

**WILD KATE by Karen Hartman**

<https://www.playscripts.com/play/2343>

*Inspired by Melville's Moby Dick and the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico, Wild Kate takes place on a high school semester at sea. During a storm, after the mad captain Kate has changed the boat's course into the Gulf, timid participant Piper speaks.*

PIPER

The nature of Moby Dick. By Piper, for credit in language arts.

What they tell you the book is about, it's *not* about. This is the only way a book so massively colossal could ever be considered boring by my peers.

(The boat hits a wave and rocks. All steady themselves)

I Wikied it too, last year in AP English Lit. Because my teacher said it was a story of revenge, and gave all these essay topics about Ahab and the whale. Yet Ahab doesn't show up until more than a hundred pages in, and then more or less just yells, "Hast seen the white whale?" and goes back into his forecastle or whatever. Then there's a monstrous bloody climax. Which rocks.

But I think this is a story of witnessing. Making sense out of violence, not apologizing, just asking for real:

Where are we in the food chain?

What is the meaning of a culture fueled by dirty oil, obtained by barbaric means?

If corpses power our civilization, are we civilized?

I had the chance to think about this at the feet of a person asking the big asks. Captain Kate squints into the sun, and *moves us out*.

Kate says Herman Melville never had an education. He was orphaned at twelve and went to work, got a job on a whaling vessel.

Check this. It's the narrator Ishmael but it might as well be Herm Melville himself:

(Reads)

“And as for me, if, by any possibility, there be any as yet undiscovered prime thing in me; if hereafter I shall do anything that, upon the whole, a man might rather have done than to have left undone; if, at my death, my executors, or more properly my creditors, find any precious manuscript in my desk, then here I prospectively ascribe all the honor and the glory to whaling; for a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard.”

Really gives a person perspective about college applications.

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*You are welcome to perform this monologue for free! It would mean a lot to me if you would [buy this play](#), and it's a good idea for your performance too.*

*You may CUT but you may not CHANGE the words. Please introduce the monologue with title of play and author's name (this is a monologue from Leah's Train by Karen Hartman).*

*Feel free to send a video link to yourself performing the monologue through the Contact page, and let me know if I may share! Thanks and be well, KH*

[www.karenhartman.org](http://www.karenhartman.org)