



Shipmates

Several days passed with not a sign of Captain Ahab. I did, however, meet the others of our crew. The chief mate of the *Pequod* was Starbuck, a native of Nantucket and a good person. He was a tall, slender man, but hard as nails. The rest of the men looked up to him because he was calm and steady. He was only thirty, but he seemed older. Perhaps the deaths of his father and brother during past whaling trips made him that way. He had great courage, but he was also very careful. He knew the dangers of hunting giant whales.

Stubb, the second mate, was from Cape Cod,



Massachusetts. He was happy and carefree and I was told he could be heard humming a tune right in the middle of a battle with a whale. Stubb had a pipe in his mouth all of the time. He kept a whole row of pipes full and ready to go.

The third mate was Flask, another Massachusetts native—a short, chubby young fellow, always ready for a fight with a whale. It was said he would toy with a whale as if it were just a big mouse. Flask was tough and steady.



Now, these three mates, Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask, were very important men. They were each in charge of a whaleboat and its crew. These whaleboats were lowered over the sides of the main ship when whales were sighted. The whaleboat crews were made up of the men who pulled the oars, and the harpooner. When the time came to attack and kill a whale, the harpooner's skill with his spear usually decided who won the battle. The men in each crew trusted one another like brothers.

Starbuck had chosen Queequeg for his harpooner. You have already heard about him. Next was Tashtego, a full-blooded Massachusetts Indian, known for his bravery and daring. Tashtego was long and lean and strong as a steel wire. Tashtego was Stubb's harpooner. The third harpooner was Daggoo, a gigantic, coal-black African. With two hoop earrings and a height of six feet and five inches, he was quite a sight next to little Flask, the mate with whom he worked.

There was another whaleboat crew on the *Pegud*, though nothing was known about them. One night before we sailed, a crew had slipped on board like shadows and disappeared into the

area of Ahab's cabin. They were more like ghosts than men. The gossip was that they were Ahab's personal crew, led by a strange man named Fedallah.

The rest of the crew came in all shapes, sizes, and colors—from all over the world, especially islands. Most of the crew had spent their whole lives on the sea and were expert whalemens. Many had hidden aboard ships that had been passing their islands, and they had never returned. The whaling ship became their home, their own little island.

