



Jonah climbed down into the bottom of the ship and, exhausted from the hasty long journey, immediately fell into a deep sleep.

As the ship sailed outside the harbor, the wind rose and got stronger and pushed her off the course. A gray giant-like cloud far away began to collapse and surge to roof the vast ocean, and soon the sea line was darkened by black rain. Upon a flash of lightening and cracking of thunder, cold rain started to pour on the ship. The waves, pushed high by the strong winds, tackled the ship with such force that she squeaked and rolled dangerously and would topple any moment. Then, a whirl wind rose from nowhere and started twirling her.

"This is a double catastrophe! A storm and tornado at once!" shouted the helmsman, who could no longer hold the spinning helm.

"Oh, my good god, help, help me this once!" cried a sailor holding to a rope lest he be blown away.

"Boatswain, lower the sail, hurry!" the captain shouted to the sailor. "And you there, drop the anchor immediately!" (The latter was to prevent the ship from dashing against rocks or going aground on shallows, for in those days ships sailed alongside the coasts.)

All the cabin lamps having gone out owing to the rough motion, passengers stirred and groped their way up to the deck from their darkened creaking corners with troubled hearts. They were rapidly outpaced by many rats running toward as high a place as possible. A few ferrets, which fed on them, appeared on the deck too and hissed and danced crazily, causing the ship dog to chase after them barking.

"My men, beseech your gods for mercy! Ask your respective gods to kindly calm the sea and lull the wind," the captain was ordering. "You, good passengers, too! You surely worship a god or two; so do pray to your dear gods and vow that when you can ever walk on the firm land again you will do a handsome offering for them!"

The terror-stricken individuals on the deck sought mercy of their gods for their dear lives. But, the stormy winds were not endeared. Nor did the ship stop making shrieks as if she were having labor pains and wanting to be delivered as soon as possible - or, perchance, was she too praying for mercy to some secret goddess?

The rats and ferrets clinging to high places squeaked and squealed for mercy too; then the ship dog whined and joined their lament with pensive howling - keeping its throat stretched as perpendicularly to heaven as possible, despite the motion.

"Oh, my god, my beloved god Bel, please pardon and help us!" a rich lumber merchant cried earnestly. "I swear I will make a shrine of Lebanon cedar for you if you help me out of this peril."

“Ah, great goddess Artemis, daughter of Zeus and the twin sister of Apollo!” pleaded a gambler. “I bet a hecatomb to be sacrificed in your wonderful shrine if I’ d be allowed to live to do so! So please help me I don’ t have to hand in my cards yet!”

“Alas, my plentiful Dagon, the fish-god and filler of our stomach with corn and wine! Please do not allow our stomach to be filled with salty water and seaweed!” the chef.

“Abba! Jehovah, Lord of nature, heavenly being! Pardon me for the wrongs I have committed in your divine name!” pleaded a sham prophet in a low voice lest he be overheard. “I shall never prophesy again! No, no more fake prophecies in your name or any other god’ s! So, for mercy’ s sake, please do not wreck this ship! As you well know, it’ s exactly to escape from that king of Nineveh that I got on this very ship! His men came and urged me to go back to Nineveh to prophesy…prophesy another fake prophecy of their destruction by you. But this time I repented and took flight so I do not sin again. So, please pardon me, and I will pay back the money I earned wrongfully!”

"Please turn from your anger, my lord Neptune, God of the Sea!" prayed the captain.

"Please spare us our lives! What did we do to deserve this catastrophe? We did nothing wrong to you, did we? Or is there anyone among us who overlooked a duty? If so, please let us know of it and we shall amend the wrong immediately."

"Oh, Baal, my good god Baal, please! Please help Jojo! If you must sink this ship, please turn me a dolphin, for I can't swim!" shouted an apprentice cook in tears.

"Mother, Mother, help me! I am scared!" wept a cabin boy bitterly, who had come out to sea for the first time in his life.

The sailors, while uttering respective prayers to different gods, began throwing cargos and anything they could reach overboard so as to lower the gravity center of the ship as well as to lighten her.

Now, Jonah was still sleeping in the bottom of the ship, although his body was shook and rolled like a log.

The captain came down there with a lantern. Hearing a groaning in the dark, he soon found the prophet and was awe-struck that a man should be able to stay asleep in such a rough motion and noise.

"Terrible man!" thought the captain with a shudder, "sleeping in this tumult?! ...Still you are steadfastly awake to some sin or suffering you seem to have bred. ...Certainly some god must be angry at you and working this storm to rouse you up...in vain. ...But, how come am I here?! Alas, alas! Has the same god possessed me to come down here to kick this man up? For I don' t recollect why and how on earth I have come down in the midst of this dangerous motion!"

