



Moby-Dick; or, The Whale

Herman Melville (1819 - 1891)

Read by:	Stewart Wills	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	24 hours and 45 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1001
Language:	English	UPC:	0684758935816
Style:	Solo	MSLP:	\$11.99
Genre:	Action & Adventure Fiction		

Moby-Dick; or, The Whale (1851) is an epic sea adventure told by Ishmael, the sole survivor of the Pequod, a whaling ship driven to ruin by its captain's monomaniacal obsession to hunt and destroy a white sperm whale, Moby Dick. Captain Ahab is driven to seek revenge on the ferocious whale, who destroyed Ahab's ship and severed his leg at the knee on a previous voyage. The opening line, "Call me Ishmael" is among the most famous in all literature. The following narrative was radical at the time for its use of a variety of styles and techniques, some quite unconventional, and covers topics ranging from the techniques of whaling to life aboard ship to explorations of class and status, good and evil, and the nature of God.

Moby-Dick was a commercial failure and out of print by the 1890's but was rediscovered in the 1920's. It is now regarded as a seminal work on the American themes of religion, fate, and economic growth and opportunity as well as a radical experiment that prefigured Modernism with its enormous scope and kaleidoscope of forms.

Herman Melville (August 1, 1819 – September 28, 1891) is best known as an author of novels, short stories, and poetry, most notably the masterpiece *Moby-Dick, or The Whale*. He was born in New York City in 1819 to a genteel family. The failure of family's prosperous import business and untimely death of his father forced Melville to work in a bank at age thirteen. After working as a school teacher and reporter he went to sea at age nineteen. His second voyage took him to the South Seas, where he abandoned ship in the Marquesas Islands in the summer of 1842 and accidentally spent a month in the company of a tribe of cannibals. His experiences formed the core of his first novel, *Typee: A Peep At Polynesian Life*, which became a best seller and was followed by *Omoo*, a continuation of his chronicle. He became known as "the man who lived among the cannibals".

Melville eventually settled in the Berkshires near Nathaniel Hawthorne, who became a close friend. Melville read widely and immersed himself in metaphysics, and his work increasingly addressed philosophical issues, beginning with *Mardi* in 1849 and continuing through *Moby-Dick* in 1851 and *Pierre* in 1852. Both books met with indifference and ended his run as a popular author. After publication of *The Confidence-Man* in 1857 he stopped writing novels and worked as a customs inspector in New York for twenty years. He began to write poetry and published small collections privately. He had numerous connections with those involved in The Civil War, and the conflict became the chief subject of his poetry. His little known *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (1866) is ranked with his novels by many critics. Melville died of a heart attack in relative obscurity in 1891. His work was largely ignored until it was rediscovered in the 1920's by literary historians developing an American literary tradition.