MOBY DICK; OR THE WHALE By Herman Melville CHAPTER 1. Loomings. Call me Ishmael. Some years ago--never mind how long precisely--having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation. Wh enever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping i to the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off--then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly t he same feelings towards the ocean with me. There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs--commerce surrounds it with her surf. Right and left, the streets take you waterward. Its extreme downtown is the battery, where that noble mole is washed by waves, and cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were o ut of sight of land. Look at the crowds of water-gazers there. Circumambulate the city of a dreamy Sabbath afternoon. Go from Corlears Hook to Coenties Slip, and from thence, by Whitehall, northward. What do you see?--Posted like silent sentinels all around the town, stand thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries. Some leaning against the spiles; some seated upon the pier-heads; some looking over the bulwarks of ships from China; some high aloft in the rigging, as if striving to get a still better seaward peep. But these are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster--tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are the green fields gone? What do they here? But look! here co me more crowds, pacing straight for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive. Strange! Nothing will content them but the extremest limit of the land; loitering under the shady lee of yonder warehouses will not suffice. No. They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling in. And there they stand--miles of them--leagues. Inlanders all, they com e from lanes and alleys, streets and avenues--north, east, south, and west. Yet here they all unite. Tell me, does the magnetic virtue of the needles of the compasses of all those ships attra ct them thither? Once more. Say you are in the country; in some high land of lakes. Take almost any path you please, and ten to one it carries you down in a dale, and leaves you there by a pool in the stream. There is magic in it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest reveries--stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will infal libly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region. Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a metaphysical professor. Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever. But here is an artist. He desires to paint you the dreamiest, shadiest, quietest, most enchan ting bit of romantic landscape in all the valley of the Saco. What is the chief element he employs? There stand his trees, each with a hollow trunk, as if a hermit and a crucifix were within; and here sleeps his meadow, and there sleep his cattle; and up from yonder cottage goes a sleepy smoke. Deep into distant woodlands winds a mazy way, reaching to overlappi ng spurs of mountains bathed in their hill-side blue. But though the picture lies thus tranced, and though this pine-tree shakes down its sighs like leaves upon this shepherd's head, yet all were vain, unless the shepherd's eye were fixed upon the magic stream before him. Go visit the Prairies in June, when for scores on scores of miles you wade knee-deep among Tiger-lilies--what is the one charm wanting?--Water--there is not a drop of water there! Were Niagara but a cataract of sand, would you travel your thousand miles to see it? Why did the poor poet of Tennessee, upon suddenly receiving two handfuls of silver, deliberate whether to buy him a coat, which he sadly needed, or invest his money in a pedestrian trip to Rockaway Beach? Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea? Why upon your first voyage as a passenger, did you yourself feel such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land? Why did the old Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the Greeks give it a separate d eity, and own brother of Jove? Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mil d image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable pha ntom of life; and this is the key to it all. Now, when I say that I am in the habit of going to sea whenever I begin to grow hazy about the eyes, and begin to be over conscious of my lungs , I do not mean to have it inferred that I ever go to sea as a passenger. For to go as a passenger you must needs have a purse, and a purse is but a rag unless you have something in it. Bes ides, passengers get sea-sick--grow quarrelsome--don't sleep of nights--do not enjoy themselves much, as a general thing;--no, I never go as a passenger; nor, though I am something of a salt, do I ever go to sea as a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook. I abandon the glory and distinction of such offices to those who like the m. For my part, I ab ominat e all hon ourable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind whatsoever. It is quite as much as I can do to take care of myself, without taking ca re of ships, barques, brigs, schooners, and what not. And as for going as cook,--though I confess there is considerable glory in that, a cook being a sort of officer on shi p-board--yet, som ehow, I nev er fanc ied broiling fowls;--though once broiled, judiciously buttered, and judgmatically salted and peppered, there is no one who will speak more resp ectfully, not to say reverentially, of a broiled fowl than I will. It is out of the idolatrous dotings of the old Egyptians upon broiled ibis and roasted river horse, that you see th e mummies of th ose creatures i n their huge bake-houses the pyramids. No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor, right before the mast, plumb down into the forecastle, aloft there to the royal mast-head. True, they rather order me about some, and make me jump from spar to spar, like a grasshopper in a May meadow. And at first, this sort of thing is un pleasant enoug h. It touches one 's sen se of honour, particularly if you come of an old established family in the land, the Van Rensselaers, or Randolphs, or Hardicanutes. And more t han all, if just previous to putting your hand into the tar-pot, you have been lording it as a country schoolmaster, making the tallest boys stand in awe of you. The transition is a keen one, I as sure you, from a school master to a sailor, and requires a strong decoction of Seneca and the Stoics to enable you to grin and bear it. But even this wears off in time. Wh at of it, if some old hunks of a sea-captain orders me to get a broom and sweep down the decks? What does that indignity amount to, weighed, I mean, in the scales of the New Testament? Do you think the ar change I Gabriel thinks anything the less of me, because I promptly and respectfully obey that old hunks in that particular instance? Who ain't a slave? T ell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-captains may order me about--however they may thump and punch me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that ev erybody else is one wa y or other served in much the same way--either in a physical or metaphysical point of view, that is; and so the universal thump is passed round, an d all hands should rub each other's shoulder-blades, and be content. Again, I always go to sea as a sailor, because they make a point of paying me for m y trouble, whereas t hey neve r pay pas sengers a single penny that I ever heard of. On the contrary, passengers themselves must pay. And there is all the difference in the world between payi ng and being paid. The act of paying is perhaps the most uncomfortable infliction that the two orchard thieves entailed upon us. But BEING PAID,--wh at will compare with it? The urbane activity with which a man receives money is really marvellous, considering that we so earnestly believe money to be the root of all earthly ills, and that on no account can a monied man enter heaven. Ah! how cheerfully we consign ourselves to perdition! Finally, I always go to sea as a sailor, beca use of the w holesome exe rcise and pure air of the fore-castle deck. For as in this world, head winds are far more prevalent than winds from astern (that is, if you never violate the Pythagorean maxim), so for the most part the Commodore on the quarter-deck gets his atmosphere at second hand from the sailors on the forecastle. He thinks he breathes it f irst; but n ot so. In much the same way do the commonalty lead their leaders in many other things, at the same time that the leaders little suspect it. But wherefore it was that after having repeatedly smelt the sea as a merchant sailor, I should now take it into my head to go on a whaling voyage; this the invisible police officer of the Fates, who has the con stant sur veillance of me, and secretly dog s me, and influences me in some unaccountable way--he can better answer than any one else. And, doubtless, my going on this whaling voyage, formed part of the grand programme o f Providence that was drawn up a long time ago. It came in as a sort of brief interlude and solo between more extensive performa nces. I t ake it that this part of t he bill mus t have run something like this: "GRAND CONTESTED ELECTION FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES. "WHALING VOYAGE BY ONE ISHMAEL. "BLOODY BATTLE IN AFFG