

Banchō Sarayashiki

Japan

MULTIPLE CHOICE

A LONG TIME AGO, there was a beautiful woman named Okiku. She worked as a maid for a samurai named Aoyama and his family. Aoyama was madly in love with her. Okiku did not feel the same way, and often she had to turn down his proposals.

Having exhausted all his other options, Aoyama decided to try and trick Okiku into marrying him. One night while she was asleep, he hid one of the ten plates in the family's collection of fine porcelain. "Perfect. She'll think she was the one to lose it, and she'll have to come to me to for help! Then I'll take care of the matter, and she'll have to marry me because I helped her."

The next day, Okiku noticed that one of the plates was missing. Knowing that Aoyama and his family would assume she stole it, she frantically began counting the plates over and over. Alas, there were only nine.

Okiku became terrified that the family may send her to jail for stealing. As Aoyama was fetching water from the well, Okiku came running up to him in tears. "Where is it? The tenth plate is missing! Oh, that has been in the family for years; your father will be furious!"

"There there," Aoyama said. "You needn't worry. I won't tell my father that the plate has gone missing... if you will be my bride."

Okiku couldn't believe it. How dare he bargain with her in that way! She was disgusted. "Never. I don't love you, and I never will."

Aoyama couldn't contain his anger and pushed her into the well. To this day, if you wander by the well at night, you'll hear a soft count to nine. At ten, the voice unleashes a piercing shriek!



1. Why was Okiku scared when she noticed the missing plate?
 - a. She worried the dog had eaten it.
 - b. She thought a ghost had stolen it.
 - c. She could be sent to jail for stealing.
2. Okiku was angry at Aoyama because:
 - a. He tricked her into thinking she had lost the plate.
 - b. He blamed her for losing the plate.
 - c. He told the police she had lost the plate.
3. Why do you think Okiku's ghost stops counting at nine?
 - a. Nine is her favorite number
 - b. She was only able to find nine plates
 - c. Aoyama proposed to her nine times

