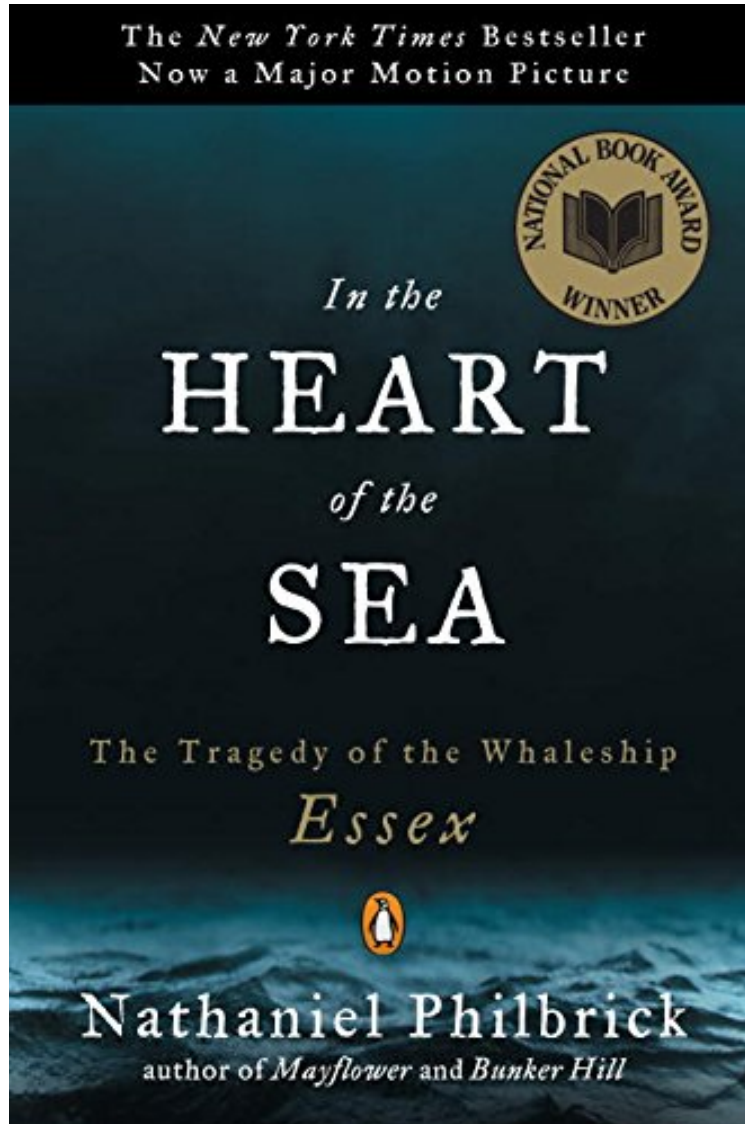


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## In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex

*Nathaniel Philbrick*

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**Nathaniel Philbrick : In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good but short readBy CustomerReally interesting and engaging story if some what short. It has inspired me to start reading Moby Dick as I have a better understanding of the whaling culture. I had started Moby Dick several times before and it never engaged my interest,now I am finding it quite as enjoyable as reading Dickens. The observations on the human condition have left me much to think about. But I am

not done with it so enough of that. back to the book at hand, For the price as a kindle book of the day it was more than worth it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A good read in history, a tribute to the early life in the USA By Mr. Bill If you are into historical reality this is a story very well told and in the doing accurately informative of life in such times. I also truly enjoy the movie somewhat based on the book (as Hollywood is inclined to do), but as is inherently true the book is so very much better than the movie/1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Sad but uplifting at same time. By Wade Steen It is hard to read about what these poor men endured. Sad to know that there fear of the unknown caused them sail in the wrong direction leading to many more deaths.

From the author of *Mayflower* and *Valiant Ambition*, the riveting bestseller tells the story of the true events that inspired Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Winner of the National Book Award, Nathaniel Philbrick's book is a fantastic saga of survival and adventure, steeped in the lore of whaling, with deep resonance in American literature and history. In 1820, the whaleship *Essex* was rammed and sunk by an angry sperm whale, leaving the desperate crew to drift for more than ninety days in three tiny boats. Nathaniel Philbrick uses little-known documents and vivid details about the Nantucket whaling tradition to reveal the chilling facts of this infamous maritime disaster. In *The Heart of the Sea*, recently adapted into a major feature film starring Chris Hemsworth, is a book for the ages.