HANISTAN." Though I cannot tell why it was exactly that those stage managers, the Fates, put me down for this shabby part of a w haling v oyage, when others wer e set down for magnificent parts in hig h tragedies, and short and easy parts in genteel comedies, and jolly parts in farces--though I cannot tell why this was exactly; yet, now that I recall all the circumstances, I think I can see a little into the springs and motives which being cunningly presented to me under vari ous disg uises, indu ced me to se t about p erforming the part I did, besides cajoling me into the delusion that it was a choice resulting from my own unbiased freewill and discriminating judgment. Chief am ong these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my c uriosity . Then the wild and dis tant seas where he rolled his i sland bulk; the undeliverable, nameless perils of the whale; these, with all the attending marvels of a thousand Patagonian sights and s ounds, helped to sway me to my wish. With other men, perhaps, such things would not have been inducements; but as for me, I am torme nted wi th an ev erlasting itch for thing s remote. I love to s ail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts. Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, and could still be social with it--would they let me--since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place one lodges in. By reason of these things, then, the whaling v o yage was welc ome; th e great flood-gate s of the wonder-wo rld swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless proce ssions of the whale, and, mid most of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air. CHAPTER 2. The Carpet-Bag. I stuffed a shirt o r two into my ol d carpe t-bag, tucked it under my arm, and st arted for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford. It was a Saturday night in De cember. Much was I disappointed upon learning that the little packet for Nantucket had already sailed, and that no way of reaching that p lace woul d offer, till the follo wing Monday. As mo st young candidates for the pains and penalties of whaling stop at this same New Bedford, thence to embark on their voyage, it may as well be related that I, fo r one, had no idea of so doing. For my mind was made up to sail in no other than a Nantucket craft, because there was a fine, boist erous something about everything conn ected with that fam ous old islan d, which a mazingly pleased me. Besides though New Bedford has of late been gradually monopolising the business of whaling, and though in this matter poor old Nantucket is now much behind her, yet Nantucket was her great original--the Tyre of this Carthage;--the place wh ere the first dead American whale was stra nded. Where else but from Nantu cket did those aboriginal whalemen, the Red-Men, first sally out in canoes to give chase to the Leviathan? And where but from Nantucket, too, di d that first adventurous little sloop put forth, partly laden with imported cobblestones--so goes the story--to throw at the whales, in order to discover when they were nigh en ough to risk a h arpoon from the bo wsprit? Now having a night, a day, and still another night following before me in New Bedford, ere I could embark for my destined port, it be came a matter of concernment where I was to eat and sleep meanwhile. It was a very dubious-looking, nay, a very dark and dismal night, bitingly cold and cheerless. I knew no one in the plac e. With anxious gra pnels I had sounded my pocket, and only brought up a few pieces of silver,--So, wherever you go, Ishmael, said I to myself, as I stood in the m iddle of a dreary street shouldering my bag, and comparing the gloom towards the north with the darkness towards the south--wherever in your w isdom you may co nclude to lod ge for the night, my dea r Ishmael, be sure to inquire the price, and don't be too particular. With halting steps I paced the streets, and passed the sign of "The Crossed Har poons"--but it looked too expensive and jolly there. Further on, from the bright red windows of the "Sword-Fish Inn," there came such fervent rays, that it se emed to hav e melted the packed snow and ice from before the house, for everywhere else the congealed frost lay ten inches thick in a hard, asphaltic pavement,--rather weary for me, when I struck my foot against the flinty projections, because from hard, remorseless service the soles of my boots were in a most m iserable pli ght. Too ex pensive an d jolly, again thought I, pausing o ne moment to watch the broad glare in the street, and hear the sounds of the tinkling glasses within. But go on, Ishmael, said I at l ast; don't you hear? get away from before the door; your