

There is a record album consisting of the songs of the humpback whale; recorded on the spot, underwater, without any Disneyesque touches to mar it anywhere. It is a moot question whether these songs are cetacean works of art, or partly conversations and only partly works of art—but I think it must be impossible to listen to them without experiencing some kind of thrill. People with receptive ears—those who are willing to be communicated with, and who know communication when they hear it—surely experience the aesthetic thrill while listening.

Katherine MacLean is nobody's aesthete. She invented logic in the cradle and has been instructing her teachers ever since; except that now she is a teacher at a university and is wisely letting her students instruct her.

Katherine MacLean

SMALL WAR

Humming smoothly, a giant ship designed to kill, dismember, cook and can whales moved toward a society of whales: bulls and their harems and playfully sporting pups.

An Audubon Society submarine followed the giant ship, swerving nervously as the people inside grew more excited.

"They mustn't do it! I can't let them do it!" Tears streaked Mrs. Appleton's cheeks. She was fat and rich, and she had put up half her personal fortune for the submarine study of the social life of whales. Her crew consisted of a mechanic, a field naturalist, a specialist in dolphin language, and a xenobiologist and universal linguist. They were surprised by her tears but they all shared the same anger and dismay as they saw the commercial ship prepare to destroy the herd they had been studying. Fury struggled with caution.

"Maybe we can stop them." "Let's ram them." "Maybe the submarine could . . . could . . ."

The mechanic made a gesture demanding attention. "We can ram a hole . . ."

Mrs. Appleton brightened and wiped her eyes, restraining snuffles. "If we crash into them, will it make a hole?"

"It will go through four feet of pack ice to get to the air, ma'am. It's built for ramming. The front end is pointed. We could make a hole below their waterline that would let in water."

Mrs. Appleton shoved the throttle forward and they took up the chase after the whale-killing ship. The fat woman handled the control with skill and determination. She fastened safety straps. "Everyone strap in for the crash."

"Strike amidship," said the mechanic. "Strike just aft the center bulge."

They strapped in. The xenobiologist brought Mrs. Appleton a large foam pillow and stuffed it between her and the instrument panel.

He was a specialist in the study of totally alien species from other planets, and he wanted to live long enough to meet an alien intelligent species someday when the spaceships made contact. To live so long requires caution. He fastened his safety straps and said, "Are you sure this is safe?"

"No," said the mechanic.

"Whales help their friends," said the dolphin expert.

"We can't let them kill Horace and Aimee," Mrs. Appleton said, gripping the wheel tightly and hardening her double chin with determination. She was referring to two whales. She said, "They'd help us. So we have to help them. Hang on. Hang on everybody."

They watched the huge side of the whale-killer ship loom over them, growing bigger and closer, and gripped handholds.

A harpoon with an explosive charge struck and exploded against the hull of the submarine, veering it sideways. Therefore, they struck the whaling ship at a slant. Striking armor plate was not in any case the same as striking pack ice. The impact was shattering.

Badly dented, leaking, with controls shattered, the submarine sank slowly, tilting at odd angles as it went deeper. The big factory ship hummed on its way with a rent in its side below the waterline.

Presently four survivors of the submarine bobbed to the surface, their scuba suits inflated like balloons.

Three miles away, nearer the coast, seal hunters in powerboats were circling a seal island, looking hungrily at the seals, using binoculars to search their view of the rocks for signs of the assassin who protected the seals, the hunterhunter, a fanatical conservationist who was rumored to be responsible for the death of five missing seal hunters. His action had been declared and filed as a small war between voluntary organizations. He was registered as an agent of the SPCA. He was legalized. They could not ask for help from the Coast Guard. Their only defense was to fire first, and the Small Wars Agreement limited their weapons to an ineffective, single-shot, hand-loading rifle. Circling the rock island they stared, looking for a man disguised as a seal, exchanging curses against hunterhunters over their CB radios.

One of them heard the whale ship sending a distress call to the Coast Guard and reporting the sinking of the Audubon submarine. He told the others. They cheered, and turned their radios to the distress band and heard the feeble signals of the survivors' safety suits. Turning the powerboats and roaring the engines, the seal hunters raced toward the signals, readying their rifles, happy to have a chance to pick off members of the hated Audubon Society.

From HANDY LEGAL ADVISER FOR HOME AND BUSINESS, 16th revised edition:

Any voluntary organization can legally declare war on any other voluntary organization engaged in any activity which the first organization considers objectionable or harmful to its own or the general welfare. Such a declaration of war must be given two months in advance of any overt act. Certain professions and activities which may be considered harmful to other groups are classified as membership in a voluntary organization. Listings of these are available from the UN Committee on Regulation of Small Wars. Nations, states, or any organization founded on place of residence, or political or religious beliefs or racial differences, cannot declare war, or have war declared upon them, because such attack would involve injury to persons whose membership had not been entered into as a matter of easy, adult, reversible choice.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals had long ago declared war on any commercial organization or individual entrepreneur attacking or killing endangered or intelligent species of animals.

On the rocky seal island, the young SPCA member straightened up from his crouch inside the reflective gray and black fabric that had surrounded him with the outward appearance of a gray and black rock. He watched the seal boats go, then went to his disguised motorboat and followed at a brisk twenty knots, a startling speed for an object that looked like floating, dirty ice.

As he went he stripped off the boat's disguise and tried to arrange it like a seal hunter's powerboat. His name was Joseph. He was seventeen and felt a deep conviction that all animals were people, and therefore all hunters were murderers.

