



"Highly recommended for both its quality of writing and its superb handling of difficult subject matter."  
—Kirkus Reviews

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## THE WHALE

by [Vita Murrow](#), illustrated by [Ethan Murrow](#)

Age Range: 5 - 10

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## KIRKUS REVIEW

Two tenacious preteens (one lanky, long-haired, and light-skinned, the other bespectacled, short-haired, and slightly darker-skinned) strive to get to the briny bottom of a 50-year-old local legend and prove the Great Spotted Whale swims in their town's harbor.

Working separately, one rigging sound equipment and another mounting video cameras, the two steer dinghies into open water—and into each other! The collision damages both boats, sets tempers ablaze, but forces the industrious, determined duo to join forces on their whale hunt. A newspaper spread in the first pages provides readers with the back story; a bold headline reads, "GIANT WHALE OR GIANT HOAX?" The articles beneath (partially obscured) describe events half a century earlier, piquing readers' interests and vaulting them into the children's ardent endeavors. Photorealistic graphite drawings stretch across pages, bringing sea spray, wires, lenses, wooden planks, waves, ropes, and frayed fabric into penetrating focus. These extraordinary black-and-white illustrations, etched with details, crosshatches, shadows, and shading, charge the children's expedition with a pulsing, breathless urgency. Their preternatural technical proficiencies and passion-fueled mission emerge somehow as entirely believable. More astounding is the artist's uncanny ability to reproduce the murky transparency of rippling ocean water, a whale submerged silently just beneath.

Wordless, with masterful artwork and an intriguing narrative undertow, this whale's tale will transfix. *(Picture book. 5-10)*

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