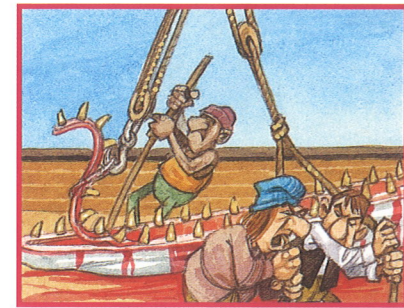
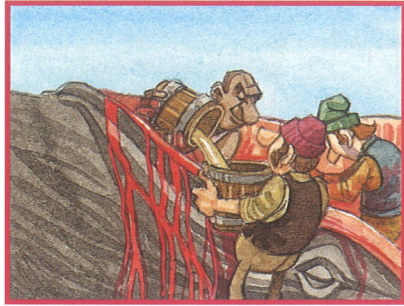


# “Trying Out” the Oil

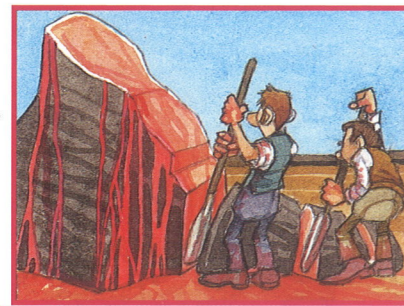
## The process:

**DRAINING.** A hole is cut in the whale’s skull to drain the spermaceti. As much as 528 gallons (2,000 l) can be harvested from a large whale.

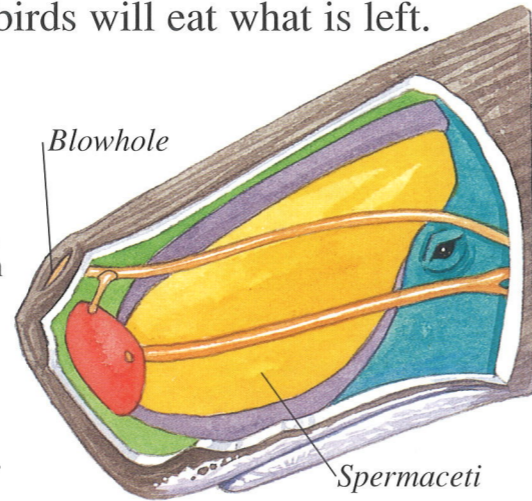


**PULLING TEETH.** Ropes and pulleys are used for pulling the whale’s teeth from its jawbone.

**HORSE PIECES.** The long strips of whale blubber are carved into smaller blocks known as the “horse pieces.”



**SPERMACETI.** Located in the skull, the spermaceti organ is unique to the sperm whale. Its liquid wax is valuable to whalers, who use it to make high quality candles.



**THIN SLICES** are cut into horse pieces (left). These are called “bible leaves” because they flop open like the pages of a book. They are put into the “try pots” (right). The blubber melts into oil, which is skimmed off the surface, cooled, and drained into barrels.



**W**ith the blubber removed, the sperm whale’s head is cut from its body and raised onto the deck. The spermaceti (liquid wax) and teeth are removed from the head.

Now it’s time to “try out” the oil from the whale’s blubber. Fires are lit in the try pots, and sections of blubber are lowered inside. The fatty blubber boils and is turned into oil, which is poured into barrels. The bloody carcass of the whale drifts away from the boat, where sharks and sea birds will eat what is left.



# Rammed by a Whale!

The months go by as you search for whales in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It is November 20th, 1820, a day you will remember for the rest of your life. While most of the crew are on a whale hunt, you spot a huge sperm whale heading straight for the *Essex*. First it rams the ship's side. Then it rams the bow, pushing the ship backward and causing seawater to pour into the hold. The *Essex* begins to sink. The whale swims away, leaving the wreckage of the ship and its crew to the mercy of the Pacific Ocean.

## A quiet morning...

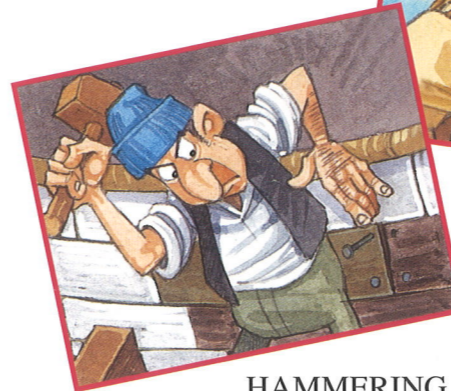


**SHIPKEEPER**  
It's your turn to stay on the *Essex* as a shipkeeper. Most of the crew take the three whaleboats.



**DAMAGED.** The first mate's whaleboat is damaged by a whale during the chase and returns to the *Essex* for repairs.

**LOOK OUT!** A huge whale, about 85 feet (26 m) long and weighing 80 tons, is heading for the *Essex*. Does it see the ship as a rival male?

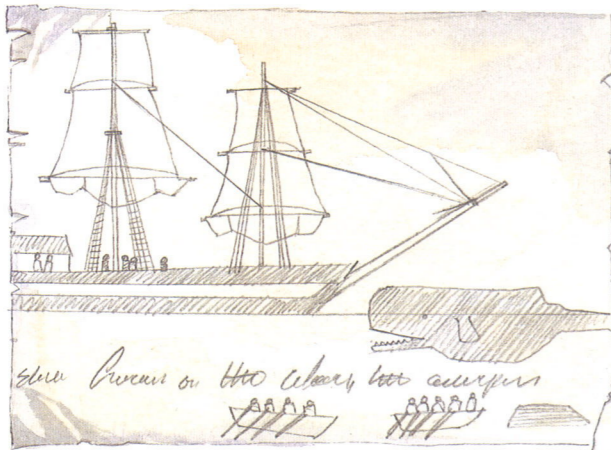


**HAMMERING.** Maybe the bull (male) sperm whale was attracted by the sound of the crew repairing the ship.



### Handy Hint

Keep a bag of emergency supplies close at hand. You never know when you will need it!



**YOUR JOURNAL.** Many years later you write a journal with drawings of the whale attack and the sinking of the *Essex*. You write, "Here lay our beautiful ship, a floating and dismal wreck..."

