

The Essex (Words & Music by Ruth Dunfield)

Twenty-eight hundred miles off the coast of Chili
There's the smell of whale in the air
The Captains face is marked with the signs of killing
He knows today the men will earn their share
That old familiar cry sends each man on his way
"There she blows" in the early morning sun
The boats are lowered down - anticipation's running high
The slaughter of the innocent has begun

They headed out to sea in the direction of the sighting
Harpoon in hand and poised for the kill
Each man staring hard into the fury of the ocean
The unsuspecting victim lying still
Quietly she rose and spouted in the air
Soon she was struck from behind
She gave a mighty pull - turned and swung her tail around
And stove a hole in the boat of the very worst kind

They quickly cut her free and made their way back to the Essex
They proceeded to repair the damage done
When off the weather-bow the first mate spotted a large whale waiting
No one seemed to know where he came from
He suddenly disappeared just to come up once again
Clearly there was a purpose in his eye
How could they have known that he had them in his sight
And he did not intend to pass them by

They could hardly believe their eyes as he made directly for them
They desperately tried to turn out of his way
But he rammed the ship so hard they nearly fell down on their faces
The Essex shook like a leaf on a windy day
And it did not take them long to realize they were going down
They couldn't speak of the fear on each ones mind
All that they could do was to gather up their stores
And prepare for the fate that was only a matter of time

As they set about the ship to make ready for their journey
Someone cried "there he is - here he comes again!"
But this time twice as fast with his tail madly thrashing
Determined to make sure they would meet their end
The force was strong enough to completely take her bow
Surely now they had no time to lose
They climbed into their battered boat but all they could do was stare
They were badly shaken - scared and so confused

Now the captain all this time was unaware of what was happening
He was caught in the chase and the cruel pursuit of the prize
When he returned to the ship he found it sinking on the horizon
No words can express the terror in his eyes
There was nothing left to do but pray and take to the open water
In three little boats with scarcely enough to eat
They set their course due south and pretended to be brave
Then swore that they would never admit defeat

All twenty crew were there to watch the Essex dying
Only eight men survived to tell the dreadful tale
The year was eighteen twenty and the story still lives on
Of the day a great whale brought the Essex down
Well it only took one whale — to bring her down

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