

MAISON HOMURA

THE WOMEN WHO CAME BACK



*Five women. Five true addresses.
What each one came back for.*

*Five women. Each came
back for one thing.*

- I A promise kept.
- II One plate missing.
- III An answer, always wrong.
- IV A stolen face.
- V One coin, every night.

Start with the snow. →



*She spared one man. He
should have kept quiet.*



The Snow Woman

Yuki-onna · 雪女

A storm catches two woodcutters at the river. The ferryman has gone home. They shut themselves into his hut, one door, no window, and the wind makes the walls creak like a ship.

The old man sleeps. So, at last, does the boy, Minokichi.

Snow on his face wakes him. The door is open. A woman in white bends over the old man and breathes on him. Her breath is bright as smoke.

She turns to the boy. Lower. Lower. Her face almost touches his.

She stops.

"You are so young," she whispers. "I will not hurt you now. But if you ever tell anyone, even your mother, I will know."

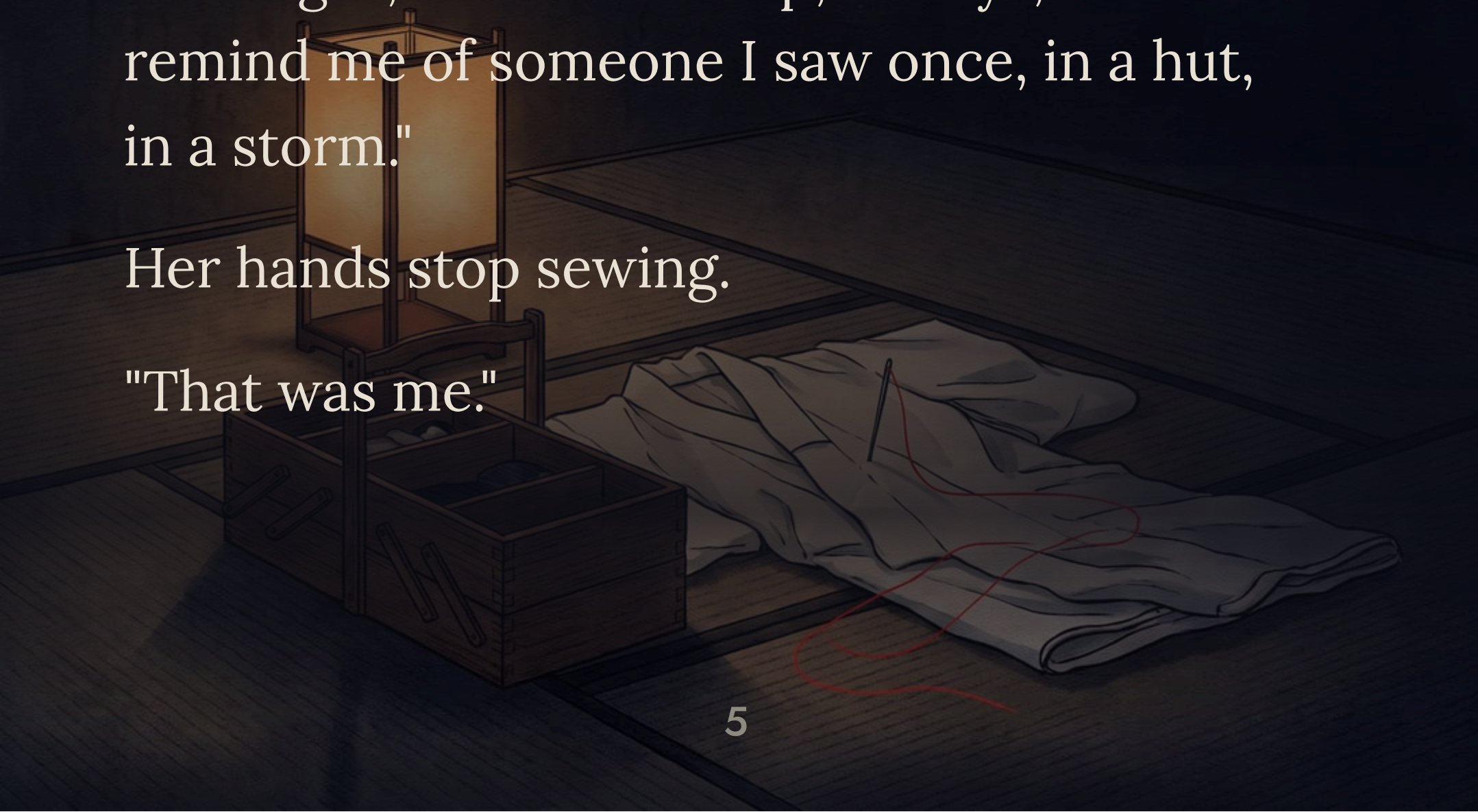
He reaches for the old man's face. It is ice.

