

## Welcome to Moby-Dick Book Club!

In his introduction to *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*, American historian and literary scholar Andrew Delbanco writes that Herman Melville's grand opus was his "lifelong meditation on America." Never knowing that his novel was to reach any level of critical acclaim, literary gravitas, or scholarly study, Melville's work holds an important and longstanding position in the American canon and cultural milieu today. Yet, for many of us, this piece of classic American literature remains unread, whether it be due to the sheer length of the book, the dense and often confusing nautical terminology, or Melville's rhetorical style. Perhaps, we just haven't found the time to read it by ourselves.

This book club will help us to work through pieces of literature that may seem daunting or insurmountable on our own. Literature allows us to reach into the past, to connect, to empathize, and to understand the world around us. What can we learn from these stories? What do they tell us now? How do we, as readers in the 21st century, understand its themes, its questions? What do we bring to the piece of literature we are reading? And how does tackling these books in a group change the dynamic from reading alone? These are questions we might think about as we read.

Attached, you will find a reading schedule for us to follow, along with the date and time that we will "meet" to discuss the reading. Additionally, I've included a PDF of resources that will help us as we read, including a list of nautical terms, diagrams of whaling ships, and a map to trace the journey of Captain Ahab's ship, the *Pequod*, across the seas.

### Reading Schedule

Week One (Aug. 31) : Ch. 1 - 19

Week Four (Oct. 12): Ch. 61 - 83

Week Two (Sept. 14): Ch. 20 - 41

Week Five (Oct. 26): Ch. 84 - 105

Week Three (Sept. 28): Ch. 42 - 60

Week Six (Nov. 9): Ch. 106 - End

*Oh, the rare old Whale, mid storm and gale  
In his ocean home will be  
A giant in might, where might is right,  
And King of the boundless sea.  
—Whale Song*

*So be cheery, my lads, let your hearts never  
fail, / While the bold harpooner is striking  
the whale!  
—Nantucket Song*

MOBY-DICK;

OR,

THE WHALE.

BY

HERMAN MELVILLE,

AUTHOR OF

“TYPEE,” “OMOO,” “REDBURN,” “MARDI,” “WHITE-JACKET.”



NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY.

1851.