

The Bird and the Books

Meredith lifted a slice of pizza to her beak, the smell of it wafting up her nostrils for the second that it passed by them: tuna and anchovy, her favourite. She brushed her greasy black feathers off on her taut shirt and turned the page.

She was reading *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (as it was properly titled) by Herman Melville, her twenty-third book this week. And it was only Thursday! Meredith had actually read it already, but given that was almost two years ago, a refresher seemed in order. That was very much the point of her week off: to refresh herself and finally get to bury her beak in books, just like when she was young. The problem with working in a library, she found, was there just wasn't enough time for reading.

She took up another slice in her wing, devouring it in two mouthfuls. For the first time in hours she set the book aside. She knew she was approaching the ending chapters of the book; the *Pequod* was coming to the Equator and would soon be tracking Moby Dick for the last time; it seemed a good time for a break.

Quietly she emptied the pizza box of its remaining slices and put the cardboard aside with the others, pushing her messy wingtips into the large, exposed belly before her. Her diet over the previous six days had been less than stellar—a reading holiday was for *reading* after all, not cooking—and she had resorted to takeaways for almost every meal. Add to that snacking and how she had rarely even left her bed in that time and suddenly this swollen mass of stomach became a reasonable. No wonder this t-shirt was so tight.

Meredith huffed slowly as she massaged her tummy. Such a greasy diet wasn't doing her insides any good (she'd read enough biology books to know that), but she was dedicated to reach fifty books before the weekend, and she couldn't afford the hours it took to cook nutritious meals in that goal. Not when reading such tomes as *Moby Dick*.

Convinced that her insides were placated for the time being, she opened another pizza box from the stack next to her, taking a slice in one wing, and *Moby Dick* in the other.

Meredith belongs to @kimintodarkness.