



El desastre del *Essex* hundido por una ballena (Spanish Edition)

Chase y Nickerson

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El 12 de agosto de 1819 zarpaba del puerto de Nantucket el *Essex* «rumbo al Océano Pacífico a la pesca de la ballena», con una tripulación de veinte hombres. En mitad de una travesía bastante afortunada, el 20 de noviembre de 1820 el barco fue hundido por un cachalote; y, aunque en ese momento toda la tripulación se salvó y pudo rescatar algunos víveres e instrumentos de navegación, su peripecia a lo largo de tres meses «en medio del inmenso Pacífico» en tres botes abiertos estuvo marcada por el terror, la desesperación, el canibalismo y la muerte. Este volumen reúne los testimonios de cuatro supervivientes de la tragedia (el primer oficial, el grumete, el capitán y un arponero), además de una serie de documentos de la época, incluidas las anotaciones de Herman Melville, que leyó «esta asombrosa historia sobre el mar sin litorales» hallándose embarcado «cerca de la misma latitud donde aconteció el naufragio» y la utilizó posteriormente para *Moby Dick*. El desastre del *Essex* conmocionó a la Norteamérica del XIX de un modo parecido al del *Titanic* en el siglo XX, y desde entonces su historia nunca ha dejado de impresionar.

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