

# Lotte Plaat

Lotte Plaat (1895-1979) was a Dutch woman who in her thirties developed psychic abilities. These were confirmed by investigating scientists. She showed a particular facility for psychometry, able by handling an object to discern true facts about its owner and past events associated with it.

## Life

Lotte Plaat-Mahlstedt was born on 30 December 1895 in Groningen, the Netherlands. She received a good education and was fluent in several languages. During the late 1920s her psychic faculties were tested by investigators in Germany, England, and the Netherlands. She married baron Otto von Strahl, a diplomat, on 27 May 1933. The couple lived for fifteen years in Berlin and South Africa. In 1947 they moved to California. In Hollywood, Plaat became a celebrity for her psychic readings. She died in Los Angeles in 1979.[1](#)

## Psychic Activities

Lotte Plaat, as she is referred to in research reports, discovered psychic abilities around 1927 while recovering from a serious illness, and began to make a reputation as a clairvoyant. She specialized in psychometry, experiencing visions when she handled antique objects or items belonging to individuals living or recently deceased, such as jewellery, bones, gravel stones, garments, letters, match boxes, and the like. Unlike most psychics in this period, she did not need to go into a trance in order to achieve this.

In 1929 she took part in [successful experiments](#) carried out by scientists in Berlin. The experts compared her descriptions, and the various identifications they contained, with affidavits, testimonies, and historical records, finding a high degree of concordance.

Similar tests were conducted shortly afterwards by investigators at the British College of Psychic Science in London and by [WHC Tenhaeff](#) in Utrecht, the Netherlands.[2](#)

Tenhaeff's experiments were conducted over several weeks, attended by 'dozens of well-educated men, journalists, medical doctors, judges, etc.' Plaat was offered an object such as an envelope (sealed or unsealed), a pencil or pocketbook and asked to describe its owner. Far more hits were registered than misses. Responding to one object she was given, Plaat said, 'This lady is all the time getting hold of her wrists. Is she going to commit suicide by cutting her wrists?' The owner of the object was a woman who had a fear of being buried alive having been mistakenly assumed to be dead, and insisted that her wrists be cut before burial. Other experiments in which Plaat was asked to identify metals such as mercury, silver, gold and sulphur concealed in small bottles were said to be highly successful.[3](#)

In 1931 Plaat helped German antiquaries to identify, date and classify (by sex and social position) a set of human bones excavated near Borsch, Hessen. Her comments included the following:

I hear Latin spoken and I have something absolutely Roman Catholic before me. I feel I have to bow and to kneel: I make the sign of the cross, and take the rosary beads in my fingers (here Frau Plaat went through the motion of telling the beads). I see many monks. This bone has belonged to a bishop or an abbot.”  
...

Then she takes up another bone. “This” she says “belonged to a person of very proud position. I feel I must bow before him. He was very tall and of broad build; deep set eyes. I see him wearing around his neck a thick gold chain. He also wears a crown. This must have been a king or an emperor. Now I see him standing before a cathedral. It has two very lofty towers. There are fifteen steps leading up to the great portals. There I see His Majesty advancing up the steps, clothed in a very rich set of robes, with golden chain and crown upon his head. Many people are bowing before him. He has been very cruel, and has been responsible for many murders during the wars. He has a very evil conscience, and in order to soothe this, he has built many monasteries and made great gifts of money to the poor.

The archaeological site where the bones had been discovered was a thousand-year-old monastic cemetery,<sup>4</sup> where according to records monks, abbots and kings had been buried.

## Characteristics

In an interview Platt said that, when acting as a medium, she could see spirits not with any ‘inner vision’ but with her ‘bodily eyes, clairvoyantly’. On such occasions she was ‘in a dreamy condition, passive’, as if watching ‘the cinema’: ‘I am *in* them,’ she declared, ‘and I feel them’.<sup>5</sup> By the mid-1930s her clairvoyant sense had apparently developed to the point of enabling her to perceive ‘auras’.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, psychometry required a strong mental concentration. She had to be fully awake. She added that a psychometric exercise related to a living person can sometimes be followed by a clairvoyant vision pertaining to a deceased person linked to that person.<sup>7</sup>

## Police Work

Plaat claimed to have several times given court testimony in Germany during the late 1920s, describing cases of theft where she was able to confirm both the culprit and the location of the stolen goods.<sup>8</sup>

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## Literature

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## Endnotes

### Footnotes

- [1.](#) *Light* (1933), 341; Denning (1999), 110, 134.
- [2.](#) McKenzie (1930), 16-19; Sünner (1928b), 633-645; Tenhaeff (1929-30), 1-80.
- [3.](#) Tenhaeff (1929-30). Descriptions of the metals experiments can also be found in McKenzie (1930), 16-18.
- [4.](#) Kufferath (1931), 163-64.
- [5.](#) Howgrave-Graham (1943), 34.
- [6.](#) Brath (1934), 305.
- [7.](#) Howgrave-Graham (1943), 34-35; McKenzie (1930), 18; Sünner (1928b), 638.
- [8.](#) Howgrave-Graham (1943), 35-36. Sünner (1928a), 398-403.

