

The Nine Moons of Fukushima

CHARACTERS:

Hiromitsu – Male 20's - 40's
Oji-san – Male 60+
Yuko – Female 20's - 40's
Okubi (goddess) - any
Yokai (demon) - any
Off-stage Voice

SETTING:

A vast scene of ocean wreckage, from here to the horizon. There is the faintest impression of land all the way upstage. The surface of the ocean is covered in wood, plastic, trash, toys, every imaginable type of debris. Several bodies are mixed into the mess, no faces are visible. The only large piece of debris is the top corner of the roof of a slowly sinking house. The house is tilted so only a rough pyramid is above the surface, just enough room for one person to sit on, but never comfortably. To the far right of the stage, there is a high, isolated platform occupied by Okubi. At the base of the platform crouches a yokai (demon) with a collection of rattles, drums and wood blocks.

(Lights come up on the stage, revealing the endless wreckage. Stage right, Okubi is hunched into a ball, back to the audience, her robes disguising her true size and shape. The sound of rushing water is heard as the lights rise, reaching a crescendo with the lights.)

HIROMITSU

Gasp!

(Hiromitsu emerges from under a pile of wreckage, as though from underwater. He works desperately to fill his lungs with air. In a panic, he claws his way up on to the roof-top, heaving and sobbing. He is filthy and missing one boot. Okubi rises and opens her fan as she sings kubuki-style to the audience.)

OKUBI

Hiromitsu! Hiromitsu! Rise and meet the light. Poor, poor, Hiromitsu. Each breath will cost you more than you can pay. Rise! Rise!

(The Yokai makes a huge ruckus with his noise-makers.)

(Hiromitsu wrenches himself up and scrambles around the roof-top, looking in all directions.)

HIROMITSU

Yuko! Yuko! Yuko!!!!!!!

(Hiromitsu looks and listens.)

HIROMITSU

Yuuuuuuuuuuuuuuukoooooooooooo!

(pause)

HIROMITSU

Help! Help! Help me!

(pause)

HIROMITSU

Anyone!

(Hiromitsu laughs.)

HIROMITSU

I'm alive! Alive!

(Hiromitsu does an obscene little dance. He loses his balance and almost falls back in the ocean. He freezes and grabs back onto the rooftop with hysterical strength.)

HIROMITSU
(sobs)

(The Yokai begins marking the time with wood blocks, tock tock tock tock tock, etc. Hiromitsu moves through different positions, sitting, standing, trying to lay down, poking at the garbage around him, looking at the sky, sitting etc.)

OKUBI
(sings)

Alone to the horizon. Blackened water all around. A castle floating in the ocean, alone, alone among the damned.

(Hiromitsu takes an interest in the muck around him. He carefully digs out a batting helmet and puts it on. He finds a lunchbox, empty. He finds a large comic book. He finds something wet and dead that he throws back in fear and disgust.)

HIROMITSU
(muttering)

Garbage. It's all garbage. Have to clean it all up. I bet the government will have to clean it up. Can't just let it sit out here. People will complain. Ruins the view. People like a nice view, mountains, ocean, hundreds of miles, nature, mountains, just so it looks nice, can't just leave it here..

(Hiromitsu realizes he's babbling and shuts up. He examines himself carefully for the first time, checking his arms and legs. He takes off the helmet, looks inside it, and puts it back on. He tries to find a comfortable place to sit, again. He looks at the comic book. He looks at the roof under his feet.)

HIROMITSU
Some house. (He thumps it.) At least it is a house. (He looks around.) Better than most. Still. A fixer-upper. Perfect for a young couple.

(Hiromitsu gets to his feet.)

HIROMITSU
Yuko!

(The Yokai makes a crashing noise. Hiromitsu whips around.)

HIROMITSU

Yuko!

(pause)

HIROMITSU

Yuko.

(The Yokai laughs silently.)

(Hiromitsu sits and pulls a pen out of his pocket and starts to write on a page of the comic book.)

HIROMITSU

On March 11th, I was with my wife Yuko. My name is Hiromitsu...

(Hiromitsu shoves the comic book into the lunch box and collapses into a ball around it, sobbing.)

(The Yokai begins tapping a beat again, tock tock tock tock... Hiromitsu cries or sleeps or maybe both. The lights fade to nighttime.)

(Okubi dances and opens her fan to show the moon.)

OKUBI

(sings)

Darkness falls on Fukoshimi, it rests much better in the night, dreams can't be worse than waking in this life.

(From somewhere upstage comes Hiromitsu's grandfather, OJI-SAN, a hunched old man. He carefully picks his way over the surface, observing the wreckage with great interest. He seemingly can walk on the water.)

OJI-SAN

Hey. Hey. Hiro. Wake up.

(Hiro continues to doze.)

OJI-SAN

Hey! Lazy! Up! Wake up. (Oji-san sighs.)

OJI-SAN

Hiro, It's time for baseball!

HIROMITSU

Huh? I'm ready, I...

(Hiro jerks awake and almost falls off the roof.)

