

ЛЕГКО ЧИТАЕМ ПО-АНГЛИЙСКИ

Герман Мелвилл

**МОБИ ДИК,
ИЛИ
БЕЛЫЙ КИТ**

Herman Melville

**MOBY-DICK,
OR THE WHALE**

Адаптация текста, комментарии
и словарь Д.А. Демидовой

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Роман Германа Мелвилла «Моби Дик, или Белый кит» - это классика литературы американского романтизма. В центре произведения — жажда мести и смертельное противостояние бесстрашного капитана китобойного судна Ахава и огромного белого кита, Моби Дика. Повествование ведётся от имени моряка Измаила, отправившегося в плавание на китобойном судне «Пекод». Весь роман проникнут библейской образностью и символизмом.

Книга содержит комментарии и словарь, облегчающие чтение. Предназначается для продолжающих изучать английский язык (уровень 4 – Upper-Intermediate).

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Moby Dick, or The Whale
by Herman Melville

CHAPTER 1

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago, having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I decided to sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is my way to fight the spleen. Whenever I become moody, whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and following every funeral I meet; then I know it is high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and bullet.

And here I am in the insular city of the Manhattoes, with wharves around it. All the streets lead you to the water. So many of its citizens gather to look at the sea, though not all of them are sailors. What a point for philosophy and art!

There is magic in the sea. You will not find this magic in prairies, or desserts, or hills, lakes and mountains. Why is almost every robust healthy boy at some time crazy to go to sea? Why did the Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the Greeks give it a separate god? What about that story of Narcissus who was drowned because he could not grasp the image in the water? Surely all this is not without meaning. That image is the key to everything. And, as everyone knows, meditation and water are forever married.

Now, when I say that I am in the habit of going to sea whenever I begin to feel sad, I do not mean that I ever go as a passenger. Nor do I ever go as a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook. No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor. True, the order me about something, and make me jump from spar to spar. And at first, this sort of thing is unpleasant enough. It touches one's sense of honour, particularly if you come of an old established family and were a schoolmaster.

What of it, if some old sea-captain orders me to get a broom and sweep down the decks? What is that indignity in the scales of the Bible? Who's not a slave? Tell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-captains may order me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right.

Again, I always go to sea as a sailor, because they pay me for my trouble, whereas they never pay passengers 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 paying and being paid.

Finally, I always go to sea as a sailor, because of the wholesome exercise and pure air of the fore-castle deck. But after having repeatedly smelt the sea as a merchant sailor, I should now go on a whaling voyage. The invisible police officer of the Fates, who secretly influences and protects me, can better answer why than anyone else.

The main motive for him to send me to sea was, I think, my own interest: it was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a huge and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity¹. Then, I am interested in the faraway parts of the world where he lives. I love to sail 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.

So I put a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific.

¹ *rouse one's curiosity* — возбудить любопытство

Quitting the good city of old Manhatto, I arrived in New Bedford. It was a Saturday night in December. Much was I disappointed when I learnt that the little packet for Nantucket had already sailed, and that there was no way of reaching that place till the following Monday.

My mind was made up to sail in no other than a Nantucket ship. Though New Bedford has been gradually monopolising the business of whaling, and now poor old Nantucket is much behind it, yet Nantucket was its great original, the place where the first dead American whale was shown.

Now having a night, a day, and still another night before I could go to my destined port, I had to find a cheap place to eat and sleep meanwhile.

It was a dark and cold night. I walked down the streets, passing the signs of various inns. I liked none of them. They were either too expensive, or too noisy, or too frightening. But moving on, not far from the dock, I saw a sign over the door with a white painting upon it: a tall straight jet of misty spray², and these words underneath — “The Spouter Inn — Peter Coffin.”

² *a jet of misty spray* — фонтан брызг

Coffin? Spouter? Rather ominous, thought I. But it is a common name in Nantucket, they say, and I suppose this Peter here is an emigrant from there. As the light looked so dim, and the place looked quiet enough, and the swinging sign spoke of poverty so clearly, I thought that here was the very spot for cheap lodgings.

It was a strange place — an old house, one wall damaged and leaning over sadly. It stood on a sharp bleak corner, open to all the winds in the world. Inside, it was like an old ship: a wide and low entry; dusky rooms; a collection of monstrous whaling clubs and spears, each with its own history, on the wall; and a bar resembling a right whale's head, where glasses had a deceitful thick bottom and horizontal measure lines. The full glass — the Cape Horn measure — you could have for a shilling.

I found the landlord, and telling him I wanted to be accommodated with a room, learnt that his house was full — not a bed unoccupied. “But you can share a harpooneer's blanket, can't you? I suppose you are going whaling, so you'd better get used to that sort of thing.”

I told him that I never liked to sleep two in a bed; that if I should ever do so, it would depend upon who the harpooneer might be, and if he was a good person, I would put up with the half of any decent man's blanket.

“I thought so. All right; take a seat. Supper will be ready directly.”

At last, some four or five of us were eating our meal in the next room. It was cold as Iceland — no fire at all — the landlord said he couldn't afford it. The dinner was very poor, too.

I asked the landlord if the harpooner was present. He smiled diabolically and said, “He would be here soon”, and also added that that person had a dark complexion.

