

***Moby-Dick* Book Club**

Session 2: Tuesday, October 21st, 2025, at 5:30pm

Section to read: Chapters 48-95

Theme: Race, Nation, and Representation

Featured Guests: Professors Wyn Kelley and Bob Wallace

Welcome to *Moby-Dick* Book Club!

The New Bedford Whaling Museum *Moby-Dick* Book Club is a virtual series exploring Herman Melville's iconic American novel. Whether you're reading it for the first time or returning to it with fresh eyes, all are welcome to take part in engaging, thought-provoking conversations led by some of the world's leading Melville scholars.

Each session centers on a guiding theme and includes a suggested reading schedule—but participants are encouraged to read at their own pace and join when they can. Bring your thoughts, questions, and interpretations to share with fellow readers and Melville experts alike.

Reading Guide: Chapters 48-95

These chapters take us from the first lowering of whaleboats from the *Pequod* to the complex processing of whale parts. Readers get a closer look at character dynamics, whale bodies, and changing stylistic approaches from the narrator. Race, nation, and representation are just a few of the complex factors at play in the middle of the book, which the narrator explores through plot, language, tone, and explicit provocations. The following are some questions that readers can consider as they read and reflect on the text.

1. How does Melville represent whales in the text? How does he represent different human cultures? Are these humane or inhumane representations?
2. What do you make of the different gams in the middle of the book—the Albatross, Town-Ho, Jeroboam, Virgin, Rose-Bud? How do they foreground the presence—and problems—of “nations” at sea?
3. How do you feel when Stubb kills a whale at the end of Chapter 61?
4. How do you feel during the discussion between Stubb and Fleece in “Stubb’s Supper”?
5. Are you a Fast-Fish or a Loose-Fish?
6. What does Ishmael mean when he writes of the “all-grasping western world” at the beginning of Chapter 87, “The Grand Armada”?
7. “The Castaway,” “A Squeeze of the Hand,” and “The Cassock” seem to take place in dramatically different moods and genres, yet they are jammed together at the end of a long series of chapters on whales and whale-hunting. What is the effect of Melville’s grouping Chapters 93-95 so close to each other?