

- **Kuniko 3000**

The sheen from the window cast his reflection back at him, but Hitoshi could deal with that, he could cope. The fattening face, the two week stubble, even the unkempt, thinning hair, all could be ignored. Day by day, hour by hour even, it felt like he was transforming into this stereotypical image of the average middle-aged man. Every day his waistline got wider, his head hair shorter and his nose hair longer. His skin was getting waxy too, despite the expensive facial soap he had bought from that big department store in Shibuya.

But all that was unnecessary when he was here, looking at what he was. Hitoshi pressed his face closer to the window until his nose was squashed against it. His beady eyes peered inside and traced the outline of the doll in the store window. He was conscious that he wouldn't have long before the store owner came out and chased him away again, but there was time enough. He thrust his hand into his trouser pocket and stared.

She was beautiful. Every part of her; the curves of her body, the pout of her plastic lips, hiding a bountiful mouth that was quite literally built for pleasure. Even the deep, brown hue of her eyes he found alluring, as if the eyes had been made especially to look into his. She was Japanese in her features too and that made a big difference. He knew that some of the other guys he spoke to in the chat rooms like western style dolls, with big blonde hair and even bigger titties. But he didn't need big tits. Hers were perfect, small but well formed and plastic hard. She had long, straight hair that came down like a brown waterfall to her shoulders. She was so gorgeous, a fantasy.

Today she was wearing a naughty red lace lingerie set that made his eyes burn with intense lust. How he longed to see that innards that lay beneath those thin layers of lace. Hitoshi dug his hand in deeper into his pocket and felt around until his fingers grasped around his growing erection. He took a quick look to his left and right and then started moving his hand, building up the rhythm as he stared into the window, stared into *her*. If only he could take her home. She would be the centre of his life, the pride of his existence. He would treat her like no man had ever treated a woman. All those men out there, who ignored their wives, seeing them as nothing more than a nuisance or a commodity; a way to secure that next big promotion. He had no time for men like, who took their women for granted. For Hitoshi, women were things to be revered, to be worshipped. And right now he was worshipping at the altar of *Kuniko 3000*, as the neat placard next to her feet identified her as. Oh if only he had the money he would march right into that shop now and waft a big stack of bills right under that bastard of a store keeper's nose. Then things would change; he would no longer be hounded out of the shop for merely browsing, there would be no bad language or threats to call the police. There would only be ' , as the neat placard next to her feet identified her as. Oh if only he had the money he would march right into that shop now and waft a big stack of bills right under that bastard of a store keeper's nose. Then things would change; he would no longer be hounded out of the shop for merely browsing, there would be no bad language or threats to call the police. There would only be *'yes Hitoshi-san, of course Hitoshi-san, whatever I can get for you Hitoshi-san*. If only he had the money, then he would have the man's respect. That was how things worked.

But he didn't. He worked as a lowly store clerk at the Seven-Eleven in Dochi-cho, earning maybe sixty thousand yen a month. That doll cost forty thousand and Hitoshi would have given up every penny he earned if he could. But his rent each month was nearly as much as his wage packet and then there was food and bills on top of that... Maybe, if he tried hard and worked every overtime shift available, maybe then he could save up enough money in six months or so. But six months was too long. He wanted her now, he wasn't sure that he could even bear to spend another night alone in his bed without her by his side.

His hand started moving faster and he could feel his balls start to shrivel as his semen got ready to make the journey up the length of his shaft.

"Hey you! What have I told you, get the hell out of here!"

Damn. The store owner was at the door again, his face flushed red, his little pencil moustache crooked with the anger on the man's face. He had rolled up a newspaper and was brandishing it in his hand like he would a baseball bat.

And he was so close. Hitoshi pulled his hand quickly from out of his pocket and felt his orgasm shrink almost instantly. He turned to shoot the shop keeper a deep, hateful scowl and then skulked away, ignoring the abuse that followed on the air behind him. Some of the people in the street had stopped to stare, alerted by the shop keeper's harsh words, but Hitoshi ignored them. What did they matter, he didn't know them.

"Fucking pervert," he heard shouted behind him and lowered his head, eyes fixed on the pavement. Such shame. His mother would have died of the embarrassment of it all if she weren't dead already. Six years gone yet her judgemental shadow still hung over him.

