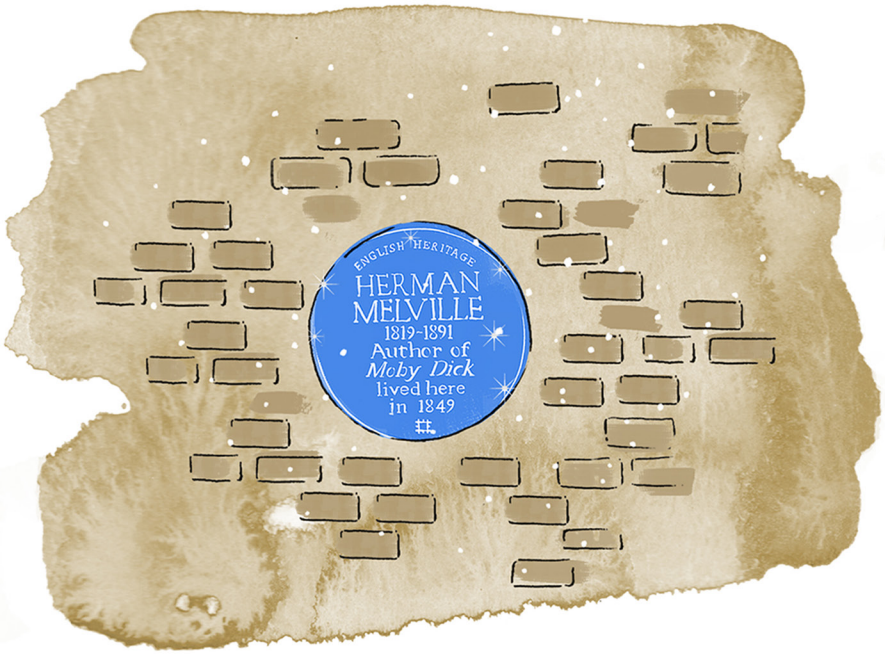
# THE FARAWAY ADVENTURES OF HENRY BOGGET

## Henry and The Great White Whale




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For Edward and Alice, Buddy and Rudy, Rex, Leo and Corey and my newest little godson Otto. All of your magical adventures have only just begun...

Our story begins on a dark, frosty night, many years ago in the depths of a cold English winter. The London streets were gloomy and still in the wintry cold. Even the stars were hidden by the smoke of a thousand chimney pots as fireplaces roared below, keeping their families warm.

At eight-thirty on the dot, a man breaks the stillness. Seemingly appearing out of nowhere, he moves through the shadows of the streets, a beacon of light burning in his hand. He is one of the lamplighters of old, who, long before electricity was invented, lit the oil lamps on the streets in an effort to cut through the gloom of the night. This is no ordinary man, and if you are ever lucky enough to spot him, you'll know why.

However, the story I am about to tell you is not of this lamplighter, but of a young boy called Henry Bogget. Henry Bogget was an ordinary boy of just eight years old. He lived with his mother and father in a big white house on a tree-lined street in the middle of London, England. He had lots of friends and went to school like most other children, but what set him apart is this: Henry had a secret. A secret that had been kept for many, many years. A secret about magic in London…

Now, I bet you're desperate to know what the big secret that Henry discovered was, and I'm here to tell you. Only a small handful of people have ever known this (and now you will know too!). All around London there is a very secret hidden magic, a magic which only exists under the cover of dark.

In England, whenever someone changes the world and leaves their mark on history – for example, a world-famous storyteller or an exceptional actress, a ground-breaking scientist or a beloved musician – a magnificent round blue plaque is placed on the house where they once lived, to make sure they can never be forgotten. People from all over the world come to see these blue plaques, and to see the places where their heroes once lived. However (and what I am about to tell you is nothing short of extraordinary), what they don't realise is that with every discovery made, artwork painted or song written, a little trace of very powerful magic comes into existence, which will forever live within the very walls where that person once resided.

