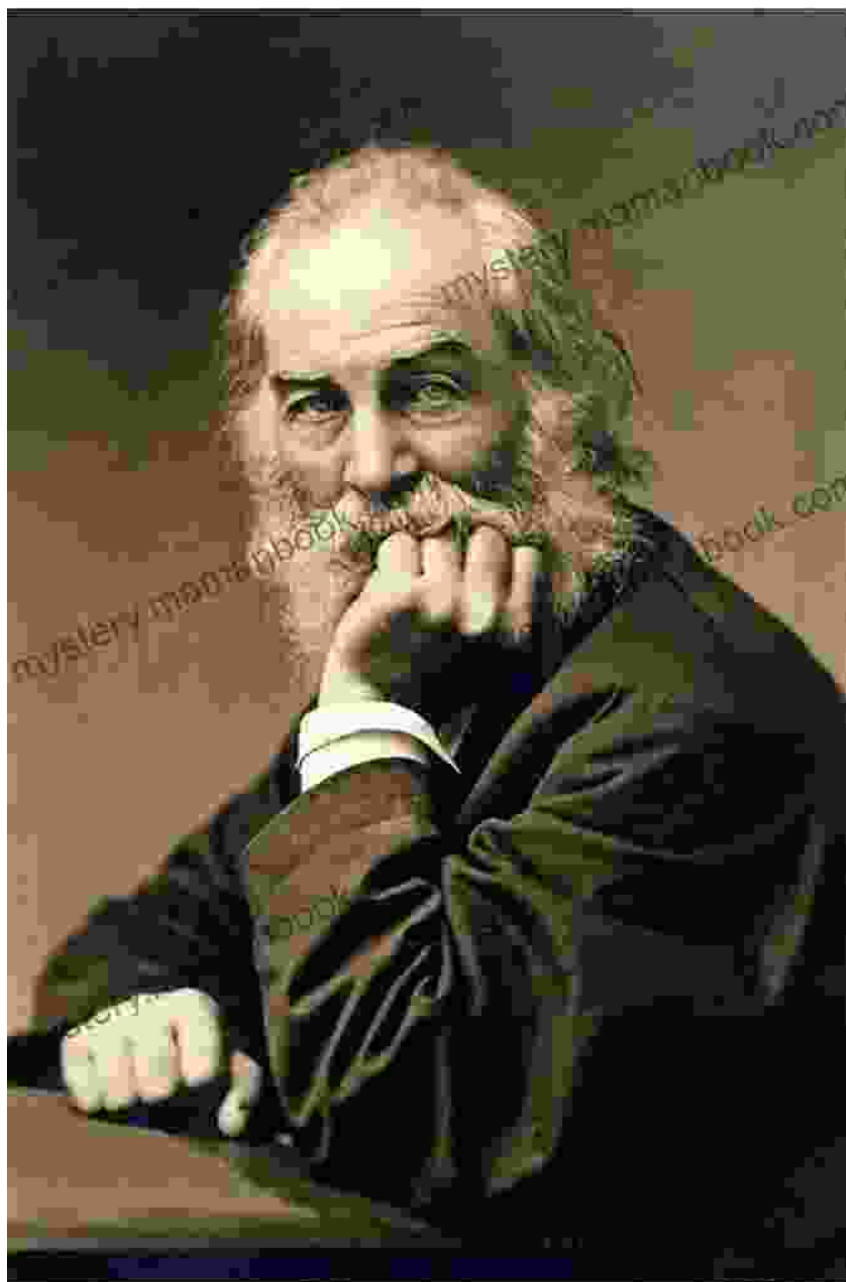


Walt Whitman: The Bard of Bingo



Bingo! by Walt Whitman

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 348 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 155 pages
Lending : Enabled



Walt Whitman, the visionary American poet, is celebrated for his groundbreaking work "Leaves of Grass," a collection that revolutionized American poetry. However, beyond his profound literary contributions, Whitman harbored a peculiar passion - the game of bingo.

Whitman's fascination with bingo stemmed from his democratic and inclusive spirit. He viewed bingo as a game that welcomed people from all walks of life, regardless of their social status or background. In a time when societal divisions ran deep, Whitman found solace in bingo halls, where individuals from diverse communities gathered to share a moment of excitement and camaraderie.

Whitman's passion for bingo was not merely confined to recreational enjoyment. It permeated his writing, shaping the themes and imagery of his poetry. In "Leaves of Grass," Whitman frequently invoked the language and imagery of bingo, employing terms such as "numbers," "boards," and "marked." These references served as metaphors for the interconnectedness and diversity of American society.

One poignant example of Whitman's bingo-inspired imagery can be found in the poem "Song of Myself." In this sprawling masterpiece, Whitman writes:



“I am the man, I suffered, I was there; The neck of the hunted fox was mine, The bullet and knife were mine, The taunts of the many were mine; The mocking and scorn of the many were mine.”

Whitman's use of the term "marked" in this passage alludes to the act of marking numbers on a bingo card. This suggests that the speaker has experienced life's trials and tribulations, leaving an indelible mark upon him. The accumulation of these experiences, like numbers on a bingo card, contributes to the speaker's profound understanding of human suffering and resilience.

Beyond its metaphorical significance, bingo also provided Whitman with a source of inspiration and joy. He frequented bingo halls in Brooklyn and Manhattan, engaging with fellow players from various backgrounds. These encounters fueled his empathetic imagination, allowing him to capture the vibrant tapestry of American life in his poetry.

In "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," Whitman describes the bustling crowds he observed while riding the ferry:

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“I see the farmers working in the fields or barns, I see the mechanics working at their trades, I see the housewives in the windows of their homes, I see the children playing in the streets.”

Whitman's ability to observe and connect with people from all walks of life can be attributed, in part, to his experiences playing bingo. The game fostered a sense of community and inclusivity, allowing Whitman to transcend social barriers and embrace the richness and diversity of human experience.

Walt Whitman's connection to bingo was not merely a passing fancy. It was a reflection of his deeply held beliefs in equality, democracy, and the interconnectedness of all things. Through his poetry, Whitman transformed the humble game of bingo into a profound metaphor for the American experience, celebrating the vibrant tapestry of society and the shared human journey.



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