A year later, on the road, Minokichi meets a girl named Yuki. He marries her. Ten children. She never grows old.

One night, under the lamp, he says, "You remind me of someone I saw once, in a hut, in a storm."

Her hands stop sewing.

"That was me."



I · WHERE SHE STILL IS

Chōfu Bridge, Ōme, western Tokyo. A stone there marks the Snow Woman's place.

Hearn's storyteller came from this village, not from the city of Chōfu.

Lafcadio Hearn, Kwaidan (1904), told with fewer words. In his version she then melts into mist.





*Every night, a voice in
a well counts to nine.*

||

The Woman Who Counts

Okiku · お菊

Okiku keeps ten plates for a samurai house in Himeji.
Ten, never nine. That is her whole duty.

A man in the house wants her. She says no.

One morning he hides a plate. Then he calls
for the set.

Okiku lifts them out one at a time and counts.

One. Two. Three.

Her voice stays steady until the last plate.



Nine.

She counts again. Nine.

A missing plate is a crime. The man who hid it makes her an offer: he will clear her name if she goes with him.

She says no a second time.

They throw her down the well.

Now, at night, a voice rises from it, counting slowly. One. Two. Three. All the way to nine.

Then the counting stops, and the weeping begins.

She cannot say ten. Ten is the plate he took.

II . WHERE SHE STILL IS

Himeji Castle, Hyōgo.
Okiku's Well, where visitors
still stand and look down.

*A legend with many versions. In some, the
counting ends when someone calls out "ten."*



|||

The Woman in the Mask

Kuchisake-onna · 口裂け女

Dusk. A child is walking home alone. At the corner,
the streetlamp has just come on.

Under it stands a woman in a white surgical mask.

"Am I pretty?"

Versions differ on which answer is safe. Every one
agrees on this: the child must answer.

She lifts the mask.

"Even like this?"

A stranger in a surgical mask asks you one question.