patched boots are stopping the way. So on I went. I now by instinct followed the s treets that took me waterwar d, for ther e, doubtless, were the cheapest, if not the cheeriest inns. Such dreary streets! blocks of blackness, not houses, on either hand, and here and there a candle, like a candl e moving about in a tomb. At this hour of the night, of the last day of the week, that quarter of the town proved all but deserted. But prese ntly I came to a smoky lig ht proce eding fro m a low, wide buildin g, the door of which stood invitingly open. It had a careless look, as if it were meant for the uses of the public; so, entering, the first thing I did was to stumble over an ash-box in the porch. Ha! thought I, ha, as the flying particles almost choked me, are these ashes from that destroyed cit y, Gomorrah? But "The Cross ed Har poons," and "The Swo rd-Fish?"--this, then must needs be the sign of "The Trap." However, I picked myself up and hearing a loud voice within, pushed on and opene d a second, interior door. It seemed the great Black Parliament sitting in Tophet. A hundred black faces turned round in their rows to peer ; and beyond, a black Angel of Doom was bea ting a book in a pulpit. It was a negro church; and the preacher's text was about the blackness of darkness, and the weeping and wailing and teeth-gna shing there. Ha, Ishmael, muttered I, backing out, Wretched entertainment at the sign of 'The Trap!' Moving on, I at last came to a dim sort o f light not far from the docks, an d hea rd a fo rlorn cre aking in th e air; and looking up, saw a swinging sign over the door with a white painting upon it, faintly representing a tall straight jet of misty spray, and these words underneath--"The Spouter Inn:--Peter Coffin." Coffin?--Spouter?--Rather ominous in that particular connexi on, thought I. But it is a commo n name in Nantuck et, they say, and I sup pose this Peter here is an emigrant from there. As the light looked so dim, and the place, for the time, look ed qu iet enough, and the dilapidated little wooden house itself looked as if it might have been carted here from the ruins of some burnt district, and as the swinging sign had a poverty -stricken sort of creak to it, I thought that h ere was the very spot for cheap lodgings, and the best of pea coffee. It was a queer sort of place--a ga ble-ended old house, one side palsied as it were, and leaning over sadly. It stood on a sharp bleak corner, where that tempestuous wind Euroclydon kept up a worse howling than ever it did abo ut poor Paul's tossed craft. Eur oclydon, nevertheless, is a mighty pleasant zephyr to any one in-doors, with his feet on the hob quietl y toasting for bed. "In judging of that tempestuous wind called Euroclydon," says an old writer--of whose works I possess the only copy extant--"it m aketh a marvellous d ifference, wh ether thou lookest out at it from a glass window where the frost is all on the outside, or whether thou observest it from that sashless windo w, wher e the frost is on both sides, and of which the wight Death is the only glazier." True enough, thought I, as this passage occurred to my mind--old black-letter, thou reasonest well. Yes, these eyes are windows, and this body of mine is the house. What a pity they didn't stop up the chinks and the crannies though, and t hrust in a l ittle lint here and there. But it's too late to make any improvements now. The universe is finished; the copestone is on, and the chips were car ted off a milli on years a go. Poor Lazarus there, chattering hi s teeth against the curbstone for his pillow, and shaking off his tatters with his shiverings, he might p lug up both ears with rags, and put a corn-cob into his mouth, and yet that would not keep out the tempestuous Euroclydon. Euroclydon! says old Dives , in his red s ilken wrapp er--(he ha d a redder one afte rwards) po oh, pooh! What a fine frosty night; how Orion glitters; what northern lights! Let them talk of t heir oriental su mmer climes of everlasting conservatories; give me the privilege of making my own summer with my own coals. But what thinks Lazarus? C an he warm his blu e hands b y holdin g them up to the g rand northern li ghts? Would not Lazarus rather be in Sumatra than here? Would he not far rather lay him do wn lengthwise al ong the line of the equator; yea, ye gods! go down to the fiery pit itself, in order to keep out this frost? Now, that Lazarus should lie strande d there on the curbston e before the doo r of Dives, this is more wonderfu l than that an iceberg should be moored to one of the Moluccas. Yet Dives himself, he too live s like a Czar in an ice palace made of frozen sighs, and being a president of a temperance