

# Selkie Play (A Staged Reading)

Kara O'Rourke, Fall 2022

## Who?

Producer: Kara O'Rourke  
Director: Catherine Alam-Nist  
Stage Manager(s): TBD! (could be you or your friend!)  
Preferred Contact Email: [kara.orourke@yale.edu](mailto:kara.orourke@yale.edu)

## What?

The Irish myth of the selkie tells of a shape-shifting seal-person who is often trapped in an unwilling human marriage until they can find their seal skin again to return to the sea. This show is about a selkie weighing the pros and cons of giving up femininity entirely if it means sure escape from domestic hell. They encounter The Little Mermaid, Captain Ahab (from Moby Dick), and some other friends along the way almost "The Little Prince" style who all also talk about gender.

## When?

Date of First Rehearsal: Week of Oct 24th?  
Current Tech Week Dates: December 4th - 6/7  
Performance Dates: 3 shows btw Weds (Dec 7) and Sat (Dec 10) based on cast availability  
Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): Week of Oct 24 - Dec 10

## Time Commitment

Weekly Estimated Time Commitments (in Hours): 2-3 hours a week until tech, a couple hours per night of tech

## Content Warnings

Metaphorical transphobia, possibly implied past SA if you interpret it that way (1 mention), mention of abusive relationship

## Audition Expectations

Please choose and familiarize yourself with a provided monologue (based on tone, not gender of a character, that will be taken into consideration later) and also come prepared with a topic to do a short rant about!

## Audition Location

LC 101! Linsly-Chittenden Hall is on Old Campus or accessible via High Street. 101 is one of the big lecture halls on the first floor.

## Thank you for your interest in auditioning for Selkie Play!!

This packet proceeds as follows:

1. The team
2. Show info
3. Rehearsal info
4. Audition info (“rant” & monologues)

### 1. THE TEAM (so far):

#### Kara O’Rourke — Playwright & Producer



Kara O’Rourke (she/her) is a senior English major in Branford. She grew up in the woods of Connecticut listening to Irish folk music on the radio and reading ALL the Warrior Cats books. Having joined the theater world relatively late, she loves welcoming and encouraging new-comers, original student writing, and the magic that is large scale collaborative art. In her free time she does even more theater (shocker, I know! Mostly stage makeup), co-leads Ace/Aro Space, and listens to queer horror audiodramas (don’t get her started but also pls ask her about them).

#### Catherine Alam-Nist — Director



Catherine (they/she/???) is a seniorish in Hopper College (🐦🐦👑🌟🌟) majoring in Humanities (whatever that means) and Theatre Studies (unfortunately my parents know what that means). They are deeply committed to expanding what stories we tell and how we tell them, and firmly believe in the symbiotic relationship between innovative/unconventional creative processes and the promotion of genuine diversity/inclusion. Apart from theatre, Catherine is involved in Yale Hillel, teaches Hebrew school to fourth graders, plays guitar, draws, and is hoping to record some original music for the first time this semester.

**Also seeking: stage manager! & any other designers interested.**

## 2. SHOW INFO

Selkie Play is an original play by Kara O'Rourke named after the Irish myth of the selkie, a creature who can shapeshift between seal and human form. In the stories, selkie women are often forced to wed human men who steal and hide away their sealskin, without which they cannot return to the sea. Through this mythology and some other familiar faces from literature, the text explores ideas of gender fluidity, gender roles, cisnormativity, heteronormativity, sexuality. The desire to reclaim one's identity after it's been stolen. Fishing, whaling, boats, and flower crowns.

### ROLE BREAKDOWN

SELKIE	any pronouns, restless and resentful
THE LITTLE MERMAID	he/him but female/human presenting, metaphor for closeted trans man
BOY	he/him 15yo cis boy exploring femininity, enthusiastic and polite.
LIGHTHOUSE	she/her, melancholy and bewildered
CAPTAIN AHAB	he/him, "grand, ungodly, god-like man" from Moby Dick
SAILOR 1	he/him, cis male. One of Captain Ahab's harpooners, then later an older teen from the village on the fishing crews. No spoken lines.
SAILOR 2	he/him. One of Captain Ahab's harpooners. No spoken lines. May be double cast as The Little Mermaid.

