

Moby Dick

By

Herman Melville

Chapter 120: The Deck Toward the End of the First Night Watch

Ahab standing by the helm. Starbuck approaching him.

We must send down the main-top-sail yard, sir. The band is working loose and the lee lift is half-stranded. Shall I strike it, sir?"

"Strike nothing; lash it. If I had sky-sail poles, I'd sway them up now."

"Sir!- in God's name!- sir?"

"Well."

"The anchors are working, sir. Shall I get them inboard?"

"Strike nothing, and stir nothing but lash everything. The wind rises, but it has not got up to my table-hands yet. Quick, and see to it.- By masts and keels! he takes me for the hunchbacked skipper of some coasting smack. Send down my main-top-sail yard! Ho, gluepots! Loftiest trucks were made for wildest winds, and this brain-truck of mine now sails amid the cloud-scud. Shall I strike that? Oh, none but cowards send down their brain-trucks in tempest time. What a hooroosh aloft there! I would e'en take it for sublime, did I not know that the colic is a noisy malady. Oh, take medicine, take medicine!"