III . WHERE SHE STILL IS

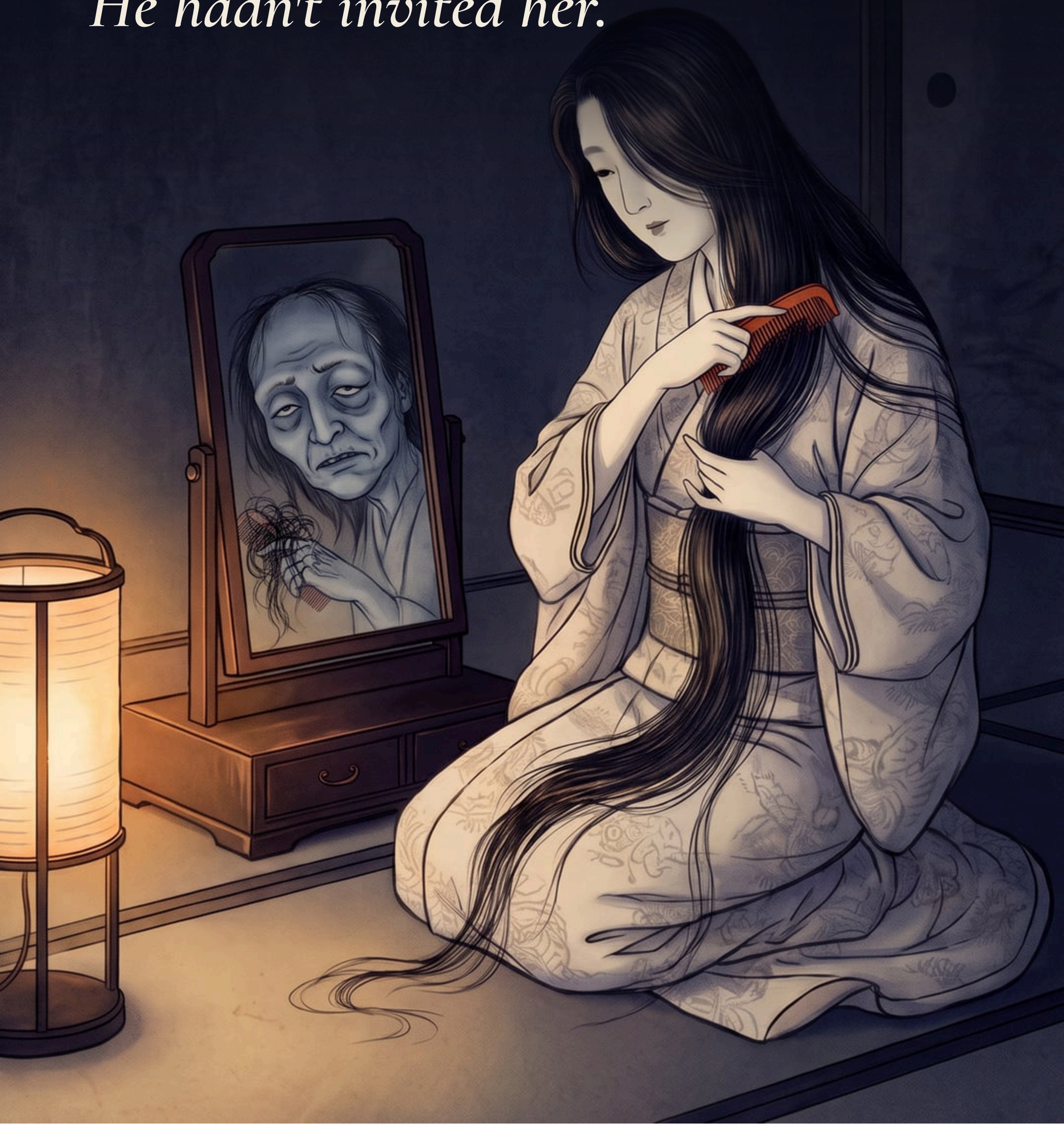
Gifu, 1979. She has no shrine, only a date.

On 26 January a newspaper printed the rumour. By spring, in some places, parents walked children home.

A modern urban legend. Versions differ on what she asks and what saves you.



