

Half Dog, All Hate

By

Yuki Iwama

(c)Yuki Iwama 2015

HALF DOG, ALL HATE

(All actors are wearing red masks except for the FATES, who are wearing blue masks. The Fates are talking into microphones which manipulates their voices.)

The stage is dark.

There is the sound of someone BEATING another.

A WOMAN PLEADING and CRYING.

A GIRL YELLING.

The sound of a MAN PANTING and SWEARING.

A TERRIBLE SCREAM.

Then silence.

A SPOTLIGHT slowly reveals FATHER, sitting on a chair with his face buried in his bloody hands, DOWNSTAGE LEFT. He is distressed.

FEMALE FATE comes into view behind him. She rests her hand on his shoulder.

FEMALE FATE

You're a good man. You're a good, good man.

Father shudders.

FATHER

She was beaten to death by a bad man. I remember him well. He was a client and he came by every week with an orange lollipop. He'd throw it to me with a wink before heading to her room.

He raises his head.

FATHER

I thought maybe she deserved it. But I was a kid and I was angry. Mad as all hell. After she got taken away and cremated, for the longest time I'd dream of her smell and I'd wake up in the middle of the night, piss dampening the sheets. Even though I was awake, the smell stayed, lingered.

Cigarettes, soju, and sex.

BLUE WASH.

1960s music plays in the background.

DOWNSTAGE RIGHT, Female Fate and Male Fate dance together.

Father watches them, pulling out an orange lollipop and sucking on it.

FATHER

He was different from her other clients. He was well connected to wealthy Americans and he managed a light bulb factory. He was-

FEMALE FATE

-handsome and kind and he treats me so well-

FATHER

And for the briefest moment I thought maybe, just maybe he could be my father.

Laughter from Female Fate.

Father looks back at the audience.

But then he killed her. He killed my mother.

RED WASH.

The music becomes warped.

The lights turn red and flash as Male Fate beats Female Fate down.

Father buries his face into his hands again.

BLUE WASH.

FATHER

My mother taught me about the different kinds of men in this world.

FEMALE FATE

There are bad men, evil men, and mild mannered men - and sometimes, on very special occasions, there are good men.

FATHER

And I would ask her: What kinda men are your clients? And she would say:

FEMALE FATE

They aren't good men, son. They are all living in a world not our own. The wars changed them into something inhuman. But you're not going to be like that, are you?

(MORE)

FEMALE FATE (cont'd)

No, you're going to be a good man. Now, what are you going to be?

FATHER

A good man, mother. I'm going to be a...good...man.

He shudders and buries his face again.

FATHER

I think that perhaps I became the man I am when I went hunting in the woods with my uncle and my cousin. There was a stag, a royal golden stag with hard eyes and a stiff neck, and I was unmoved when my uncle shot it down...

A GUNSHOT.

...but when my cousin misfired and killed a stray dog....

GUNSHOT and a WHINING DOG.

RED WASH.

I thought I would never stop shaking. The dog was an ugly mutt with shit and dirt matted in its tangled fur; but its death held a strange power over me, haunting my dreams for years.

NORMAL LIGHT WITH RED WASH.

Mother is looking out the 'window'. She looks on edge and worried.

Daughter is reading a book CENTERSTAGE CENTER.

FATHER

Can you get me a drink?

Mother looks away from the window, nods nervously, and scurries off stage.

She comes back with a bottle and hands it to him before going back to the window.

Father drinks deeply as he stares at Mother.

FATHER

The dreams died the first time I got drunk. I don't dream at all after that.

FEMALE FATE

You're a good man. You're a good, good man.

FATHER

She is my mother and more so with each bruise I inflict on her.

Mother turns to look at Father and smiles at him. Goddamn, goddamn. When she smiles at me like that...I can't understand her. Not anymore. And...I feel myself unraveling.

Goddammit.

He drinks from the bottle again.
The first time I lost myself to anger was when I was with her. She held me with her lips and her hands for some endless minutes but when I moved to touch her...she cowed from me.

I grew angry then because whenever I looked at her... my mother's face stared back and my mouth tasted bad and my body felt too heavy to move.

I didn't touch her and I wouldn't let her touch me.
(Drinks)

She was concerned at first, she always was, but concern quickly turned into fear, the kind of fear that filled the room with a sour stench and it only unraveled me further.

And the anger turned putrid inside of me like a writhing parasite. It was a poisonous sentience. Over time, it took my mind and I became the poison.

RED WASH.

My daughter's eyes; my wife's trembling hands; they take me like the dog's death...

And I can't stop shaking.

FEMALE FATE

You're a good man. You're a good, good man.