Hitoshi hurried his pace and soon turned off down a small alley, away from the hustle and bustle of the main street. He walked for another fifteen minutes before turning down into an even smaller and darker alley, one that seemed to have water dripping down its walls all year round.

It was the beginning of autumn, and another long, stifling summer was finally in its death throes. Hitoshi hated the summer; he hated feeling sweaty all day long and then come night time he could never sleep, the heat making him permanently uncomfortable. Autumn was okay, still warm but without the mugginess of summer and it only rained occasionally. But that meant that winter was getting closer and that was just as bad as summer. Hitoshi's apartment was only small, but the insulation in the windows wasn't too good and so it always got freezing cold in the winter. And it wasn't like he could afford to keep the heating on all day long either. What he needed was a nice warm body to snuggle up to at night; to lay his arm over and to lay his cock inside.

As Hitoshi made his way into the reception of his apartment block, he felt utterly miserable. The day had been long and boring and staring at that doll's perfect body had only extended his longing. He punched the button for the lift and waited. If only he could afford that damn doll, then everything would be different. It wouldn't matter if he had a bad day, if he had been made to clean out the hot food display again, splashing day old gravy all down his clothes. It wouldn't make a difference if his manager shouted at him again for his scruffy appearance. Because he would be coming home to *her*. That thought alone would be enough to get him through the day.

The lift still not having arrived, Hitoshi impatiently punched the button again and noticed that the light didn't come on. Fucking thing wasn't working again. He hated to

swear like that, even if he was only thinking it, not saying it. But today had been one of *those* days and he forgave himself that little slip.

Feeling heavy and dejected, his shoulders held in a slump, Hitoshi turned and started on his long walk up the stairway, trudging up step after identical step. His room was on the ninth floor but it may as well have been the ninetieth for all the extra weight he felt he was carrying. As he walked, the remnants of his erection poked against his leg and he was reminded of his unfulfilment. At least that was easily rectified. He had a couple of pictures of Kuniko in his room anyway; print outs off the online catalogue. They would do for now. But they could never match the real thing.

As he climbed the floors, Hiroki thought of what it would be like to touch that long, slender body; to feel the soft rubber give beneath his fingers as he ran his hands along its length. He bet it would feel a bit like heaven and that he would probably come even before he had chance to get inside her. But it wasn't just about that. That guy at the shop had been wrong; he wasn't just a pervert, because perverts were only interested in sex and that wasn't how it was between him and Kuniko. There was just something about her, some connection that they shared. He wasn't dumb; it wasn't like if he had her in his room, he would expect her to suddenly start talking to him. That was crazy, though he had spoken to some guys who had claimed that exact thing. No, she wouldn't talk, but she would *listen*. That was what really mattered. She would listen to everything he said, without interrupting or turning away. She would sit there dutifully and hang on his every word. And he would repay her kindness too. He would buy her lots of nice things; he had already made a list of accessories from this year's catalogue that he thought would look good on her. He would also get her some good wine, not like that rubbish they sold at work. She couldn't drink it, but she did have swallowing reflexes, so he had read, that you activated by pressing a little button on the back of her neck.

Hiroki was so entranced by his wonderful thoughts, that he almost tripped on the next step. He woke back up to realise that he had already passed his floor and would now have to walk back down again. Normally he would have been annoyed, but the fantasy had calmed him down and he was happy to simply slip back into it.

Finding the right floor this time, Hiroki made his way through the exit and started along the corridor, counting down the numbers until he reached number twelve. He reached into his trouser pocket for his keys, knocking against his half hard cock as he did so. Those thoughts of Kuniko's gag reflexes had started up another well of excitement within him, one that would have to be seen to soon.

He turned the key and pushed open the door, having to fight against the stack of magazines that had toppled from the pile again and splayed out into the doorway. With a grunt and a groan, he bent down to pick them up, eyed the unsteady tower and decided to find a new place to put them. He kicked off his shoes and then stepped into the hall, heading into the kitchen. Even in here, there were magazines and manga books scattered all over the place and Hiroki vowed to do some tidying tomorrow. It wasn't like he needed all this stuff, most of it he had read months ago and had no desire to re-read. There was some good stuff; romance comics that had some pretty graphic scenes but most of it could go. But that could wait for tomorrow; it was his day off after all.