*She came to the wedding.
He hadn't invited her.*



The Wife in the Play

Oiwa · お岩

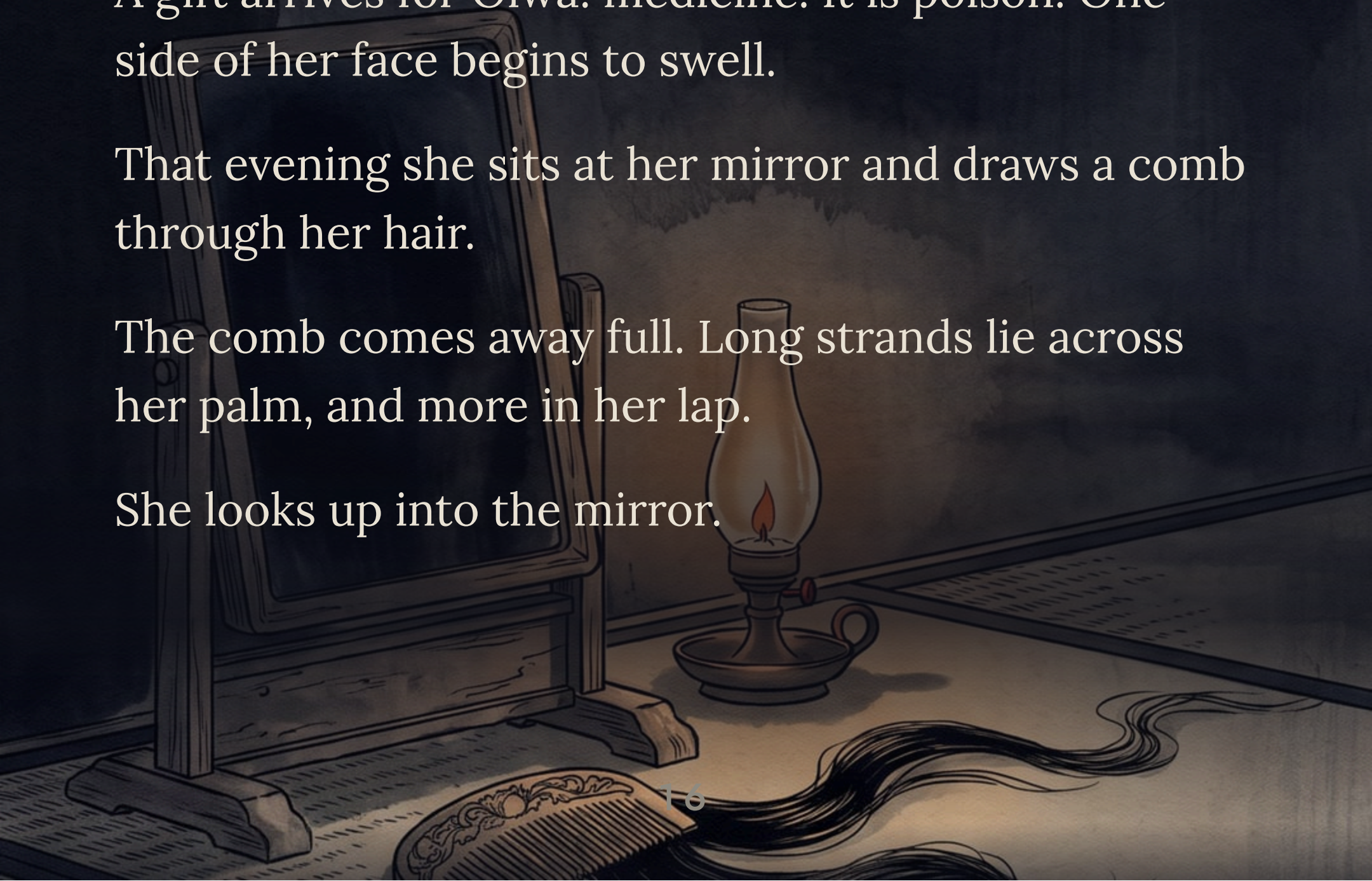
Iemon wants a richer wife. A wealthy family has a granddaughter, Oume, and Oiwa, his wife, is in the way.

A gift arrives for Oiwa: medicine. It is poison. One side of her face begins to swell.

That evening she sits at her mirror and draws a comb through her hair.

The comb comes away full. Long strands lie across her palm, and more in her lap.

She looks up into the mirror.



Oiwa dies. Iemon marries Oume anyway.

On the wedding night he wakes in the dark, a cold on the back of his neck. His bride lies beside him, and she has Oiwa's face.

He reaches for his sword. He does not hesitate.

The head rolls across the mats. It is Oume's.



IV . WHERE SHE STILL IS

Oiwa Inari Tamiya,
Yotsuya, Tokyo. It is said
that casts and crews go
there to ask her blessing
before they stage her play.

*From Tsuruya Nanboku IV's kabuki play,
1825. Her grandfather dies the same
night. Accounts differ on the poison.*

*Why would a dead
woman buy candy?*



✓

The Mother Who Bought Candy

Kosodate-yūrei · 子育て幽霊

Kyoto, late. A candy seller is closing up when a woman steps into his lamplight. Pale. Thin. Dressed in white. She buys one piece of candy and pays with one coin. Her hand is cold. She says nothing.

The next night, she comes again. And the night after.

He grows uneasy. One night he follows her through the dark, as far as a graveyard.

She is gone.

And from under the ground, he hears a baby crying.

He fetches help, and they dig.

In the grave lies a woman, dead. Beside her,
a child, alive.

Every night she had climbed out of the
earth with one coin, to feed him the only
way she could.

One piece of candy at a time.