society, he only drinks the tepid tears of orphans. But no more of t his blubbering now, we ar e going a-whali ng, and there is p lenty of that ye t to come. Let us scrape the ice from our frosted feet, and see what sort of a place this "Spouter" m ay be. CHAPTER 3. The Spouter-Inn. Entering that gable-ended Spouter-Inn, you found yourself in a wide, low, straggling entry with old-fashioned wainscots, r eminding one of the bulwar ks of so me co ndemned old craf t. On one sid e hung a very large oilpainting so thoroughly besmoked, and every way defaced, that in the u nequal cr osslights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful inquiry of the neighbors, that you could any wa y arriv e at an understandin g of its purp ose. Such unacco untable masses of shades and shadows, that at first you almost thought some ambitious young artist, in the time of the Ne w England hags, had endeavored to delineate chaos bewitched. But by dint of much and earnest contemplation, and oft repeated ponderings, and especially by thro wing o pen t he little window tow ards the back of the entry, you at last come to the conclusion that such an idea, however wild, mi ght not be altogether unwarranted. But what most puzzled and confounded you was a long, limber, portentous, black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue, dim, pe rpend icula r lines floating in a nam eless yeast. A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous m an d istracte d. Yet was there a sor t of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvellous painting me ant. Ever and anon a bright, but, alas, deceptive idea would dart you through.--It's the Black Sea in a midnight g ale.--It 's t he unnatural combat of the four primal elements.--It's a blasted heath.--It's a Hyperborean winter scene.--It's the breaking-up of the icebound stream of Time. But at last all these fancies yielded to that one portentous something in the picture's midst. THAT once found out, and all the rest were plain. But st op; d oes it not bear a faint resemblance to a gigantic fish? even the great leviathan himself? In fact, the artist's design seemed this: a final theory of my own, partly based upon the aggregated opinions of many persons with whom I conversed upon the subject. The picture represents a Cape-Horner in a great hur ric ane; the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three dismantled masts alone visible; and an exasperated whale, purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself upo n t he three mast-heads. The opposite wall of this entry was hung all over with a heathenish array of m on strous clubs and spears. Some were thickly set with glittering teeth resembling ivory saws; others were tufted with knots of human hair; and one was sickle-shaped, with a vast handle sweeping round lik e t he segment made in the new-mown grass by a long-armed mower. You shuddered as you ga zed , a n d wondered what monstrous cannibal and savage could ever have gone a death-harvesting with such a hacking, horrifying implement. Mixed with these were rusty old whaling lances and harpoons all bro ke n and deformed. Some were storied weapons. With this once long lance, now wildly elbow ed , fifty years ago did Nathan Swain kill fifteen whales between a sunrise and a sunset. And that harpoon--so like a corkscrew now--was flung in Javan seas, and run away with by a whale, years afterwards sl ai n off the Cape of Blanco. The original iron entered nigh the tail, and, like a restless nee d, le assigning sojourning in the body of a man, travelled full forty feet, and at last was found imbedded in the hump. Crossing this dusky entry, and on through yon low-arched way--cut through what in old times must ha v e been a great central chimney with fireplaces all round--you enter the public room. A still duskier place is this, with low, shelf-like table co vered with cracked glass cases, filled with dusty rarities gathered from this wide world's remotest nooks. Projecting from the further angle of the room stands a dark-looking den--the whale's jaw, so wid when this corner-anchored old ark rocked so furiously. On one side stood a long, bar--a rude attempt at a right whale's head. Be that how it may, there stands the v ast arched bone of t he sailors deliriums and (by which name indeed they called him), bustles a little withered old man, who, for their money, dearly sells th nd your charge is but heating bottom. Parallel meridians rudely pecked into the glass, surround thes e footpads' goblets. Fill to THIS mark, a m I desired to be acco n gathered about a table, examining by a dim light divers specimens of SKRIM SHANDER. I sought the landlord, and telling hi o sleep two