FATHER

And then last night I realised that I wasn't upset about the dog's death; I was upset because I wasn't the one to kill it. The poison inside cultivated then, a pod in the ground - I've just never noticed it.

NORMAL LIGHT.

MOTHER

It's raining.

FATHER

Did you bring the washing in?

MOTHER

(horrified)

No...No I didn't.

Father stands, angry, and grabs her.

MOTHER

Sorry, sorry, should I go get them now?

Father stops, staring at Mother who can't even meet his gaze.

Mother looks at him, shocked.

Father walks offstage.

Mother continues to watch him through the window.

MOTHER

I wonder what's gotten into him?

DAUGHTER

Why do you care?

He doesn't even remember your birthday. Isn't it about time to leave him?

MOTHER

That's not important. What's important is that we're together.

She stalks offstage.

Father walks back in and sits in his chair.

BLUE WASH FADES IN.

FATHER/MOTHER

Because violence is addictive.

BLUE WASH.

Male Fate appears.

RADIO STATIC and incoherent words from Male Fate.

SOUNDS OF WAR.

Lights dim and only Mother and Male Fate are seen.

MOTHER

In the 1940s...there was the violence of the Dogs. And the violence of the Dogs...was...

Sounds of RAPE.

MOTHER

My father...He was the first to go. He was the first to be crushed under a soldier's boot. He was an old man...and yet...It was the Dogs. It was the fucking Dogs. Because of labour shortages, they took away my father to work as a slave. We heard stories...stories of men dying like flies. Being treated like animals. And we knew, once he left, he wouldn't come back.

And he never did.

MOTHER

And then it was mother, my sister, and me.

(pause)

They say that the older you get the less you remember from your childhood. But even though I was a small child, I remember those days so clearly.

(pause)

They burned our books, took away our language, took away our identities. They...they took away my innocence.

VIOLENT KNOCKING, DOOR KICKING.

RED WASH.

Female Fate rushes forward and grabs Mother, hugging her and pulling her down into a crouch.

Mother stares at the audience.

SOUNDS OF RAPE and SCREAMS.

MOTHER

I didn't know what they were doing to her. I didn't know if they were killing her or...but as me and my sister hid in the closet, watching through the open crack, my mother looked at us, smiling. But...she wasn't there anymore. She wasn't my mother. She was gone. They took her away from us.

And it wasn't just my mother I lost.

BLUE WASH.

Mother and Female Fate slowly stand. Female Fate appears to have a baby in her arms swaddled in black material.

Sounds of transport and soldiers.

MOTHER

I was 12 and she was 14. The baby...she was a child of my mother's madness. We were being moved from our hometown to the capital, down south. It was scary and sad but...but-

FEMALE FATE

It's an adventure!

MOTHER

The Dogs were gone and the Rats were here...one thing after another...but at least the Rats gave us candy.

FEMALE FATE

Come on, little sister!

MOTHER

Wait! I'm just fixing my shoe.

FEMALE FATE

Fine, I'll wait for you.

MOTHER

And she did, she always did. She was always waiting for me and she did so with a patient smile. Because after our father died, and after the Dogs...after what they did to Mother over and over again... my older sister became the head of the house. Taking care of me and the baby. Always waiting with that patient smile.

Mother closes her eyes. Blue lights floods over her.

MOTHER

And even though he was gone, in the depths of the nights, I dreamed about him...

Male Fate appears behind her and he hugs her. His voice and words are manipulated as he tells his story.

MALE FATE

There once was a magical rabbit with beautiful magical fur. If the rabbit should ever lose her fur, she would only grow it back. One day, the rabbit was out in the forest, playing, when a hunter captured her and took her home with him. That was the very first time the rabbit was skinned from head to foot and it was the most excruciating, agonising pain she had ever felt. She thought she was going to die. But then, ofcourse, all her skin and fur grew back and the hunter was

(MORE)

MALE FATE (cont'd)

delighted. Years passed and the rabbit grew accustomed to the daily skinning. In fact, she grew to enjoy them. But then the hunter grew sick and died and the rabbit was once again free. But with no-one to skin her, she became anxious and scared. So she went to look for another hunter. Luckily for her, the rabbit was finally captured and her new owner brought her back to his home. And so, he skinned her day after day-

MALE FATE/MOTHER

-and the rabbit lived happily ever after.

MOTHER

And he would appear to me as the rabbit, skinned from head to foot.

Male Fate squeezes Mother who SCREAMS.

Silence. Normal lighting.

MOTHER

And here we were. In the midst of another war. Living with another hunter.

FEMALE FATE

Who gives us candy!

MOTHER

Who gives us candy. But it was manageable. Even though we lived in a contentious area, we had a home. We had a family. And father visited me every night, so I was never truly alone.