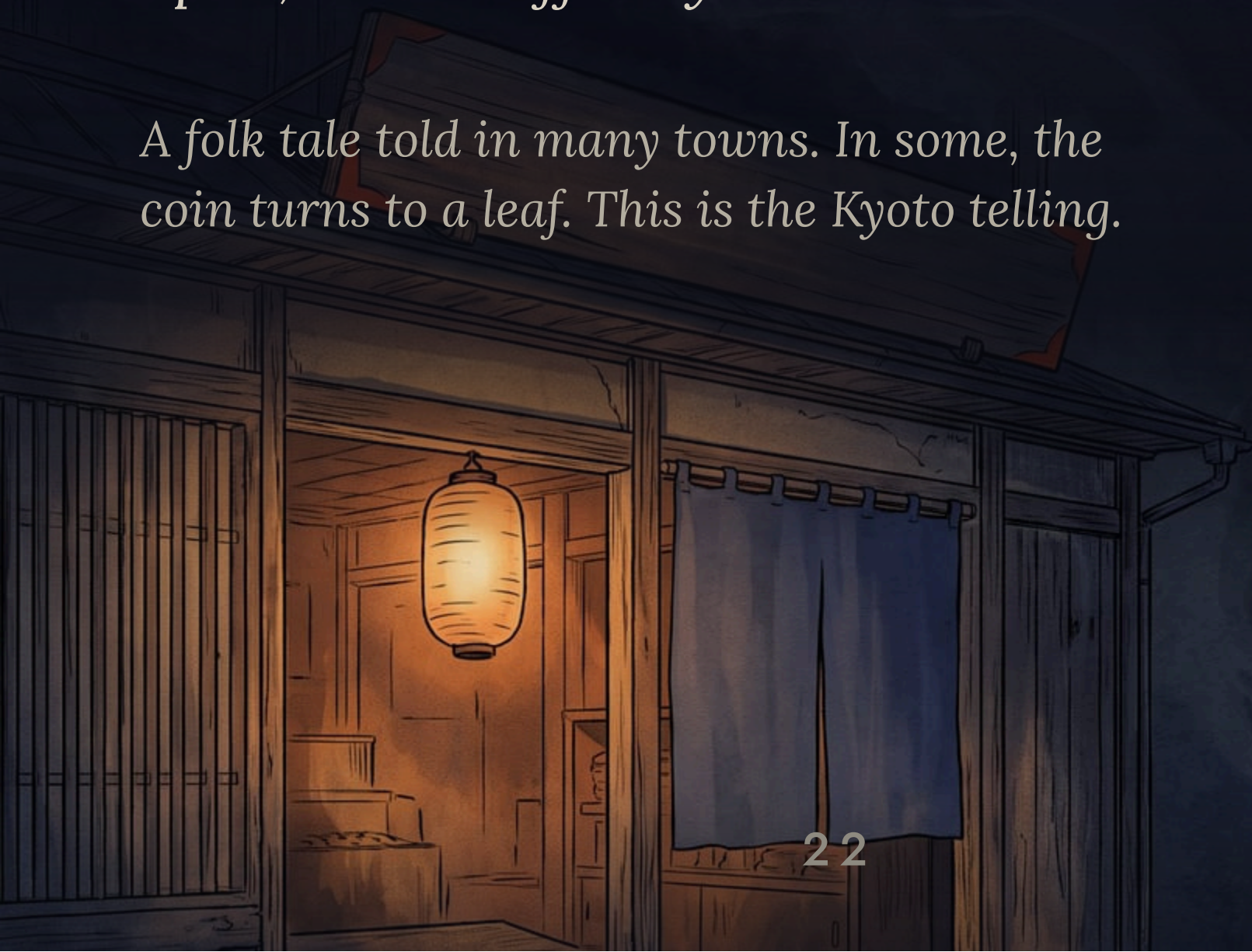


V . WHERE SHE STILL IS

Minatoya, Higashiyama, Kyoto.
The shop says it opened in
1599 and still sells that candy.

*Reviews from 2026 describe it
open; hours differ by source.*

*A folk tale told in many towns. In some, the
coin turns to a leaf. This is the Kyoto telling.*



*A silence you've kept.
A count you can't finish.
A question you keep asking.
A face you were never allowed to show.
Someone who gave you their last.*

Which one is yours?



MAISON HOMURA · MADE IN JAPAN

MAISON HOMURA

Five true addresses.



BOOK II

The next book is The Objects That Woke Up.

The story goes that a tool kept for a hundred years grows a spirit. The ones thrown away grow angry.

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Tsukumogami: from the Tsukumogami Emaki, a picture scroll. The figure of a hundred years is symbolic.

*If one of these women stayed with you,
pass her on. If you tell it, tell it softly.*

The snow is listening.

Old things remember. Maison Homura keeps
a few: authentic vintage Japanese pieces,
made in Japan. Visit us at maisonhomura.com.



MAISON HOMURA . FUKUOKA