in a bed; eer's blanket, have ye? I s'pose you are goin' a-whalin', so you'd better get used to that sort of thing." I told him that I never liked t any decent man's bl t decidedly objectionable, why rather than wander further about a strange town on so bitter a night, I would put up with the half of working away at th ench on the Battery. At one end a ruminating tar was still further adorning it with his jack-knife, stooping over and diligently ford it. Nothing but ere summoned to our meal in an adjoining room. It was cold as Iceland--no fire at all--the landlord said he couldn't af good heavens! du half frozen fingers. But the fare was of the most substantial kind--not only meat and potatoes, but dumplings; "Oh, no," said he o ur d, "you'll have the nightmare to a dead sartainty." "Landlord," I whispered, "that aint the harpooneer is it?" fore long," was t mplings for supper! One young fellow in a green box coat, addressed himself to these dumplings in a most direful manner. "My boy," said th e la ndlor he likes 'em rare." "The devil he does," says I. "Where is that harpooneer? Is he here?" "He'll be here a over, the co , looking a sort of diabolically funny, "the harpooneer is a dark complexioned chap. He never eats dumplings, he don't--he eats nothing b ut steaks, and so turned out that we should sleep together, he must undress and get into bed before I did. Supper rampus 's cre he answer. I could not help it, but I began to feel suspicious of this 'dark complexioned" harpooneer. At any rate, I made up my mind t hat if it o oker on. Presently a rioting noise was heard without. Starting up, the landlord cried, "That's the G was flung mpany went back to the bar-room, when, knowing not what else to do with myself, I resolved to spend the rest of the evening as a l Feegees." A tramping of sea boots was heard in the entry; the door ews from the ears fr o w. I seed her reported in the offing this morning; a three years' voyage, and a full ship. Hurrah, boys; now we'll have the latest n rned and ragged, and their beards stiff with icicles, they seemed an eruption of b o open, and in rolled a wild set of mariners enough. Enveloped in their shaggy watch coats, and with their heads muffled in woo llen comforters, all beda s mout h--the bar--when the wr inkled little old Jonah, there officiating, soon poured them out brimmers al l roun d. O m Labrador. They had just landed from their boat, and this was the first house they entered. No wonder, then, that they m ade a straight wake for the whale' reign cure for all colds and catarrhs wha tsoever, never mind of how long stan ding, or whether caught off the coast of Lab rador, or on me complained of a bad cold in his head, upon which Jonah mixed him a pitch-like potion of gin and molasses, which he swore w as a sove opers newly landed from sea, and t hey began capering about most obstreperously. I observed , however, that the weather side of an ice-island. The liquor soon mounted into their heads, as it generally doe s even with the arr antest t the w hole he re frained from making as much n oise as the rest. Thi s man intere sted me at once; an d sin one of them held somewhat aloof, and thou gh he seemed desiro us not to spoil the hilarity of his ship mates by his own sober face, ye t upon will he re ventu re upon a littl e description of him. H e stoo d full six feet in height, with noble sh oulder s, an d a ce the sea-gods had ordained that he s hould soon become my shipma te (though but a sleeping-partn er one , so far as this narrative is concern ed), I teeth dazzlin g by the co ntrast; while in t he de ep s hadows of his eyes floated som e reminiscen ces that chest like a coffer-dam. I have seld om seen suc h brawn in a man. His face was dee ply br own and bur nt, making his white teeth dazzlin g by the co ntrast; while in t he de ep s hadows of his eyes floated som e reminiscen ces that did not seem to give him much j oy. His voic e at once an nounc ed that he was a Southe rner, and from hi s fine statu re, I t houg ht he mu st be one of those tall mountain eer s from the Alleghanian Ri dge in Virgini a. When th e re velry of his companions had moun ted to its he ight, this man slippe d awa y unobserved, and t saw n o mor e o f him till he becam e my comr ade o n the sea. In a few min utes, however, he was mis sed by h is shipmates, and being, it se ems, for s ome rea son a huge favourite with them, they r aised a cry o f "Bulking ton! Bulki ngto n! where's Bulkington? " and dar ted out of the house in pu rsuit of hi m. It was n ow abou t nine o'c lock, and the room seeming alm ost sup ernaturall y qui et after t hese orgies , I bega n to con gra tulate m yself upon a little plan t