ship was attacked by a large sperm whale. The whale rammed the Essex twice, causing the ship to spring a leak. The crew was forced to abandon ship and take to the lifeboats.

The crew members spent the next three months adrift in the Pacific Ocean. They faced starvation, exposure, and attacks by sharks and other sea

creatures. Several of the crew members died, including Captain Pollard and First Mate Chase. The survivors eventually resorted to cannibalism to stay alive.

In March 1822, the survivors were rescued by the whaling ship Dauphin. Only eight of the original 20 crew members survived the ordeal.

The story of the Essex was first published in 1821 by Owen Chase, who kept a journal of the voyage. The story has since been adapted into several books, movies, and television shows.

### **The Attack**

The Essex was attacked by a large sperm whale on November 20, 1821. The whale rammed the ship twice, causing the ship to spring a leak. The crew was forced to abandon ship and take to the lifeboats.

The whale that attacked the Essex was estimated to be between 80 and 100 feet long and weigh between 80 and 100 tons. It is believed that the whale was provoked by the Essex's whaling activities.

The attack on the Essex was one of the most famous and well-documented whale attacks in history. The story has been used to illustrate the dangers of whaling and the power of nature.

### **The Drift**

The crew of the Essex spent the next three months adrift in the Pacific Ocean. They faced starvation, exposure, and attacks by sharks and other sea creatures.

The crew members were initially able to survive by eating the food that they had salvaged from the Essex. However, their supplies quickly ran out, and they were forced to resort to eating raw fish and birds.

The crew members also suffered from exposure to the elements. They were constantly wet and cold, and they developed a number of illnesses, including scurvy and dysentery.

Several of the crew members died during the drift, including Captain Pollard and First Mate Chase. The survivors eventually resorted to cannibalism to stay alive.

## **The Cannibalism**

The survivors of the Essex resorted to cannibalism in order to stay alive. They ate the flesh of their dead shipmates.

Cannibalism is a taboo practice in most cultures. However, it is sometimes practiced in extreme situations, such as when people are stranded at sea or in a life-threatening situation.

The survivors of the Essex were desperate to survive. They had no other source of food, and they were facing certain death if they did not eat.

The cannibalism that occurred on the Essex was a tragedy. However, it is also a testament to the human will to survive.

## **The Rescue**

In March 1822, the survivors of the Essex were rescued by the whaling ship Dauphin. Only eight of the original 20 crew members survived the

ordeal.

The survivors were taken to Valparaiso, Chile, where they were treated for their injuries and illnesses.

The story of the Essex survivors was met with great interest and sympathy. The survivors were hailed as heroes, and their story was used to illustrate the dangers of whaling and the power of the human spirit.

## The Legacy

The story of the whaleship Essex has been passed down through generations. It is a tale of survival, heroism, and cannibalism that has captivated readers for centuries.

The Essex has been the subject of several books, movies, and television shows. The most famous adaptation is Herman Melville's 1851 novel *Moby-Dick*, which is based on the Essex disaster.

The Essex disaster is a reminder of the dangers of whaling and the power of nature. It is also a story of human resilience and the will to survive.



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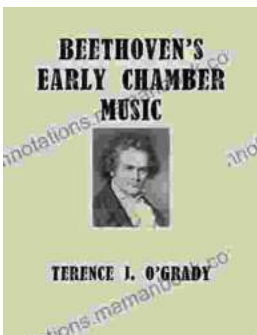
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