One of these blue plaques sits on the wall at 25 Craven Street. And it just so happens that Henry Bogget lived opposite. On this particular night, he was sitting at the window of his home watching the snow fall outside,

warmed by a roaring fire that crackled peacefully away. His father was in his big comfy armchair, snoring loudly as usual after a large dinner, but was quickly startled awake by the grandfather clock striking the hour. Eight o'clock: bedtime! Just like every night at this time, Henry ran upstairs to brush his teeth and wash his face. Just like every night, Henry put on his blue and white striped pyjamas, jumped onto his bed and under his covers. And just like every night, his mother stepped carefully into his room to read him a bedtime story before kissing him on the forehead and turning off the light. However, Henry would soon find out that this was not going to be just like every other night. In fact, this was going to be the night that changed Henry's life forever. An adventure beyond his wildest imagination was about to begin.

He was *just* drifting off when he thought he heard something outside. The grandfather clock had just struck eight-thirty and as the last chime rang, he heard an unmistakeable tinkling of entirely different chimes outside. He crept out of bed and hid behind his bedroom curtain, peering cautiously out into the night. There! What was that? Something moving, in the shadows?


ENGLISH HERITAGE
HERMAN
MELVILLE
1819-1891
Author of
Moby Dick
lived here
in 1849
20

It was a man, and he appeared to be carrying a long pole alight with a bright flame! The man climbed a ladder (that seemed to appear out of nowhere, might I add) and set fire to a magnificent beacon which lit up the street opposite Henry's window. Through the curtains, Henry's bedroom was filled with light. He watched, mesmerised.

With the street now bathed in light, Henry couldn't help but notice the beautiful round blue plaque on the house opposite. The plaque proclaimed that the house had once been the home of Herman Melville, the author of *Moby Dick*, the story of a very famous whale and the men who tried to hunt it. Henry had seen it so many times before but never quite like this. Never before had it shimmered and shone like that. It was as though it had been struck by fairydust.

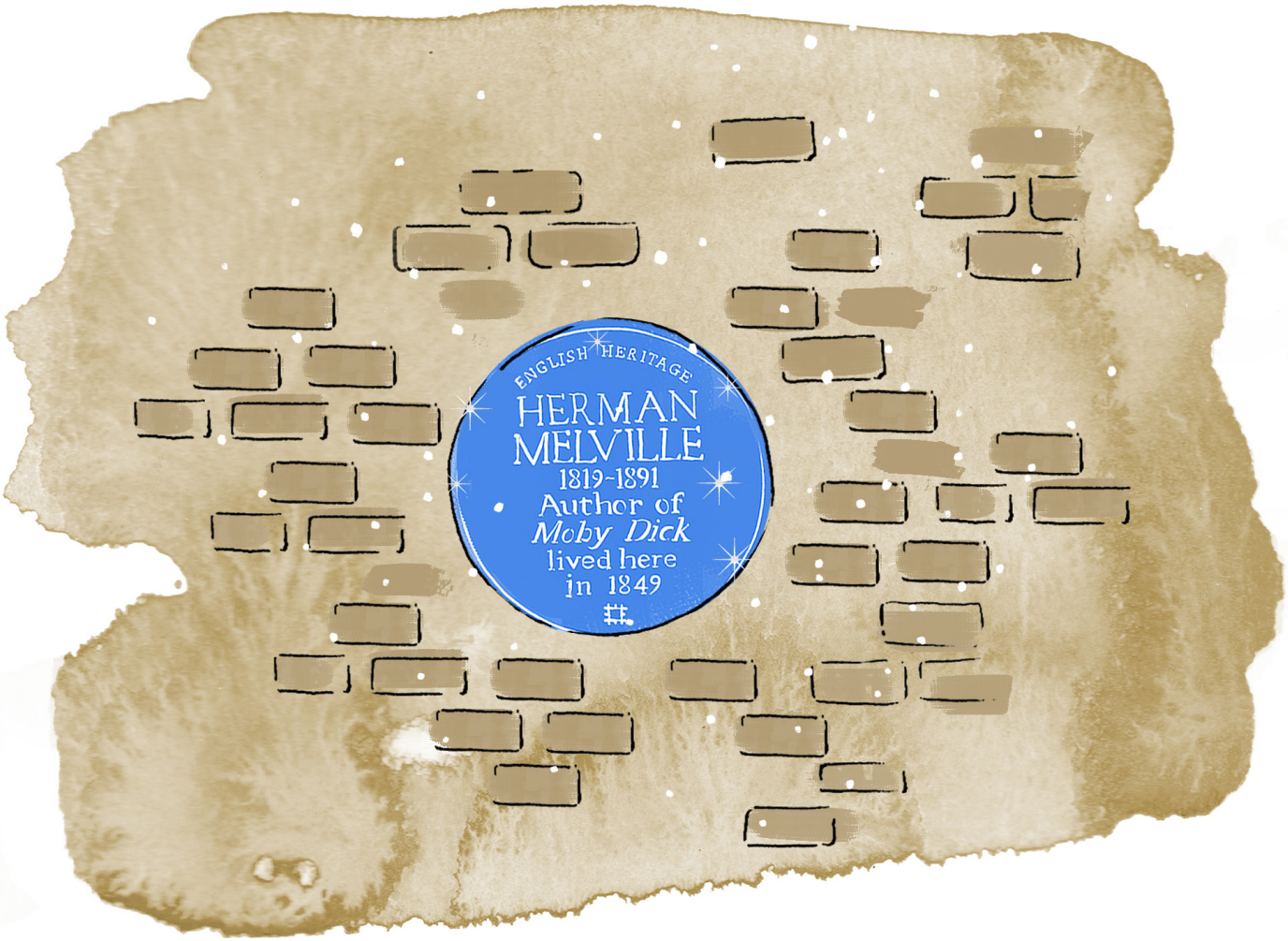
Henry loved an adventure and loved to explore. And at that very moment, as he stood spellbound by what was in front of him, he knew that he needed to see more.



