

ADVENTURE WITH A SPERM WHALE

THE YARNS OF BOB NICKL

BY ALMI-

It was while I was harpooner on th' whaling bark, Rufus Wood, that I had a close call from goin' to Dav Jones' locker. Here's what happened:

One fine mornin' we were bowlin' along with all sails set when th' lookout aloft bellowed "Thar she blows!"

That meant he had sighted a whale. In a few minutes th' boats were over th' side, headin' for th' whale, th' crew of each boat pullin' like mad so that their harpooner would be th' first to heave th' first harpoon. As luck would have it, th' boat I was in reaches th' whale first. In jay time I had an iron fast, and then th' fun started. Instead of divin', as whales generally do when harpooned, this old boy started off over th' surface of the sea.

Without knowin' it, I was standin' in a loop of th' rope fastened to th' har-

poon in th' whale, and that rope was whizzin' out over th' bow of th' boat. All at once I was jerked overboard and away I went, sometimes over th' waves, and sometimes through them as th' whale towed me after him.

All at once th' whale stopped and lay still on th' water. And then, just beyond th' end of his tail I saw th' dorsal fin of a shark cuttin' through th' water right for me. Th' boat was comin' as fast as th' men could pull, but I knew it would never beat th' shark. Then what did I do but shin up th' harpoon rope, right to th' top of th' whale's back.

He must have felt me climbin', for all at once he dived and left me kickin' in th' water. Well s'r, I'd given up all hope when th' boat hove alongside and I was yanked aboard just as th' shark's big mouth snapped shut behind me.