And then it happened. I was walking home from a friend's house...when the air raid sirens starting screaming from the tinny speakers-

SIRENS.

-and I started running, sprinting, because I didn't want to be alone if I happened to die - that was something everyone was afraid of in those days - 'if I die, I don't want to die alone.' The planes started flying past overhead, and I couldn't tell who they were, but home, I saw it, right in front of me. And as if being skinned wasn't enough...

The sound of a firebomb. Burning.

Then dead silence.

RED WASH.

MOTHER

My sister, my beautiful sister, she burned to death in front of me that day. The baby, she melted into her chest. And my mother went mad.

I was the only one left. And it was the Rats. They gave me candy, and they took away my family. From one hunter to another.

NORMAL LIGHTS.

Mother/MF/FF stares at Father.

MOTHER/MALE FATE/FEMALE FATE

From one hunter to another.

FATHER

Get me another drink.

MOTHER

My screams and his fists echo in the house from last night.

But I take my skinning, with a patient smile. I take my skinning like a good rabbit.

Daughter wanders back on stage, reading.

FATHER

Get me another drink.

MOTHER

Yes, sorry. I'll get it now.

Mother scurries off stage to get a drink.

Daughter stares after her with a disgusted look on her face.

DAUGHTER

Why don't you just get the drink yourself?

Father is lost in thought. Daughter goes over to him.

DAUGHTER

Did you hear me? Why don't you just get it yourself?

Father suddenly grabs her arm in a vice grip.

FATHER

I'm warning you, don't test me.

DAUGHTER

Is that a threat, father?

He slumps.

FATHER

No, it's a warning.

She shakes him off.

Mother walks back on stage and hand him his drink.

DAUGHTER

I should let you know that I invited someone over.
Someone important.

FATHER

What are you talking about?

DAUGHTER

He should be here any minute.

FATHER

He?

MOTHER

I don't think that's such a good idea.

DAUGHTER

And I have some things to tell you.

FATHER

It's always something, isn't it? First the girl, now
this...whatever this is.

DAUGHTER

Her name is-

FATHER

I don't care. Why can't you just be happy? Isn't this
enough for you?

MOTHER

You have a family, and a home.

DAUGHTER

You have to be fucking-

*Mother quickly rushes forward and grabs Daughter
and silences her.*

Daughter physically pushes her away.

Mother tries to appeal to her, but Daughter stands firm.

Mother is torn between Father and Daughter but she eventually gives up and returns to Father's side. Daughter sits and covers her face.

Daughter rolls her head.

SLIGHT BLUE WASH.

Female Fate comes up to her and kisses her cheek.

She touches Daughter's stomach and they smile at each other.

There is a KNOCKING.

NORMAL LIGHT.

Daughter answers the door and hugs Male Fate. She is still holding Female Fate's hand behind her back, but slowly lets go.

Daughter brings Male Fate onstage.

Father is attempting to control his anger.

Mother looks worried.

FATHER

You brought a man into my house.

DAUGHTER

Father, mother, this is-

FATHER

I don't care who this is. Get out!

MALE FATE

I'm sorry, I'll go-

DAUGHTER

No! Father, just listen to what I have to say.

Father rushes forward and grabs Male Fate.

FATHER

Didn't you hear me? I said, get the fuck out of my hou-

He stops. Peering at Male Fate. Suddenly he lets go, disgusted.

FATHER

A Dog. A fucking Dog. You brought a Dog into my house.

MOTHER

You know what they did to us. You know what they did to me!

FATHER

Get out.

MOTHER

Don't do this.

FATHER

You must be out of your fucking mind.

MOTHER

Why?

Daughter touches her stomach.

Dead silence.

RED WASH FADES IN.

Father goes to grab his hunting rifle.

HOWLING SCREAMS(?)

Father points it at Daughter and Male Fate.

Lights go out.

A GUNSHOT.

(cont'd)

(voice manipulated/warped/repeated)

The dog was an ugly mutt with shit and dirt matted in its tangled fur; but its death held a strange power over me, haunting my dreams for years.

MOTHER

(voice manipulated/warped/repeated)

From one hunter to another.

BLUE WASH.

DAUGHTER

It was something like this.

I used to hear God's voice. When the beatings got too bad, I would kneel down beside my bed and submit to them.

Hello? Can you hear me? Can you...can you feel me?

And they would whisper in my ear.

I'm here, they would say, I'm here.

I was so faithful, so wistful. I was the kid who would dream in her waking life. And dream nothing at all at night. I was the kid who would talk to the television and think the happy, beautiful people trapped behind the glass were her friends.

That's how he found me.

MALE FATE

A kid with too many dreams and too much faith.

I was the abandoned child of a Dog, left behind after the occupation to rot. But a couple of Rabbits took me in. They were living in poverty, as we all were back then, and they worked me hard.