As silently as he could, Henry opened his bedroom door. From downstairs he could hear news reports of the day crackling out of his parents' old TV. Trying not to make a sound, Henry crept out of his bedroom, down the stairs and past the drawing room where his parents were sitting. As he took a peek through the doorway, he could see his father had fallen back to sleep. Henry tiptoed towards the front door and reached for the handle. Pulling the heavy door open, he stepped out into the freezing night.

Henry shivered as the snowflakes started to settle on his nose and cheeks, and all around him he could see icicles had started to form. But he quickly forgot about the cold when he noticed that, on the other side of the road, another shiny ladder had appeared, as if by magic, and was resting against the wall leading up to the sparkling blue plaque he had seen from his window. As he walked towards the plaque, a shimmer passed across its surface, as though tempting him with the promise that there was more behind the bricks and mortar than any normal person would expect. He was transfixed. Moments later, Henry was standing at the bottom of the ladder, staring up at the intriguing blue plaque. He started to climb before he even knew what he was doing. One step at a time, he got higher and higher until he finally reached the top.

The plaque sparkled and gleamed curiously in the moonlight. Suddenly, to his amazement, the plaque clicked open like a porthole and then, very slowly, it started to reveal a hidden doorway. Henry could barely believe his eyes.



He took one quick look over his shoulder, towards his silent and still home, and in that moment he made a decision. And that was how young Henry Bogget found himself climbing through the secret porthole and down into a long tunnel. As soon as he was through, the plaque clicked shut behind him and everything went very dark. Henry's adventure had begun.

The tunnel was so long that Henry couldn't even see the end. He wriggled through the darkness and crawled down into the long passageway, past sleeping bats hanging from the ceiling and spiders carefully spinning their intricate webs. It felt like an eternity before he finally saw daylight and, as he got closer to the end of the tunnel, he started to feel a warm breeze and the taste of salt on his tongue. In the distance seagulls squawked and the air was filled with the noise of bustling crowds. Henry kept going, and was finally greeted with a matted web of overgrown weeds and wildflowers so thick he had to fight to get through it.