He opened up the fridge and took out a chilled sushi dinner and a can of Kirin beer. He wasn't a big drinker, but found that beer went well with a meal and helped him relax at the end of the day. He sat down at the kitchen table, fighting for some space

against the heaps of books and notepads and broke open the wooden chopsticks that had come with the meal. He ate slowly, chewing at the rubbery rice and sipping at the beer to help down the mouthfuls of food. As he did so, his thoughts turned back to Kuniko and her marvellous, artificial beauty. It may just be a dream for now, he thought, but one day you will be mine, one day very soon.

By the time he finished his meal, it was after nine. He thought about clearing away container but decided against it, his energy severely lacking. Instead, he finished the last dregs of his beer and opened the fridge back up to fish out another one. Most of the guys would be online now; he mused and opened up the door sliding door in the living area to boot up his PC. As he waited on the blank screen, his eyes wandered to the pile of papers sitting next to the monitor. Absently, Hiroshi started flicking through the print outs until he found the picture he was looking for. The computer forgotten for the moment, he picked up the print out and headed into his bedroom to finish what he had already started.

I finally saw her today. I've been waiting months for them to get the prototype right and start the production line. But today she was finally released and I went to see her. I think it's such a shame though; such disrespect that the only place close to me that stocks her is a sex shop. I hate going into that place; it's full of weirdoes and strange dildos. I hate to look at them, so large and disfigured. What woman would ever want that kind of thing? The guy in there is an asshole too. He always gives me these weird looks and gets mad if I stare at the other dolls too long. He got like today, when I was looking at the new model. She's so much better than the previous version. Her body is more slender and they've hardened up her breasts after all the complaints they must have gotten over the last one. Man, those things were like sappy sponges, they were like old lady tits! But these ones aren't; they're divine.

I only got to look at her for a few minutes before that guy behind the counter started to stare me out. I could tell he was going to ask me to leave so I left before he got the chance. There's nothing more shameful than being asked to leave a sex shop. How bad is that? But I'll be back next week when pay day comes around. I've already saved enough so that I can buy her straight away, along with some of the accessories. The company have released a full range of wigs this time, in all different colours. Man, I can't wait to try them all; it'd be like having sex with a different woman every night! ☺ You guys should really think about getting one. She's much better than that old Kuniko model you're always going on about, Hiroshi. That girl is old news. This girl is hot, super hot and western too. Now that the boobs have been fixed, she really looks the part. I heard that they've used the same rotating mechanism that fits on the pussy, and put it in the anus as well this time, but obviously I couldn't tell just from looking in the shop! I don't know, maybe it was just a rumour but how cool would that be!

Just one more week and I'll have her, I can't wait! I'm so excited that I go to sleep every night looking at her photo; what little sleep I can get. ;-) The first thing I'm going to do...

Hiroshi clicked off the page with a groan. He couldn't bear to go through the rest of Yoshi's blog, talking about what he was going to do when he got that new girl of his. It was depressing. And talking to him in that way, saying that crap about Kuniko being an old model. How disrespectful was that? Sure, she had been on the market for nearly nine months now, but that didn't mean that she was totally out of date already. He felt like

writing a response and posting it all over the message board, pointing out what a lame loser Yoshi was and how sad it was to be obsessed with owning the latest doll. Real appreciators were only looking for that one perfect girl, the one that satisfied all their needs and then they would be happy. People like Yoshi were just idiots, wasting their money scrambling after the latest release. It was pathetic.

Hiroshi yawned and stretched his arms backwards. It was a little after midnight but that was okay. Tomorrow was his day off so he could stay up as late as he wanted. But what to do on that day of leisure? He needed to do some shopping; that sushi meal had been the last bit of food in the apartment, but beside that the day was his. He pondered this thought for a while. He knew what he really wanted to do, but that was impossible. He needed her for that she was still a long range out of reach.

He wondered sometimes if he shouldn't just give up on his dream and buy a cheaper love doll. Most of them were essentially the same and you could get a decent one now for less than fifteen thousand. They were a few years old by now, but that didn't matter. They were without the functions that had been added on to later models but they still looked good.

Hiroshi sighed. Things would be so much simpler if it was only about sex. Then he could get any doll that was going cheap, even one of those plastic things that were always in the sale. They still had rubber coatings on the inside so they wouldn't have felt that much different. But that wasn't it for Hiroshi. He didn't want a rubber girl just for sex. And he didn't just want any doll. He had fallen for Kuniko and so no one else would do.