After twenty minutes of driving across the choppy, cold waves Joseph saw the seal hunters' powerboats circling small floating objects in the sea that he knew were the Audubon Society survivors.

He closed in and joined the circle, hoping that they would not wonder how such a small craft would be a seal hunter's boat, hoping they would not hail him.

In Small Voluntary Wars, only single-shot, hand-loading firearms shall be authorized.

The boats circled the floating survivors at high speed, the white lines of their wake intersecting and jolting the starfishlike floating safety suits. The seal hunters stood on deck taking turns with a single shot each, jeering at each other with gestures for being poor shots.

Two of the survivors were losing air from their punctured suits and began swimming frantically in the choppy waves, trying to hold their heads up.

Joseph had a perfect opportunity to riddle every one of the hunters, but he did not have a machine gun. Wishing for a better weapon he raised his authorized single-shot rifle, cradled it as though he were picking off one of the swimmers and shot the man standing on the boat at the opposite side of the circle of boats. It was a good shot, from one heaving deck to another heaving deck at a distance of over a hundred feet. The hunter dropped his rifle and fell backward. Hastily Joseph reloaded and tried to pick off another before the other hunters realized something had happened.

He missed ten shots and then became impatient and swung the rifle toward a near boat and dropped another. One of the loudest of the jeering hunters stopped in the middle of a yell and fell forward off the side of his boat.

Seal hunters yelled to each other and pointed to the boat that was too small and the man who pointed his rifle in the wrong direction. Bullets began to smack into Joseph's boat and bounce off with a clang and a high ping. He set the controls for slow forward circles and hastily scrambled into a solid steel barrel with a rotating platform and a slit opening that fastened down its lid. He continued shooting, through the slit. He saw blinking blue lights flashing to one side, rotated the barrel and saw a Coast Guard cutter coming at full speed, violently flashing and blinking warning lights, thundering air and radio commands.

His boat tilted and settled to extra weight as it was boarded from behind by hunters who hated SPCA hunter-hunters of Joseph's kind with an intensity greatly exceeding their hatred of Audubon Society members. Among big game hunters it was rumored that SPCA members collected a bounty from the SPCA for each human left ear they delivered. One of them carried a bottle of gasoline, intent on painful murder of the steersman of the boat.

Joseph watched as the Coast Guard cutter nosed into the middle of the circle bellowing orders from an amplifier. All of the Audubon Society members had their suits deflated and were swimming feebly in the freezing water, presumably wounded. One gave up and sank.

Through his concern about the helpless swimmers, Joseph became aware that his boat was tilted to extra weight. He cranked his barrel around, and the slit spun across the field of view, showing the sky, the rear storage section and then four faces and four rifles pointing at him. One of the rifle muzzles entered the slit.

He slammed a sliding piece of armor plate over the slit and heard the rifle discharge outside with a deafening clang. He was safe inside the steel barrel but he could not see out.

The Coast Guard ship broadcast orders to cease fire and noted down boat numbers while crewmen pulled in the three remaining survivors of the submarine, including a numb and dripping fat woman. They then turned their attention to peculiar activity on the small boat that looked different from the others. Puzzled, they drifted the big ship close and watched as the seal hunters finished unbolting the steel barrel from its rotating support, and rolled it over the side and into the waves.

"That's a registered SPCA game protector number," announced one who had been consulting an index. "What do you bet there's a man inside?"

"CEASE AND DESIST!" called the amplified Coast Guardsman voice. "THIS IS DECLARED AN ILLEGAL RIOT. FURTHER AGGRESSIVE ACTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED." The barrel floated for an instant, settling, then turned over and sank. The Coast Guard crew caught it in a rescue net, hoisted it on deck and puzzled at the lock until a shuddering, dripping, blue young man managed to open it from the inside. Everyone present was given a summons for rioting without a Small War license. The wet people were taken back to the mainland.

Three miles away the giant whaler sank slowly, small lifeboats being lowered and circling it.

Ten miles away the whale tribe: bulls, cows and babes, alarmed by the shooting, were on their way, swimming deep and fast, to safer waters.

The Small Wars weren't over; the Small Wars had only recently begun.

But this engagement had come to an end.

The penis of the great sperm whale is nearly nine feet long. It is the mightiest organ in the history of the earth.

Divers who have witnessed the mating of Leviathan speak of it in tones of awe. Big Earl

Carruthers, in the Seven Seas bar in New Orleans, vowed that after seeing the gentle giants make love, he couldn't get it up himself for two weeks. I once watched a courtship while standing watch on the U.S.S. Opportune in the arctic. For two hours an eighty-foot cow teased a bull a few tons larger than herself. She would roll over and over on the surface, then dive into the green depths with him a fluke's length behind. We would stand breathless, our mouths unconsciously open in the bitter air, trying to guess where they would breach next. No sound but the sharp cry of an occasional tern and the groan of icebergs rolling over in their sleep.

Then the cry: "There! There! Off to starboard!"

And out of the deeps, like birthing mountains, the great gray shapes exploded, arching completely clear of the water in leaps so graceful it made the soul ache, sinking back in fountains of spray.

The bull got so frustrated that he came over and rubbed himself back and forth along the length of the ship, his crusted hide causing sandpaper sounds to boom through our hull.

Then the cow, having decided she was ready, lured him away and they sank together, bodies spiraling around one another, into the privacy of the Greenland whale fisheries.

—ROGER LOVIN