hat h ad oc curred to me jus t pre vious to the en tranc e of the seame n. No ma n prefers to s leep t wo in a b ed. In fac t, you woul d a good d eal rath er n ot sle ep with your own brother. I d on't kn ow ho w it is, but pe ople like to be private when they are slee ping. A nd wh en it comes to sl eeping wit h an unkno wn strange r, in a s trange in n, in a stra nge tow n, and tha t strange r a harpoone er, then your o bjec tions indef initely multiply. Nor was the re an y eart hly reason why I as a sailor sh ould sl eep t wo in a bed, more th an an ybod y else; fo r sailo rs n o more sleep two in a bed a t sea, th an bach elor Kings do asho re. T o be sure the y all slee p toget her in o ne apa rtm ent, bu t you have you r own hammock , a nd cove r yourself with yo ur o wn blan ket, an d sleep in you r own skin . The more l pond ered ov er this ha rp ooneer, t he more I abom inat ed the thought of sl eepin g with h im. It was fair to presum e that being a har pooneer, his linen or wo ollen, as the cas e might be , would not b e of th e t idi es t, c ert ainly n one of the fin est. I bega n to twi tch all ov er. B esides , it w as getti ng late, a nd my d ecen t harpo oneer ou ght to b e ho me and goin g bed war ds. Sup pose n ow, he shou ld tu mble in u pon m e at m idnigh t-- how co uld I tell from what vil e hol e he had been co ming? " Landl ord! I've chan ged my mi nd a bout th at har pooneer.- -I shan 't sleep with him. I'll t ry th e benc h here. " "Ju st as y ou p lease; I 'm sor ry I cant spare ye a ta bleclo th for a mat tress, a nd it's a pla guy rou gh bo ar d her e" --fe elin g of the knots and not ches. "But wait a bit, Skrim sha nde r; I've g ot a ca rpenter's pl ane the re in the b ar--wait, I say, a nd I'll make y e snu g eno ugh." So say ing he proc ured the pla ne; and with his old si lk han dker ch ief fi rst du stin g the b en ch , vi go rou sly set to planing awa y at my bed, the while grin nin g lik e an ap e. T he shavings flew right a nd left; ti ll at last t he p la ne -iro n came bump against an ind estructib le knot . T he l andl ord was n ear sp rain in g his w rist, and I told h im for h eave n's s ake to quit --the be d was so ft en ough to suit me, and I did not know ho w all the planing in the wo rld co ul d mak e eider down of a pine pl ank. So ga therin g u p t he s havin gs wit h anot her gri n, a nd thro wi ng t he m into the g re at s to ve in the mi ddle of th e room, the w ent ab out his business, and left m e in a b rown stud y. I n ow to ok the measu re of the bench, and fou nd that i t w as a foo t t oo sh ort; but tha t could b e mende d w ith a ch air . Bu t it was a foot too n arr ow, an d the other bench in the roo m was a bout fou rinch es h igh er than the planed one--so there w as no yoking the m. I th en pl ac ed t he first b ench lengthwise along t he only clea r s pa ce ag ains t the wa ll, leaving a littl e i nterv al between, f or my b ac k t o se ttl e dow n in. But I soo n f ound t hat t her e came such a draught of col d air o ver me fro m un d er the si ll of the windo w, that t his pla n wo uld neve r do at all, especially as a noth er curre nt from the rickety do or me t the on e from th e window and bot h togeth er fo rmed a series of small whi rlwinds in the immed iate v ic ini ty of t he s pot where I ha d thought t o spe nd the n igh t. Th e de vil fet ch that harpooneer, t hought I, but sto p, could n't I steal a m arc h o n h im-- bolt his door inside, and jump i nto hi s be d, n ot to be wake ned by the mo st vi olent kn oc ki ng s? I t s eem ed no bad idea; but upon seco nd tho ughts I d is miss ed it. F or who could tell but w hat th e n ext m or ning, so soo n a s I popp ed ou t of the room, th e harp oone er mig ht be st anding in the entry, all ready to kno ck m e d ow n! S till, I ooking round me ag ain, and see ing n o p ossi ble cha nce of spend ing a su ffera ble night un less in s om e o ther p erson's bed, I bega n to t hink that afte r all I might b e cherishing un warr antab le p re ju dic es aga inst thi s unkn own harpooneer. Thi nk s I, l 'll wa it awhile; he must be drop ping i n b efor e lon g. I'll have a good loo k at him th en, and perhaps we ma y bec ome jolly goo d bedfello ws after all--t he re's no telling . Bu t t ho u gh th e other boarders kept coming in by ones, two s, and t hrees, and g oing to be d, yet no si gn of m y ha rpoo neer. "La ndl ord !" s aid I, "wha t sort o f a chap is h e--doe s he always keep such late hours?" It w as no w hard up on t w elv e o'clock. The landlord chuckled ag ain wi th his le an chuc kl e, and seemed to be mig htily ti ckl ed at so methin g beyon d my c omp rehension. "No," he answered, "gener all y he's an early bird--airley to bed and airley to ris e--ye s, he 's t he b ird what catches the worm. But to-night he went out a pedd ling, you s ee, and I don't s ee what o n ai rth keep s him s o late, un less, ma y be, he can't sell his head." "Can't sell his hea d?