### 3. REHEARSAL INFO

This is a staged reading, so performances will be on-book (unless you really want to memorize your lines lol). As such, this is going to be a very chill rehearsal process.

2-3 hours a week until tech (no rehearsals from Friday evening to Saturday evening), then a few hours a night (or less) during tech week.

We will be performing three shows in the week of Monday December 5 (probably Weds, Thurs, and Sat evenings), but we will decide these for certain after casting in accordance with people's availability.

Performances will take place in the Hopper Cabaret.

### 4. AUDITION INFO

Please sign up for a slot on [Yale College Arts](#), and prepare (not memorize — just look over and think about) one of the monologues below.

Please do not let the perceived genders of the characters determine which one you pick to read at the audition — we're most interested in seeing what kind of tone you can portray, rather than seeing you read for a particular gender identity. That said, we will be asking on our audition form what pronouns/roles you're comfortable depicting, and will not cast you in roles that don't fit this criteria.

In addition to the monologue, please come in ready to tell us some sort of rant regarding anything you feel strongly about — ideally off the cuff, although you probably want to pick a topic beforehand. Can be serious or silly. This should be no longer than 2 minutes. Characters in this show have strong feelings about a variety of things. Would love to see that organically from you too!

We will only be having one round of auditions (i.e. no callbacks).

## SELKIE

Can't find it.

My coat.

He's got it. My coat.

My coat.

I've been woman long enough. But he doesn't want any other part of me.

Today I woke up as if out of a dream. Years had passed, children passed through me and began lives of their own, fish scales and garden vegetable scraps accumulated in the compost and became soil many cycles over.

I think the spell weakened overnight as my husband ventured on his first extended fishing trip in ages. I have a hazy memory of him telling me, and my agreeing, in the way wives are supposed to accept routine absences.

He would have hidden it somewhere, my coat. He knew I would go looking. But while he remains distant I'm no longer in thrall.

My children now know to keep on the lookout for it.

*Mommy wants to find her warm coat so she feels warm and strong enough to swim again.*

I'm so cold like this I stand over the hearth always. It's where he wants me.

I'll leave them all when I find it, but they won't recognize me as their mother anymore, anyway.

Men have such arrogance, in their confidence to tame beasts as they do with their women, locking girls in the kitchen since childhood until they fear to leave it. But wild creatures will still seek to flee at any opportunity.

## LIGHTHOUSE

As a little girl, I was someone for you to come home to. To come home for.

Not much to look at by day, sitting cross-legged on the clifftop at the end of the world, bones fitting together like a pile of driftwood. I would look outwards and see nothing, because I was at the end of everything, and you were further still. I learned to read, to be able to imagine you in the mist, licking my fingers to turn damp pages and tasting salt.

By night, I burned a bonfire, a homing beacon brighter than the North star above. Willing, though dreaming, my daddy home. Daring you to turn your back on that light.

The cliff's edge a permanent partition between waiting and wandering.

One day I awoke into adulthood, having gained a long waist, a neck. Looking down and realizing I had been dressed in stripes.

Had I grown, or was I constructed?

Men with easels look from a distance, painting my sculpted silhouette into their landscapes. Uninterested in my insides. They like the way my stance looks like caring.

As a little girl, I thought my light was enough to attract men. I've since found that some will gladly take my heart, but then by foolishness or storm, they sink with it to the bottom of the sea.

Whereas I, rooted to the same cliff, have found I hold a devastating capacity for love and for guilt.

Swinging lantern. Scanning dark waters.

## CAPTAIN AHAB

(shouting)

... Aye, I widowed that poor girl when I married her. A widow with husband alive! Sailed for Cape Horn not the following day, forsaking the peaceful land for war against the monstrous deep. Driven by madness, oceans boiling 'neath my passage, harpoon forged with hatred for that beast who de-masted me. My pride is my purpose, the path laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run.

There is no more compelling force than the inevitable. Someone thrusts these cards into these old hands of mine; swears that I must play them and no others.

What a pretty lighthouse.

I trust you will collect the artifacts of my great battle who wash ashore. The deserters, martyrs, whale blubber, and ship wreckage.

This is what ye have shipped for, men! To chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now?