I could not help it, but I began to feel suspicious of this “dark complexioned” harpooner. At any rate, I made up my mind that if it so turned out that we should sleep together, he must undress and get into bed before I did.

Supper over, the company went back to the bar-room, and soon more people arrived and started at once telling of their sea adventures.

I observed, however, that one of them was more serious and quiet than others, and this man interested me at once. Since the sea-god

had decided that he should soon become my shipmate, I will describe him now. He was six feet tall, with broad shoulders and a chest. His face was deeply brown and burnt, making his white teeth dazzling by the contrast; while in the deep shadows of his eyes there were some memories that did not give him much joy. His voice at once announced that he was from the south. When the noise his companions were making reached its peak, this man slipped away unobserved, and I saw no more of him till he became my comrade on the sea. In a few minutes, however, he was missed by his shipmates, being, it seemed, for some reason a huge favourite with them, and they cried, "Bulkington! Bulkington! where's Bulkington?" and ran looking for him.

It was now about nine o'clock, and the room seemed almost supernaturally quiet after these orgies. I began to congratulate myself upon a little plan that had occurred to me.

No man prefers to sleep two in a bed. People like to be private when they are sleeping. And when it comes to sleeping with an unknown stranger, in a strange inn, in a strange town, and that stranger a harpooneer, then your objections become more numerous. Nor was there any reason why I as a sailor should sleep two in a bed more than anybody else; for sailors do not sleep two in a bed at

sea. To be sure they all sleep together in one apartment, but you have your own hammock, and cover yourself with your own blanket.

The more I thought of it, the more I disliked the idea of sleeping with him. Being a harpooneer, his linen would not be the tidiest. I began to twitch all over. Besides, it was getting late, and my decent harpooneer ought to be home and going to bed. Suppose now, he should tumble in upon me at midnight?

“Landlord! I’ve changed my mind about that harpooneer. I shan’t sleep with him. I’ll try the bench here.”

The landlord agreed and even tried planing the bench to make it even. But I then found out that it was a foot too short — in this case, a chair could help; but it was a foot too narrow, and the other bench in the room was about four inches higher, so I couldn’t join them. Lastly, I felt that there came such a draught of cold air from under the sill of the window, that this plan would never do at all.

The devil fetch that harpooneer³, thought I, but stop, couldn’t I bolt his door inside, and jump into his bed, not to be wakened by the

³ *The devil fetch that harpooneer* — Чёрт бы побрал этого гарпунщика

most violent knock? It seemed no bad idea; but upon second thoughts I dismissed it. He might knock me down in the morning! I'll wait and see: he must come soon. I'll have a good look at him then, and perhaps we may become good bedfellows after all.

But it was almost twelve o'clock, and yet no sign of him. When I asked the landlord, he laughed again and seemed very amused by something beyond my comprehension⁴. "No," he answered, "generally he's an early bird, but tonight he's gone to sell his head."

"Sell his head?"

"That's precisely it," said the landlord, "and I told him he couldn't sell it here, the market's overstocked."

"With what?!" shouted I.

"With heads, of course. And I guess the harpooner won't like it if he hears you shouting like this about his head."

"I'll break it for him," promised I.

"It's broken already," said he.

⁴ *beyond one's comprehension* — выше чьего-либо понимания

“Broken?! What do you mean?”

“That’s the very reason he can’t sell it, I guess.”

“Landlord,” said I, “landlord, I come to your house and want a bed; you tell me you can only give me half a one; that the other half belongs to a certain harpooneer. And about this harpooneer, whom I have not seen yet, you tell me the most mystifying stories. I now demand of you, landlord, to speak out and tell me who this harpooneer is, and whether I shall be safe to spend the night with him. And in the first place, be so good as to explain that story about selling his head. Probably this harpooneer is mad, and I’ve no wish to sleep with a madman; and you, sir, YOU I mean, landlord, YOU, sir, will be responsible for my death!”

“Wall,” said the landlord, “be easy, this harpooneer has just arrived from the south seas, where he bought up a lot of embalmed New Zealand heads (great curios, you know), and he’s sold all of them but one, and that one he’s trying to sell tonight, cause tomorrow’s Sunday, and it would not do to sell human heads in the streets when folks are going to churches. Last Sunday I stopped him just as he was going out of the door with four heads strung on a string, like a string of onions.”

This account cleared up the otherwise unaccountable mystery, and showed that the landlord, after all, had had no idea of fooling me — but at the same time what could I think of a harpooneer who stayed out on a Saturday night, engaged in such a cannibal business as selling the heads of dead New Zealand pagans?

“Depend upon it, landlord, that harpooneer is a dangerous man.”

“He pays regularly,” was the answer.

But I stood irresolute. When looking at a clock in the corner, the landlord exclaimed, “You won’t see that harpooneer to-night; he’s come to anchor⁵ somewhere — come along then!”

We went upstairs, and I was shown into a small room, cold and furnished with a bed, almost big enough for four harpooneers.

Folding back the counterpane on the bed, I then glanced round the room; and could see no other furniture belonging to the place, but a rude shelf, the four walls, and a papered fireboard representing a man striking a whale. Of things not properly belonging to the room, there was a hammock thrown upon the floor in

⁵ *come to anchor* — встать на якорь