OJI-SAN

(Laughs)

You never change. Sleepyhead! Up!

HIROMITSU

Oji-san?

OJI

Who do I look like? Your grandmother?

HIROMITSU

You've been...

OJI

Dead? Yes. I've been dead. Very rude of you to mention it. I went to a lot of trouble to come see check on you, you might try, "Hi Grandpa" or "nice to see you, grandpa" or "gosh, you're looking handsome, grandpa"

(Hiromitsu just stares.)

OJI

(sighs)

I suppose you've been having a rough time.

(Oji pokes around the edges of the rooftop for a bit.)

OJI

Nice place you've got here, Hiro.

HIRO

Yes...

OJI

It looked a little better the last time I saw it. This is your house, isn't it?

HIRO

Yes. It stayed with me. I stayed with it. Together, we stayed together.

OJI

Pity about the neighborhood. (Oji pokes around some more, at a loss.) Nobody else around?

HIRO

I'm alone. I think. I can't find... anyone else.

OJI

You were always my favorite, Hiro.

HIRO

Can I get out of here?

OJI

Difficult to say. There's helicopters and things, boats, I don't know. Hiro, do you remember going to Shinjuku with me when you were little?

HIRO

Shinjuku.

OJI

I wanted you to see the office building where your father worked, all you wanted to do was to watch the trains.

HIRO

Oji-san, please I need to get home.

OJI

Thousands and thousands of people, all rushing through the station, everyone in a hurry.

HIRO

Yuko, have you seen Yuko?

OJI

Then we went to a baseball game. You got your first real baseball cap.

HIRO

Where's my wife? Where is she?

(The yokai starts drumming and builds to a series of explosive sounds. There are flashes of electric blue light in the distance, Oji-san and Hiro both turn and look. The Yokai laughs silently to itself.)

HIRO

What...

OJI

The Fukushima reactor. You think you're the only one with problems?

HIRO

Oji-san...

OJI

Ten thousand years, that reactor will burn for ten thousand years.

HIRO

I need to find Yuko.

OJI

It's fitting, don't you think? (He begins to stroll away.)
Most graves only last a few hundred.

HIRO

Oji! Oji-san!

(Oji wanders away into the darkness.)

(Hiro stares after Oji, confused. He looks all around. He carefully sits. He opens the lunchbox and looks inside. He closes it again.)

(The yokai again beats the wooden blocks, tock tock tock tock... Hiro curls up, back to the audience and dozes.)

(pause)

(The lights warm to indicate the sun rising. As they warm, Okubi opens the fan to show the sun and sings.)

OKUBI

(sings)

How long does love burn in the heart? Ten thousand years to die, bonded in the very core, unceasing radiant fire.

(Hiro stirs and stretches, showing how stiff and tired he is. He carefully approaches the edge of the roof and paws at the water. After hesitating, he scoops out a handful and drinks it.)

HIRO

(spits)

Shit! (spits again)

(Hiro sits glumly for a moment. He looks at the water again. He reaches in and pulls out a tattered sheet covered in cartoon figures. He shakes it out. He waves it in the air. He waves it like a bull fighting cape. He waves it as high as he can.)

HIRO

Hello!

HIRO

Hello!

HIRO

Hellooooooooooooooooooooo!

HIRO

Hellooooooooooooooooooooo Hirooooooooooooooooooooo.

HIRO

Hirooooooooooooooooooooo Hellooooooooooooooooooooo.

(Hiro gives up waving it and ties it on like a cape.)

HIRO

Hero Hiro.

HIRO

Hero Hiromitsu.

HIRO

Captain Hero Hiro.

(Hiro poses like superman flying.)

YOKAI

Bum bum ba bum bum, ba bum bum... (sings the superman theme song)

(Hiro grins at the Yokai and Okubi and waves to them, still posed as superman, they wave back. He suddenly breaks and rubs his eyes, no longer seeing them. He stops, pulls off the cape and sits again.)

(Hiro rummages in the trash again and pulls out a broken Buddha statue.)

HIRO

Hey! Lucky.

(Hiro makes several attempts to balance the statue on the roof, but the pitch makes it impossible. Sadly, he tosses it back into the garbage.)

HIRO

Guess not.

(Hiro sits. He looks around. He tires of sitting. He opens the lunch box and takes out the comic book and pen. He writes.)

HIRO

I just want to report that I am still alive on the twelfth and was with my wife, Yuko, yesterday. She was born on January 12.

(Hiro puts the comic book back into the lunch box and folds his arms around it. He sighs and buries head in his arms.)

(The Yokai goes back to keeping time again, tock tock tock tock. Time passes.)

(Hiro sits up suddenly, clutching his stomach.)

HIRO

Oh god.

(He sighs and looks around. Hiro makes a careful examination of his pockets, not really expecting to find anything. He freezes. In his side pocket he discovers a tic-tac container with ONE mint left. It is the most precious thing in the world.)

HIRO

Oh yes.

(Hiro eats the mint.)

HIRO

(Orgasmically.)