"Hey!" he shouted, shaking Jonah up, "How can you sleep in a moment like this? Wake up, and pray now to your god and appease his anger, whoever he may be! Maybe your god would turn merciful and help us."

"My God? No! I can't pray..."

"Don't you worship any god?"

"Yes, I do. I worship almighty God, the Most High. But I am now escaping from him. I disowned him!"

"You disowned your god? What do you mean? You must tell me!"

"Well, three days ago, God told *me* to go to Nineveh and persuade the people there to repent and stop their sins. But it was a burden too heavy for *me*; so I escaped, disobeying *my* God."

"(Aside) Why, *you* are a burden too heavy for *my* ship!"

"So I am not fit to pray to *my* God anymore!"

"Not fit to pray? Yes, you *must* pray. You said you disowned your god. But it was you *yourself* that you disowned."

”(Aside) Correct! I wanted my God to disown *me*!”

“You said the burden was too heavy for you; but if it is godsent, isn’ t it as light as a feather? God will of course speed you.”

“Light as a feather, yeah, but no speeding me, for this feathery burden petrifies me like a stone idol.”

“(Aside) A stone idol! No wonder my ship is sinking! (Aloud) But, you see, this storm must be nothing but your god’s fume at you. …Suppose your god is only trying to bring you back…back to your right course. Oh, yes, you must pray to your god immediately, and say that you’ ll go straight to Nineveh! The lives of many innocent men here are endangered due to your misconduct. If you do not repent and pray to your god for mercy, I as the captain of this ship in peril shall become your god’s hand to do away with you.
”

Meanwhile, on the deck, the captain's first mate was calling to the troubled men: "Hear me now, every one of you! Please, each one, draw one stick from this vase. And anyone whose stick is stained in red is the one who invited this storm by somehow angering some god or goddess."

So, one by one the passengers and sailors came and drew their sticks uneasily, for, like the sham prophet, each one had started thinking, "Oh, it must be *that* sin of mine that brought this storm!"

"Phew! I knew it was not me! Look at my lot, everyone!" said the lumber merchant with a great relief, since he had known that there was a risk of being thrown into the sea as a human sacrifice if he had drawn the wrong stick.

"Oh, thank god, me neither! I am often lucky at lotteries, so I feared I' d pick the red one. But my good god never makes a mistake, ha-ha" said the apprentice cook with tears in his eyes, and he resumed his prayer to Baal.

"Look! I am not the one to blame either. But poor my child, he is not to blame either, but you ruffians mercilessly threw the innocent boy into the cold water to be bitten by ravenous sharks!" cried a puppeteer, who had just lost one of his dear puppets.

Thus, one after another the sticks were drawn from the vase, but none had a red mark on it. There were only a few remaining in the vase.

"Now, who have not drawn yet?" asked an astrologer.

"I made the lottery, so I draw last according to the usage," said the first mate, shaking the vase to mix the sticks, as he had done each time a person picked his stick.

"I don't see Captain. Where has he gone?" asked the gambler.

"And that athlete...that narrowly got on board with that hop skip and jump," said the chef.

"Ah, that monk," said a fire worshipper, "we left him sleeping below. He's making such a terrible noise one would suspect he is a...speak of which, here he is."

"There is no need for further drawing!" exclaimed Jonah, who had just climbed up to the deck, helped by the captain. "This storm has arisen on account of my fault, and is a

work of my God in Heaven!”

The captain explained to them how Jonah had disobeyed and escaped from his god, and grabbing the last few lottery sticks from the vase, he thrust the red-marked one toward the stormy heaven and shouted:

”I solemnly ask the god of this man Jonah! On account of this red stick, do you mean to sink these innocent sticks as well into the sea?”

However, the storm only increased its violence.

”Alas, my Jove! the anchor cable is broken!” shouted the boatswain. “We are done unless the storm stops.”

People gathered round Jonah and unanimously showered accusations and complaints upon him.

"Hey! We are in danger of losing our lives owing to your presence here!" the sham prophet.

"What manner of a man are you?" the fire worshipper.

"Where are you from?" the astrologer.

"I am a Hebrew from Gath," Jonah answered. "I fear the Most High, the God in heaven, who made the sea and the earth."

"And what made you think you had any business running away from such a mighty god of yours?" the astrologer.

"Hey, we are not willing to get involved in a quarrel between you and your god," the gambler.

"What could we possibly do to escape this violent storm?" the first mate.

A wave jumped aboard and flooded almost the entire deck.

"Throw me into the sea. Then, the sea will be calm," said Jonah, knowing that the time had come for him to perish. "I know it very well. It is me alone that God wants to feel this storm, and if you get rid of me, the ship and all of you will be safe."

However, the sailors went back to the oars and tried once more to row the ship toward a nearest harbor. Nonetheless, the rough sea and the violent winds pushed her farther away from the coast until the land disappeared from their view.

