

Comprehension quiz



The Girl In the Bathroom

In Japan, the schools contain an infernal secret. If you go into the girl's bathroom on the third floor of the building, and walk to the third stall, you might find her.

"You have to knock 3 times and call her name," a Code Switch reader named Jessica tweeted at us.

"When you open the stall door, a little girl in a red skirt will be there."

The little girl with the bob haircut is Hanako-san. She wants friends to play with, maybe. Or perhaps she wants to drag you to Hell — through the toilet.

"Depending on which part of Japan you live in, she may have a bloody hand and grab you, or be a lizard that devours you," Jessica said. "Although I am getting scared just thinking about her right now."

Hanako-san has become a fixture of Japanese urban folklore over the last 70 years. The most popular origin story for the tale holds that during World War II, a schoolgirl was using the bathroom when a bomb fell on top of the building. The school collapsed on top of Hanako-san, who has been trapped there ever since.

But Hanako isn't the only schoolgirl who haunts Japan's school bathrooms. Kashima Reiko, another young girl, was said to have been cut in half by a train. Now her disfigured spirit inhabits bathrooms, asking children who enter the stalls where her legs are. The legend goes that if Kashima Reiko is not satisfied with their answer, she will rip their legs off.

Source: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/10/24/358555307/the-creepiest-ghost-and-monster-stories-from-around-the-world>