

## CASE: The Ghost of Hanako

**LOCATION:** Japan

This urban legend takes place in a washroom—specifically, the third stall from the end of any elementary school washroom (in some versions, it's on the third floor). In order to call Hanako, you need to knock three times on her stall door. This is usually accompanied by calling out, "Are you there, Hanako-san?" If you are greeted with a reply, "Yes, I'm here!" you can push open the stall door to reveal Hanako. Said to be a little girl with bobbed black hair and a red skirt, Hanako-san will either vanish or you will be pulled into the toilet.



**WITNESS:** Mizuki Kimura, 4th grader at Numazawa Grammar School:

Just before the lunch bell rang, my friend Hanako went to the bathroom. When she didn't come back after a few minutes, I went to look for her because I didn't want her to be late for class. I went into the third floor bathroom and saw that all the stall doors were open except for the third one from the wall, so I thought she must be in there. I knocked and said, "Are you there, Hanako-san?" She answered, "Yes, I'm here!" I thought her voice sounded strange. It didn't sound like her, but who else could it be? The door opened and I saw a girl who was not Hanako. Hanako has long hair, but this girl's was short. Our uniform has a blue skirt, but this girl was wearing a red one. Most of all, I remember her eyes, which were red, just like her skirt. The next thing I knew, Teacher was calling my name and when I opened my eyes, I saw that I was lying on the bathroom floor.

**WITNESS:** Hideo Fujimoto, janitor at Miyoshi School:

I was cleaning the bathrooms after everyone had gone for the day. I was the only person left on campus. I went in to the girl's restroom, but one of the doors—the third from the end—was locked. Sometimes kids like to play around and lock the doors from the inside, then crawl or climb out, so I wondered if a kid was goofing off in there. I knocked on the door and said, "Hello? Is someone in there? Do you need me to call your parents? Hello? Are you there?" I stopped and listened for a second, but it was silent. Then, suddenly, I heard a faint voice behind the door. I threw it open, and there was a girl there. I swear I saw a girl there. She stared right back at me! But then I blinked, and then she was gone. It went silent again. I dropped my mop and ran home.

**How is the janitor's story different from the legend?**

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**How is Mizuki's story different from the janitor's?**

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