Now, the people urged the captain to make *the* decision.

The captain tore his coat and grabbed Jonah from behind by the shoulders and said with

his face looking to the rain-pouring heaven: "Oh, god of this man Jonah, who is said to have created the earth and the sea, if you are not a merciless god, please do not take our lives just because this man is with us! But if you cannot pardon him, then we shall but have to put him into the deep sea, for we cannot go against your will. We can act only as you ordain, and our hands shall be clean of the life of this man. So, please show mercy to us and save at least our lives."

So saying, the captain pushed Jonah forward and Jonah jumped overboard.

In a moment, there shone a bright golden light along the far swelling horizon as if it were a golden bow, and the dark clouds gave way to the blue sky, which expanded quickly from the horizon upwards and over. And, as Jonah had prophesied, the sea grew calm and flat, and it was as if someone had laid a vast blue carpet across the ocean.

At this the people were filled with awe and gratitude, and did not forget to pray and give praise to Jonah's god with thanks for saving their lives. The ship dog resumed barking at the noisy rats and the ferrets, which quickly were absorbed in the hull.

Suddenly, a shout was heard over the noise of numerous prayers:

"Ahoy, look! Jonah is there!" It was the helmsman at helm shouting with his right hand pushed to the starboard side, which was opposite the side of the prophet's jumping.
"He is alive! Let us go rescue him while he is afloat!"

The men rushed to the starboard and discerned that Jonah was drifting in the distance, and he was holding to a wooden puppet that had spilled from a wooden box of the puppeteer.

"(Aside) But if we rescue him, will not the storm come back?" everyone.

"Lower the boat now!" the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir," the first mate.

"Ahoy, Jonah, we will come and rescue you in a moment, so hang in there!" the helmsman.

But no voice returned from Jonah.

As soon as the boat was on the calm water, the captain jumped into it, followed by two sturdy sailors and the dog. The three men rowed the boat toward Jonah as hard as they

could. It was when the boat got within a stone's throw from Jonah that a sailor who had just climbed up to the mast-head of the ship shouted with his eyes popped:

"Captain, beware! Something big is coming! It's fast!"

"Where-away?" the captain.

"There!" the sailor pointed in a direction beyond Jonah.

Captain and the others in the boat stopped rowing and turned their heads in the pointed direction. A huge roll of water was seen to rise and fall repeatedly as it approached.

The dog ran to the bow and began barking furiously at the strange apparition.

“Wha...what is that?!” the lumber merchant.

“Alas, it’ s Hydra the sea serpent!” the astrologer.

”I bet it’s a kraken! A giant squid! Look, it’ s white!” the gambler.

”No, that’s a whale!” the pop-eyed sailor on the mast-head, “It has flukes.”

"It' s going to attack Jonah!" the chef.

"It' s opened the mouth! It' s gonna bite him!" the fire worshipper.

"Ah, poor man! He is done at one gulp!" the first mate.

"Look, there goes the jet! So, it's a whale!" the astrologer.

"Ye, bloody monster, get this!" shouted Captain fiercely, as he stood up at the bow of the boat, and lanced a long boat hook, which had been in the boat.

It scratched and left a red thin line across the vast white forehead of the sea monster.

Whether offended by this or not, the monster wriggled its body and with the snow white flukes scooped and flipped the boat high in the air. The three men in the boat (to say nothing of the dog) shrieked as they were thrown into the air and down into the water and they did not come to the surface too soon. When they popped up near the capsized boat and coughed and spat out the bitter brine, the monster jetted again raising an instant rainbow.

"Captain, are you alright?!" asked the sailors and passengers on the starboard of the ship, which rolled gently as the waves caused by the white whale's exercise reached her.

"Ye, crook-jawed man-eating fish!" shouted Captain as he clutched at the boat, "if you claim to be on a god's errand, show us a sign now!"

The whale gave a glance at the captain with its left eye, and blew again and swam away dividing the peaceful green sea.

"That was the fate of Jonah, the runaway prophet that disobeyed Jehovah. How terrible!" the sham prophet. "(Aside) But Jonah, did you really hear the voice of God? and yet run?"

Chapter II

Thus, Jonah was swallowed by the whale. Fortunately, the mammal did not chew as it swallowed him; so he was not injured. However, inside its stomach it was pitch dark and so thick with hot acidic stench that he coughed a lot and vomited. He could not keep his eyes open for the air was stinging. Only, somehow he did not suffocate.

He felt many living things struggling about him, some sneaking into his clothes, and some fixing themselves on the skin of his legs, arms and then face. When something bit him in his foot, he shrieked and kicked it away and writhed desperately. He hoped he were dead. He swore, wept bitterly and called God for help. His voice, however, pitched high sounding funny on account of the atmosphere weighted with extra rich carbon dioxide molecules.