Mmmmm. Mmmmmmmmm. Oh my god. It's so good.

(Hiro shakes out the empty box.)

HIRO

Gone.

(Hiro shivers suddenly, and pulls the tattered cape around him. He huddles.)

HIRO

When I get back, I'll have to build a new house. We'll have to build a new house. Yuko never liked this one that much. "Not enough sunlight on the south side". Sure. I wonder if we can have it in the same place. Oh god! The chickens! I bet the damned chickens drowned. Yuko will have a fit. The black one was her favorite. (pause) I'll have to get more chickens.

(Hiro looks around then snuggles deeper into his cape. He glances at the Buddha statue in the muck and then talks it.)

HIRO

They must be looking for me by now. Probably started out looking for all the women first. Probably, they took Yuko all the way into Osaka, to the hospital, just to be sure. That's ok. It's better to be sure. (Hiro yawns.) She can stay with Akumi, visit with the cousins. Or maybe, she refused to go. Yeah, that's more like Yuko, she probably refused to go and is standing outside the police station, telling them to come find me, make sure they come find me. That's what she'd do. (Hiro yawns.) It would be better if she went home though, and crawled into bed. I bet she's so tired after standing out there all night. She should just put on that cute nightgown and crawl into bed. Pull the blankets up. Right over her head. Like a turtle. I bet she misses me though, her feet get so cold without me, she does that you know (Hiro yawns) puts her cold feet on the back of my legs, they're just like ice. I always tell her that she's made of ice, but it's not true. I like it when she warms up her feet on me. I can tell she's there when I'm sleeping... (yawns) I'm... can... feel... it...

(Hiro yawns and nods off. The lights transition into night again as Okubi sings and opens her fan to show the moon.)

OKUBI

Dream, O Dream, O Hiromitsu, take comfort in my arms,
Dream, O Dream, O.

(Hiromisu slumps over in his sleep.)

(The Yokai begins marking time with his wood blocks, this time at a slow and somber pace. Tock. Tock. Tock.)

(Yuko shrouded in all in white, with her face covered, appears from the darkness. She proceeds at slow pace, one step at a time across the water toward Hiromitsu. As she nears his sleeping form, she hesitates for a moment, and then is driven on by the sound of the block. She exits past the Yokai and Okubi who watch her pass. The Yokai stops as she exits.)

(Hiro awakes. The Yokai instantly goes into a mad percussive frenzy as Okubi wails.)

HIRO

Yuko! Yuko! (Hiro scrambles around madly.) Help! Help! My wife! Help my wife! Yuko!

(Hiro lurches and falls off the back of the roof. He instantly climbs back up, retching and shaking, laughing and sobbing. The Yokai and Okubi fall silent, watching. Hiro crouches with the cape pulled around him and rocks on the balls of his feet, holding the lunchbox to his chest.)

HIRO

(muttering)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

(The lights drop almost to black. The Yokai begins keeping time again, tock tock tock tock. The light come back up to full daylight. Hiro is now sprawled out on the roof, with the lunchbox tucked under an arm. He has lost the helmet, and the cape.)

(Hiro rolls over listlessly. He looks at the sun.)

HIRO

I'm late for work. Mr. Mori will be angry. I wonder if Mr Mori is late, too. Maybe the mill floated away. Why not? It's made of wood, just like this fine house of mine.

(Hiro considers this.)

HIRO

I float. Wood floats. Buddha floats. Even my lunchbox floats.

HIRO

She must have been by the barn. I saw her in the barn. Maybe the chickens? I could have dreamed it. Houses floating, trees, rocks, cars, trucks, wood, lunchboxes, buddhas, floating..

HIRO

I'm far out now. I wonder if they're even looking this far out. (pause) Fishermen must come this far out.

(Hiro swoons.)

HIRO

No good.

(Hiro shakily leans out and scoops up another handful of water and tries to drink it. He gags.)

HIRO

Oil. Full of oil.

(Hiro fumbles open the lunchbox and writes another note on the comic book.)

HIRO

I think it's the 15th. I'm in a lot of trouble now. I'm sorry for dying before you. Please forgive me.

(Hiro closes the lunchbox and hugs it.)

HIRO

(To the lunchbox)

Is it really the 15th? I can't remember. You were always the accountant. Always knew where everything was. I was lost without you.

HIRO

I think this will go away soon.

HIRO

I'm tired Yuko.

(An off-stage voice calls from the back of the audience)

VOICE

Hello! Are you there! Can you hear me!

HIRO

Hello?

VOICE

We can't reach you it's not safe! Can you swim to us?

HIRO

Leave?

VOICE

Hurry! You have to leave! Is there anyone else there?

HIRO

My wife!

(The Yokai plays a shakuhachi while Okubi does a slow sad dance showing both sides of her fan.)

(Hiro starts to climb down, pauses, climbs back up, presses his cheek against the lunchbox for a long moment, then leaves it balanced on top of the roof.)

HIRO

(hoarse)

My wife is missing.

(Hiro climbs down and exits through the audience moving slowly, afraid.)

(Fade to black)