--Wh at sor t of a bamb ooz ing ly story i s this yo u are telli ng me?" get ting int o a to wering rage. "Do you pr ete nd to s ay, landlord, tha t his ha rp oonee r is a ctually engaged this b lesse d Saturday nig ht, or r ath er S und ay mo rning, in peddlin g his head around t his town? " "T hat' s pr ecis ely it," sa id t he lan dl ord , "and I t old him he could n't se ll it here, the m arke t's overstoc ked." "With what?" shouted I. " Wi th hea ds to b e s ure ; ain't there to o many heads in the world?" "I t ell yo u wh at it is, la ndlo rd," s aid I quite ca lml y, " you'd b et ter sto p spin ning that yarn to me--I'm not green." " May be not," taking out a stick and wh it tlin g a t ooth pic k, "but I raythe r guess you'll be done B ROWN if tha t ere h arpoo nee r hears you a sland erin' his he ad." " I'll break i t f or him," s aid I, now f lying in to a passion again at t his unac countable farr ago o f the land lord's. "It's broke a'ready," said he. "Broke ," said I --" BROKE, do you me an?" "Sart ain, and that's th e ve ry rea son he can 't sell it, I gues s." "L andlord," s aid I, going up to him a s co ol as M t. Hecla in a snow-storm--" landlor d, s top whittli ng. You an d I must unders tand one an oth er, and that too witho ut delay. I come to your house and want a b ed; yo u tell m e you cu n only give me half a one; th at the oth er half belongs to a certain harpooneer. And a bout t his harpo oneer, whom I have not yet see n, you pe rsist in te lling me the mo st m ystifyin g an d exas pera ting storie s tending to beget in me an unco mfor table f eeling t owards the man whom you design f or my bedfellow-- a sort o f c on nexion, la ndlord, which is an intimate and c onfide nt ial one in the highes t deg ree. I now dem and of you to s peak out a nd tell me who and what this harpoon eer is, and whethe r I shall be in all respects safe to s pe n d t o he nigh t with him. And in t he first pl ace, y ou w il l b e so go od a s to u nsay that story abou t sel ling his head , wh ich if tr ue I ta ke to b e good evidence that this har poonee r is stark mad, and I've no id ea o f sle epin g with a madm an; and you, sir, YOU I mea n, la n dlo rd, Y OU, sir, b y tryi ng to indu ce m e to do s o kn owin gly, would thereby render yourself li able to a cr imina l pro secu tion." " Wall," sai d the l andlord, fetc hing a l on g br ea th, " that' s a purt y long sar mon f or a cha p that rips a l it tle no w and th en. B ut be easy , be e asy, this her e ha rpo oneer I have b een tellin' you of ha s just arr ive d from t he south seas, where he bought u p a lot of ' ba lme d Ne w Zeala nd head s (great curios, you know), and he' s sol d all on ' em b ut one, and that o ne he 's try ing to se ll to -nig ht, c ause to-mor row's Sunday , an d it w ould not do to be s ellin' hum an he ads a bout t he stre et s when folk s is g oin' to church es. He wan ted t o, las t S un day, but I sto pped h im ju st as he w as g oin' out of th e do or wit h four heads strung on a s trin g, for all th e airt h like a string of inio ns." This acco unt cl ea red u p the oth erwise unac countable myste ry, and s how ed th at t he landlo rd, aft er all, had h ad no ide a of fool ing me-- but at th e same time w hat c oul d l th ink o f a h arp oon eer who stay ed o ut of a Saturd ay ni ght c le an into the holy Sabb ath, engaged in suc h a ca n niba l bu sines s a s selli ng the heads of de ad id olat ors? "De pen d up on i t, la ndlor d, that harp ooneer is a da nger ous m an. " "H e pa ys r eg'l ar," was the rejo inde r. "B ut com e, it' s ge tting d readf ul late, you had better be turning fl ukes --it's a n ice bed ; S al and m e slept in tha t ere bed the nigh t we wer e sp lice d. Th ere's pl enty o f room for tw o to kick a bo ut i n th at b ed; i t's a n al mig hty b ig be d th at. W hy, a fore we give i t up, S al used to put o ur Sam and littl e Jo hnn y in the f oot of it. But I g ot a dr eamin g an d sp rawl ing abou t on e nig ht, a nd so meh ow, S am go t pit ch ed o n the fl oor, an d ca me n ear bre akin g his a rm. A rter that, Sal said it would n't do. Come along here, I'll gi ve y e a gli m in a jiffy; " and so saying the ligh ted a cand le a nd h eld it tow ards me, offe ring to lea d the way. B ut I sto od i rreso lu te; whe n lo okin g at a cl ock in th e cor ner, he exclai med "I vum it' s Sund ay-- you wo n't see that harp ooneer to-n igh t; h e's come to a