

Okiku and the Missing Tenth Plate

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Okiku counts nine plates from the depths of a well, but cannot reach ten. Her punishment survives as a repeated sound in one of Japan's best-known ghost traditions.

STATUS	A recorded story, with its history attached
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	Himeji and wider Japanese tradition
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Ghosts & hauntings
STORY HISTORY	Old plate-mansion legend; Hokusai print around 1831

THE ACCOUNT

The counting is the part that will not end. In the plate-mansion legend, a servant named Okiku is blamed for a missing or broken plate from a valuable set. Her master kills her and throws her into a well. Afterward her voice returns from below, counting the remaining dishes, reaching nine and breaking into a cry. The task continues beyond any possibility of completing it. It is a haunting made from arithmetic: one absent object holds a person inside an accusation she cannot correct.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Himeji Castle's official guide attaches the servant-and-plate story to its Okiku Well. The National Gallery of Victoria's Hokusai exhibition labels retell the counting version beside The Mansion of the Plates, a print dated around 1831. The two sources preserve a place-associated legend and a historical artwork, rather than a verified murder file. Details vary between regional and theatrical versions.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

The missing tenth plate makes the repetition painfully clear. A listener knows what number should come next, so the silence before the cry does much of the work. The haunting is already present in the unfinished count.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

Himeji Castle visitor guide: Okiku ido Well

Himeji Castle

<https://www.himejicastle.jp/en/guide/pdf/tou01.pdf>

Hokusai artwork labels: The mansion of the plates

National Gallery of Victoria

https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Hokusai_LargePrintLabel_170720.pdf

RETURN TO THE STORY

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<https://u225x.com/record/STR-GHOST-044>