

GOLDEN BLOOD EXTRACT

Merlynn Tong

Currency Press in association with Griffin Theatre Company

ACT 1

Scene 1

Town of Suicide

In an apartment. Singapore. GIRL 14, BOY 21. GIRL holds a KOALA stuffed toy.

BOY: So this is a little weird right?

GIRL: Ya¹. You didn't have to come upstairs/ to

BOY: /No no, it's my
Pleasure? I don't know.
But ya.

Beat.

GIRL: The house smells like ear wax.

Beat.

BOY: It's the stink of our dirty relatives
Three days of coming in and out like stray dogs.

GIRL: Where did you go every night?
Why didn't you sleep here?

BOY: Can't stand those dirty dogs.
Much less sleep with them like sardines.
I rather sleep downstairs.

GIRL: To be close to her?

BOY: (defensive) No.

Beat.

BOY: What the hell happened to this place?

¹ Singlish: Yes

Outside look so nice. Inside like dog shit.

GIRL: What? It's the same.

BOY: Look at all this dust
Where is the Chandelier?
And the furniture is all falling apart.
This is all branded expensive stuff you know
Why never upkeep?

GIRL: We don't have a helper anymore.

BOY: Girl
How long have you been living like this?

GIRL: She hasn't been well.

You know
Sometimes it's been, scary here

BOY: She is a scary woman/

GIRL: /No! I don't mean that she is scary
Just that, she hasn't been herself.

Now, the house feels different.

BOY: Less people.
Feng Shui says your house size should be balanced by the number of people
Or will attract ghost

GIRL: Do you think she's already a ghost?

BOY: I think there should be an admin process or something right?
Should take a while longer.

GIRL: Admin...

BOY: Do you watch TV?

GIRL: Ya.

BOY: Chinese TV?

GIRL: Ya.

BOY: You know they always have shows about how when people die
They have to go through a whole process

You know 18 levels of hell all that?

Anyway, on Chinese TV you always see the two guys with the very long tongue.

You know in black and white.

What are they called Girl?

GIRL: I don't know

BOY: You need to improve your Chinese.

They are called Hei Bai Wu Chang²

Say it.

GIRL: Hei Bai Wu Chang

BOY: They escort you to hell.

GIRL: What. You think she is in hell?

BOY: Don't worry, we are Chinese,

Everybody goes to hell.

It's not like white people hell.

It's a normal place

You just have to pass through

Like passing customs when you go to Malaysia

Then there's like 10 courts in Chinese hell right?

Imagine the admin process?

Took them 6 months to get a court date for my last incident.

So in conclusion,

I don't think she is a ghost yet.

Because of the admin process.

GIRL: Ok.

But she is not Taoist.

Or Buddhist

She's Catholic.

BOY: You've been brainwashed by her.

She is Chinese.

Full stop.

All Chinese people have to go through the same admin process.

GIRL: Even Singaporean-Chinese...

² Mandarin: Literally means "Black and White Impermanence". They are two deities in Chinese folk religion in charge of escorting the spirits of the dead to the Underworld. Google them, they look fucked up.

BOY: Even Singaporean-Chinese-Catholic-Christian or any other Hallelujah religion.

Beat.

BOY: Those piece of shit vulture relatives we have
What did they take?

GIRL: All her Gucci, Armani and Versace clothes.

BOY: All of them have zero fashion sense. Dress like suaku³.
They take for what?

GIRL: They even ate the special nata de coco she bought for me from Malaysia.

BOY: Those vultures took what they wanted and disappeared.

GIRL: Because we have no money

BOY: No. Girl. No.
I refuse to believe that.

GIRL: What?

BOY: That we have no money.

GIRL: Mummy only had \$100 in her POSB bank account.
I checked.

BOY: But girl, think about this.
Daddy had millions.
She couldn't have spent it all in the 7 years since he died.

Maybe it's hiding in the house. Help me look.

He starts looking. She doesn't.

GIRL: We had no other income. She didn't have a job.

BOY: I mean, there must at least be gold somewhere right?
What kind of Chinese would she be if she didn't even hide some gold in the house?

GIRL: Remember the gold anklet that we both had as babies?
It was so small. And our gold bars as gifts for our births?
She used to keep it in this box—

³ Hokkien: Literally mountain turtle. To describe a person with very little knowledge; similar usage to a country bumpkin.

BOY: —Where?

GIRL: Huh?

BOY: The gold. The anklets?

Girl.

Where is it?

GIRL: —

It's gone Kor.

BOY: How can she sell that shit?

Heartless bitch.

That is our birthright.

GIRL: She was struggling.

BOY: She left us with nothing.

Nothing.

GIRL: But she said I have inheritance coming.

Big inheritance.

BOY: Lies and bullshit.

GIRL: Even the superhero man who came said that.

BOY: What superhero?

GIRL: I dunno, some guy came to the funeral and said he is like a superhero for orphans.

He came to check if we are okay.

BOY: Why he never check on me?

GIRL: You are already 21 years old. Adult.

Anyway, he gave me a folder and told me to call him anytime, but I don't have his number.

He picks it up and reads it.

GIRL: I hate that word.

BOY: What word?

GIRL: Orphan.

It sounds so pathetic.

BOYS: Lies and Bullshit.

GIRL: What?

BOY: Nothing in these documents say you have any inheritance coming.
It just says that you need to choose a guardian.
Didn't this superhero guy explain this to you?

GIRL: Sort of. But he focused on telling me a bunch of very nice things like "What won't kill you makes you stronger" and "In the end, only good will happen".

BOY: Cliched rubbish.

GIRL: It actually did make me feel better.

But Mummy definitely said I will have an inheritance.
She said that even if she dies, she will take care of me forever.

BOY: That's just her being drunk and talking rubbish.

GIRL: But she said—

BOY: —Enough.
The only good thing about her being dead is I don't have to listen to her crap anymore.
So stop telling me what "she said"

End of Extract.