They were neither my mother or my father but they were all I had in the world.

I was a simple child, we were a simple family, and my days were a simple happiness, despite the raging war.

Food was always scarce. So my obsession with food began with the vegetables I would pull from our farm, day after day after day.

Then, after the war, I started working at a restaurant as a kitchen hand.

It wasn't until years later when I realised that it wasn't food I was obsessed with. But with filling the hunger. The endless pit at the bottom of my stomach.

Food dried and turned into ash. I was desperate, am desperate, for anything, anyone to fill the hunger. My hunger. But then...but then...

DAUGHTER

I was still in school when I met him. I was in church, talking to God as always, when I noticed him. Hiding in the corner, in the shadows, staring blankly at the statues and the stained windows.

The first thing he said to me was:

MALE FATE

I'm trying to find faith.

DAUGHTER

So I gave him faith. In me, if nothing else.

And that was it. I stopped being a kid with too much faith, and too many dreams, and I became a woman with too much responsibility and too many fears.

And now it's come to this. My father. My mother. Their hatred. Their fears.

One gunshot.

NORMAL LIGHTS.

Father and Daughter are crouched on the ground, clutching the rifle.

Father looks shaken. Horrified.

FATHER

Kill it.

DAUGHTER

No.

FATHER

Then I can't be your father.

They stand, Daughter taking the rifle with her.

FATHER

I tried. I really did try.

DAUGHTER

You're barely human.

MOTHER

Don't you understand what they did to me? They took my family away. They drove your grandmother insane. They worked your grandfather to death. They destroyed us. Our country. Our identity.

DAUGHTER

He's still the father of my child. And he's not them. I'm not you. We're going to change everything. For her.

BLUE LIGHT SLIGHTLY FADES IN.

DAUGHTER

And then, they stopped talking to me. Father snapped. He became an old man overnight.

Father drops to his knees.

And mother...she took care of him, as she always did. But she was no longer my mother. She was no longer a woman. She was simply a rabbit.

Mother drops to her knees.

But I got out. I got out of that house, away from mother and father. And in a few months, we will become a mother and father.

Female Fate comes onstage.

Takes off Daughter's red mask. A blue one appears.

She curls up in front of Daughter and Male Fate.

As Daughter talks to her, she slowly stands up, 'growing'.

I'll love you as soon as I see you and though it will be difficult, the first few years will be wonderful. Your father will open up his own business and support us and I will try to be a better mother than mine ever was.

RED WASH FADES IN.

But as much as I try to escape them and their history...it's like a tick. It never goes away.

I will quickly realise that I had inherited my father's violence.

I will beat you from the age of 5 to the age of 17. I will justify my actions by thinking, this is what a parent does, this is what parenting is.

My father was never a good man. And I was never meant to be a good mother.

But I will try.

From my mother, I inherited her spite. Your husband's a hunter, she would tell me, years after our wedding, and he will skin you clean.

And though I'll still marry him, and I will love him, there will be times when I'll hate him and an age old war will begin to affect our relationship.

His ignorance and nationalism will meet my mother's spite and in that moment we will be neither human nor

(MORE)

DAUGHTER (cont'd)

parents nor lovers - we will be hunter and the rabbit, fighting for control. Sometimes it won't be clear who the hunter is or who the rabbit is, but only the anger and the hate will remain and that will fuel us.

And we will try, we will try so hard, to quench the hate.

And from the world, I inherited my cowardice.

When you turn fifteen, you will begin to question your sexuality. You will come to me and ask me my thoughts on the matter. And I'll tell you that I find the concept disgusting. You will laugh and pretend to be asking out of curiosity, but silently, you will be heart broken.

What I won't tell you is that I had a lover who was a woman and she will always haunt me, night and day. What I won't have the courage to tell you, is that I was in love with her for years and if I hadn't told my parents about her, I would have runaway with her. Because I am a coward, I won't be able to tell you that because of me, she was beaten to an inch of her life by my father and thrown out into the streets. She was too afraid to see me after that, and I lost the love of my life.

RED WASH FADE OUT. NORMAL LIGHTS FADE IN.

But as you grow older into a woman, certain and sure of yourself, I will grow with you. I will come to accept who you are as a human, woman, and lover. I will realise my father's violence and denounce him. I will love without the taint of history.

You are half dog, all hate.

FATHER

You are half dog, all hate.

MOTHER

You are half dog, all hate.

MALE FATE

You are half dog, all hate.

FEMALE FATE

I am half dog, all hate-

DAUGHTER

-but you *will* become my daughter.

Daughter removes Female Fates mask so a white one appears.

Female Fate is now in the spotlight, and Daughter sinks into the background.