Eventually he collected himself and started praying. However, the acidic air attacked his vocal cord and thus caused his voice hoarser and huskier until it became only hissing. As he was praying earnestly, suddenly his left ear started ringing, and scenes of numerous memories began to run through his mind one after another, and the childhood episodes which had long been lost from his memory returned with such vividness as if they were occurring real-life.

In one scene he was in the holy temple marveling at its grandeur and beauty. His mother handed him a small dove for him to offer. He wanted to keep it for he did not want it killed. But a priest dexterously snatched the bird off his hands and instantly wrenched its head off, dumfounding the boy; and when the priest began draining the blood out against a side of the alter, young Jonah started screaming in tears causing his parents to laugh, and his father hugged him, kissed him, and gave him a ride on his shoulders - the child's most favorite position. His father was so tall that he always felt proud there. An older priest, burning the bird on the alter, said to his father, "Mr. Amittai, you have a very clever-looking son!" "Ah, thank you, but whether really clever or not," said his father happily, "we must wait and see!" In the next scene, he was running in a race and was far ahead of other boys. He could see his parents cheering happily beyond the goal line, and he started wondering whether he should or should not run into his mother's bosom as he always had done, for she was expecting a baby now. Then flashed a scene of his parents being struck to death by two intruders in their house despite their pleading. Young Jonah cried, "Mother!" "Mother!" hissed the prophet simultaneously in the viscous darkness, and a flying fish jumped into his face, and he swooned, as did the boy then, ...and heard a voice in his dream:

“Hey, Jonnie, howdy? Call me Ben. So, you didn’ t obey God, did you? Me neither.”

The voice was a young jolly tenor. “I didn’ t want to swallow you, or any other monk for that matter. You monks are not for us sperm whales, because, in the first place, we ain’ t much fascinated about taking big lumpy food, contrary to our size. As you may have noticed, we do not have upper teeth. So we cannot crush and cut things in our mouth. Our teeth are used mainly for capturing and bringing smaller food to our children. So, generally, instead of eating large food, we rather enjoy slurping little ones like shrimps and cuttlefish. Of course we eat giant squid. They are good. They are actually very slim and nicely soft and slippery. There is nothing like the sensation of our throat stroked by one. They digest easily and don’ t stay long in the stomach unlike you land species. You are not slippery; on the contrary you are so bony and scratchy that there is a danger of choking our throat. Furthermore, your flesh is hard, lean and stringy, and distasteful anyway, and difficult to digest and, on top of these - or bottom of - causes constipation.

“But, God said to me I should go and swallow you alive. I knew he means it when he says a thing; so I said “No thanks, my Lord, no more monks,” and I turned around and escaped from the Mediterranean to go beyond his reach.

“And look at what a misery He inflicted upon me the moment I crossed Gib!...the sea gate, you know. He turned me snow white, and since then I have been in trouble one after another. ...How did I know that I turned white? The suckerfish on me were surprised at the sudden change and promptly reported it to me, for they didn’ t like it either. They said they now looked too inviting to their enemies. But they are so fond of me they have stuck with me.

“Incidentally, for your information and for the sake of their honor, those suckerfish

are by no means on me as mere free-riders, but are quite useful and congenial company. They keep watch for me when I am asleep. When it comes to caring for my skin and trimming my body hair, they are unsurpassed specialists. They pick any unwelcome adsorptions off my skin such as parasites but leave useful accessories such as conveniently sized barnacles so as to make me healthy as well as attractive to lady-whales, who love to scratch their itchy body over my skin. The suckerfish proudly say that they are called in Japan - if you know where it is - as oval-gold-coin shark after their oval connector - though they are not actually sharks. Aren' t they worth the name?

“And, oh, how they love our stories! You know, we sperm whales have the largest and hence the greatest brain among all the creatures ever created by God. And naturally we are the greatest thinker and think out many great things every day. Then, we need listeners for propagation of our ideas for the enlightenment and welfare of the world. But, why, most of the creatures do not have interest in great things, but are fond of foolish fish stories and tabloid gossips. The suckerfish are different. Oh, they really know what are great and what are not. So they are attached to our talks, especially our non-fiction stories...like this one I am telling you now. Believe it or not, there is even a theory that they came to have their sucking connector through evolution on account of their great love for whale talks; that is, they so disliked to miss any word of our talk that they kept pushing their ears to our body incessantly and God was so touched by their diligence as to allow their ears to develop into the pluggable connector to help their listening - believe it or not. By the way, God took care of us too in that our nose was allowed to gradually move to the top of our head so we can breathe better.

(Chapter II at: <http://p.booklog.jp/book/72552/read>)

for the updated version of the entire book consisting of chapters I, II, III and IV, please go to
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