.com The appeal of Dava Sobel's *Longitude* was, in part, that it illuminated a little-known piece of history through a series of captivating incidents and engaging personalities. Nathaniel Philbrick's *In the Heart of the Sea* is certainly cast from the same mold, examining the 19th-century Pacific whaling industry through the arc of the sinking of the whaleship *Essex* by a boisterous sperm whale. The story that inspired Herman Melville's classic *Moby-Dick* has a lot going for it--derring-do, cannibalism, rescue--and Philbrick proves an amiable and well-informed narrator, providing both context and detail. We learn about the importance and mechanics of blubber production--a vital source of oil--and we get the nuts and bolts of harpooning and life aboard whalers. We are spared neither the nitty-gritty of open boats nor the sucking of human bones dry. By sticking to the tried and tested *Longitude* formula, Philbrick has missed a slight trick or two. The epicenter of the whaling industry was Nantucket, a small island off Cape Cod; most of the whales were in the Pacific, necessitating a huge journey around the southernmost tip of South America. We never learn why no one ever tried to create an alternative whaling capital somewhere nearer. Similarly, Philbrick tells us that the story of the *Essex* was well known to Americans for decades, but he never explores how such legends fade from our consciousness. Philbrick would no doubt reply that such questions were beyond his remit, and you can't exactly accuse him of skimping on his research. By any standard, 50 pages of footnotes impress, though he wears his learning lightly. He doesn't get bogged down in turgid detail, and his narrative rattles along at a nice pace. When the storyline is as good as this, you can't really ask for more. --John Crace, .co.uk From Publishers Weekly In 1821, a whaling ship came upon a small boat off the coast of Chile containing two deranged men surrounded by human bones that they alternately chewed and clutched to their shriveled bodies. The two were survivors of one of the most well-known marine disasters of the 19th century: the sinking of a 240-ton Nantucket whaleship by an 80-ton sperm whale. A maritime historian, Philbrick recounts the hellish wreck of the *Essex* (which inspired Melville's *Moby-Dick*) and its sailors' struggle to make their way to South America, 2,000 miles away. Of the 20 men aboard the two boats, only eight would remain alive through the ravages of thirst, hunger and desperation that beset the voyage. With a gracefulness of language that rarely falters, Philbrick spins a ghastly, irresistible tale that draws upon archival material (including a cabin boy's journal discovered in 1960). Philbrick shows how the Quaker establishment of Nantucket ran a hugely profitable whaling industry in the 18th and 19th centuries and provides a detailed account of shipboard life. A champion sailboat racer himself, Philbrick has a particular affinity for his subject. His fastidious, extensive notes and bibliography will please historians, but it's his measured prose that superbly re-creates a cornerstone of the early American frontier ethos. 16 page photo insert not seen by PW. 15-city author tour; foreign rights sold to nine countries. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA--In 1819, the *Essex*, a Nantucket whaleship carrying a crew of 20, began what all thought would be a normal, two-year voyage. Instead, after a year and a half of near-disasters, the ship was rammed by a sperm whale and sank in the Pacific. All hands got off in three whaleboats and were at sea for three unbearable months of short rations and little fresh water, leading to the death by starvation of some and the killing of others to provide food. One boat disappeared and the two remaining eventually became separated. When rescued off the coast of Chile, only five men were still alive, including the captain and first mate, as well as three rescued later from an island. Philbrick brings the era to life, giving readers a rounded picture of the whaling industry and its society. Relying mainly on two survivors' detailed accounts, one of which has just recently been found, he fleshes out the tale in an exciting manner that sweeps readers along. He includes modern medical knowledge of the physical and mental effects of starvation on humans. The book concludes with tales of other shipwrecks, a description of how the survivors lived the rest of their lives, and an introduction to the recent work of the Nantucket Whaling Museum. The contrast between today's touristy island paradise and yesterday's hard life will not be lost on teens. Judy McAloon, Potomac Library, Prince William County, VA Copyright 2000 Reed Business

