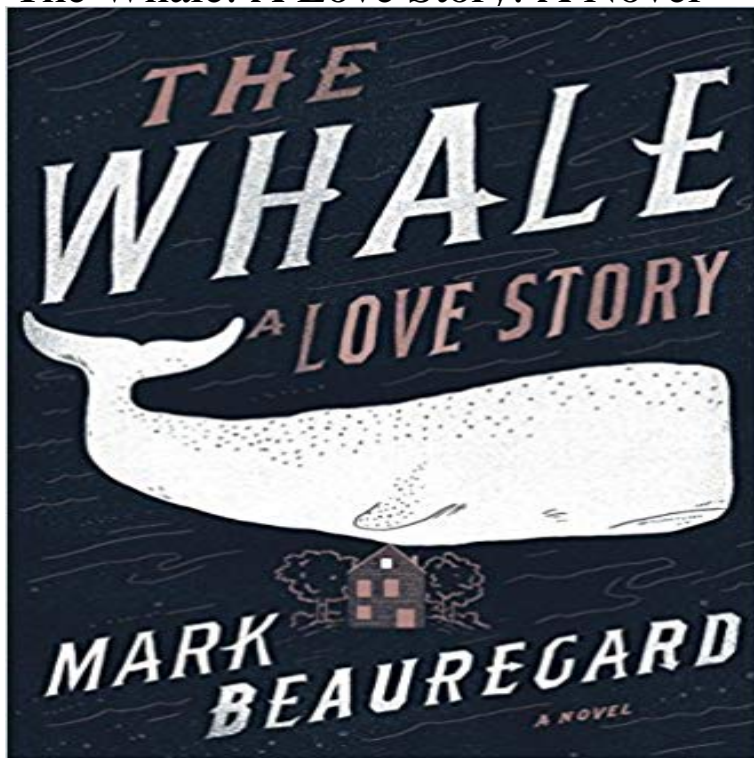


The Whale: A Love Story: A Novel



A rich and captivating novel set amid the witty, high-spirited literary society of 1850s New England, offering a new window on Herman Melville's emotionally charged relationship with Nathaniel Hawthorne and how it transformed his masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*. In the summer of 1850, Herman Melville finds himself hounded by creditors and afraid his writing career might be coming to an end; his last three novels have been commercial failures and the critics have turned against him. In despair, Melville takes his family for a vacation to his cousins' farm in the Berkshires, where he meets Nathaniel Hawthorne at a picnic and his life turns upside down. *The Whale* chronicles the fervent love affair that grows out of that serendipitous afternoon. Already in debt, Melville recklessly borrows money to purchase a local farm in order to remain near Hawthorne, his newfound muse. The two develop a deep connection marked by tensions and estrangements, and feelings both shared and suppressed. Melville dedicated *Moby-Dick* to Hawthorne, and Mark Beauregard's novel fills in the story behind that dedication with historical accuracy and exquisite emotional precision, reflecting his nuanced reading of the real letters and journals of Melville, Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and others. An exuberant tale of longing and passion, *The Whale* captures not only a transformative relationship along the subject of speculation between two of our most enduring authors, but also their exhilarating moment in history, when a community of high-spirited and ambitious writers was creating truly American literature for the first time.

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