



## **‘Spark’ Script :60**

We quickly push through the dark, damp lower deck of an 1800’s whaling vessel - lined with splintered wood - through the crew’s quarters. Large harpoons are propped up against the walls and whaling paraphernalia litter the floor of the cabin. Water leaks from the ceiling.

Weary groans of the creaking ship in the ocean waters, indistinguishable from those of the hopeless sailors who sit on bunk beds in the corners. The mood is grim.

Then the dim light of a lantern flickers on, illuminating a young sailor singing.

It’s a faint but audible murmur. A subtle, merry tune that penetrates the somber tone and dark atmosphere.

We hover over the quill of the sailor. Then whip up to a low angle of his young face - dirty and wet. A necklace made of large teeth hangs around his neck. He eyes a thick, dirty sheet of paper filled with scribbled lyrics.

He sings them in a low and patchy voice as he dips his quill in a small makeshift inkwell and pens the title of this shanty: *The Wellerman*.

Wipe transition to the cabin now full of sailors - of all ages, sizes, colours, and beard lengths - singing the chorus, arm in arm, ale in hand. We circle the men as they sing.

With their fighting spirits lifted, they each grab their harpoons, ready to tame the wild seas. We zoom out from the ship as the lanterns on deck begin to light. When they reach the end of the chorus the sound distorts and...

190 YEARS LATER appears on screen in big bold text with a loud bassy rumble.

News footage of Covid-related images (mask-wearing, empty supermarket shelves) appears on-screen along with VO from reporters “WHO declares a pandemic”, a news report - “Global deaths pass 2 million.”

We transition back out of a news programme on a TV screen to Hana (13/14) sitting alone in her dimly lit bedroom. Her walls are covered with posters of K-Pop bands, movie stars, (un)inspiring cliched quotes. The ocean is visible from her window.

She scrolls through TikTok and lands on a video of Nathan Evans singing The Wellerman (ShantyTok).

She sings along to the chorus somewhat tentatively, lacking in confidence as she tries to learn it.

She taps the 'share' button and her lone voice joins a cacophony of others as The Wellerman explodes.

Bold graphics of people's @comments about the song fill our frame. GIFs of merry sailors. And our own spin on classic memes. Twitter tags. Selfie videos of people alone in their houses. People's voices commenting. Singing.

Headlines fill our screen.

SFX pops and chirps with each post, like, and comment.

A kid sits alone at a kitchen table singing along with classmates on a zoom lesson while their teacher has a pirate ship background.

We push through the open door of a bathroom to a man submerged beneath the water in his bathtub. He holds his phone above him to get an underwater selfie, splashing water over the sides.

The song changes to an electronic remix by Argules.

The internet ramps into a frenzy and the speed of imagery intensifies as The Wellerman sweeps the world.

Through his computer screen, we see a Twitch streamer going crazy in his bedroom, jumping up and down on the bed as he parties alone to the banger with a strobe light. The feed lags a little.

Amidst the imagery, some graphics, videos, and emojis also subtly reference images associating the song with whaling - foreshadowing what's about to come. These include the whaling scene from Assassin's Creed, whale emojis, pop culture whale references such as Moby Dick, Jonah and the Whale etc. sprinkled throughout.

We push towards a bus driving along a beachside road and through the window to Hana - wearing headphones - sitting alone on a bus. People are spread far apart, abiding by the COVID social distance signage throughout the bus.

From her headphones, we hear the muffled beat of the Argules remix.

She hums along to the tune as she scrolls through the comments on her own uploaded video.

Suddenly, a comment appears. “! The Wellerman? More like the whaler-men! ” 🦴 !”

Her thumb hovers. Her brow furrows. She clicks on the commenter’s profile which takes her to the page of a young marine activist. She clicks on a video.

We move into the screen of her phone to the woman standing on a beach, talking about whaling and the dark side of the song.

“Why are we glorifying whaling in 2021?” “Toungin’ is the process of stripping blubber off a dead whale”. And so begins Hana’s descent down the rabbit hole.

Comments start to turn more critical of the song’s lyrics. A panel of influencers sit around a desk discussing it on a podcast. Images start to layer the screen as Youtubers and influencers upload videos critiquing the song. Macro shot of Hana’s fingers clattering across a keyboard. The image of a search bar fills our screen. She searches “is whaling still happening today?”. Stock footage of a recent news story detailing Japan’s whaling industry and illegal whaling.

We see Hana’s face through the laptop screen as she continues her search. A rush of horrific imagery and headlines layer the screen again. A TED talk about ocean conservation. Stock footage of crowds marching in the streets, protesting whaling and ocean pollution.

Quick cut sequences - close-ups of their signs - “Stop the slaughter in the water”, “Whales are climate warriors”, “Boycott whale products” “Whale you please leave us alone”. The protesters chant a version of The Wellerman shanty, but with modified protest lyrics:

*Soon may the Whalers come  
Reducing life to a simple sum  
One day, when the killing is done  
There’ll be no sea at all.*

Hana continues her search and the tone shifts as we cut to majestic whales. Pods of dolphins frolicking. Bioluminescent fish and vegetation with an ethereal glow that transitions into...

...the light from Hana’s tablet screen as she sits at her desk wearing a sea shepherd t-shirt. The walls of the bedroom are no longer filled with bands and celebs but whales and

conservation posters.

She writes on her tablet with a stylus pen. We whip up to her face, mirroring our shot of the young sailor who first penned the shanty.

The screen shows a preview of a video Hana has made. She stands on a picturesque beach talking about the importance of ocean conservation and issues with whaling. Her eyes are focused, determined but optimistic as she clicks upload.

**VO: The world needs entertainment.**

Join the conversation.

**Spark. Little Can Be Huge.**