He picked up the can of beer and swirled it around to collect up the last of the dregs. He had gotten through the six pack quite quickly tonight but it was going down well. His head was starting to swim a little but that might just be a result of staring at the computer screen for too long.

He tipped the can back and slurped at its meagre contents with great theatrical flair. The liquid tasted somewhat bitter on his tongue and he swallowed it with a grimace. With nothing else better to do now, Hiroshi turned his attention back to the computer.

He browsed through the rest of the message board a little while longer but found nothing of interest. He had been a member of this site for the last six months, even though he was still yet to buy his first official love doll. He had discovered the site after he had overheard someone telling a joke about it at work. He had logged on that night and had been instantly entranced by the stories and postings that he had read. Many of the members were experts on the dolls and had been collecting them for years. One guy, Musaki, claimed to have over a thousand of them, all stored up in his one bedroom flat; over ten million yen's worth of them, if he were to be believed. It had sounded a little far fetched to Hiroshi at first, but upon speaking to the man himself, there could be no doubt.

The online catalogue had also piqued his interest as he had been able to look through hundreds of different models, all with varying names and accessories. There were those dolls that were made specifically for sex; the rouge dolls as they were known to collectors, because of the amount of make up that was always painted on them. Then there were the hostess dolls, ones that had been made to look pretty and usually came with skimpy but classy clothing. These were also known as companionship dolls and were meant to be taken care of, not just fucked. Despite this ideal, they still came with fully working equipment, motorised vaginas that had rolling muscles inside and which

also vibrated, as well as latex nipples. Some of them had also been equipped with a 'vaginal excretion' extra which meant that the vagina oozed a chemically concocted goo upon the user's command, which worked kind of like a lubricant during sex, such as KY Jelly; though Hiroshi wasn't so sure he trusted those things. It was this kind of add on that gave the dolls such a dirty reputation and although some could be bought from toy stores or specialised collectable shops; many of these dolls with 'added features' were only available through licensed sex shops.

But in contrary to all this, there were the lonely hearts dolls. These were life sized and usually designed around the image of girls in their mid twenties; unlike some of the sex or hostess dolls which averaged out around the age of sixteen. These were not equipped with working parts, although they did have breasts but that was merely for dexterity's sake. These were intended solely for the purpose of providing life long companionship to men who found it hard to 'connect with real women'. They were made from a specialised rubber that was guaranteed to last for up to forty years and so you could be happy in the knowledge that your doll was most likely to outlast you.

But to Hiroshi, none of these other dolls mattered. He didn't want to be a collector like Yoshi, or a hoarder like Musaki. He was interested in the one doll and the one doll only. Kuniko. A hostess doll that however, would be Hiroshi's companion doll, he was sure of it. Once he had her, he could never imagine wanting anyone else. After all, that was how true love worked.

He woke up sticky. It wasn't that hot in his room and he only had one blanket draped over his futon but Hitoshi was still sweaty when he opened up his eyes. He pulled himself from under the covers and stood up, his head swimming at the motion. It was the beer. Damn it. He hated hangovers and now it looked as if one was brimming just beneath the surface.

He got up and went to the toilet, urinated and then headed to the kitchen, grabbing the half full water bottle from out of the fridge and draining it. Smacking his lips, he threw the empty bottle into the bin bag for plastics and headed back to bed, hoping that the intake of water would help sedate his hangover.

He got back into bed in a miserable mood; he didn't want to spend the whole of his day off nursing some stupid headache, confined to his room else he might vomit.

As he lay in bed, eyes turned up to the ceiling, hands clawing against his thighs, Hitoshi decided that he might go down to the toy store in Chuchi cho again tomorrow. He wanted to see her again, even though he knew he had done nothing but look at her for the last two months. But his desire seemed to have intensified lately. It might just be the alcohol that was still coursing through his blood system, but he felt desperate, almost hopeless in his lust for her. He needed her and she needed him. It sounded stupid, infantile even, but it was true. Hitoshi felt it in every fibre of his body. He had to have her. But the money was still a problem and not one that was solved easily. He could rob a bank. Or maybe some old rich lady on her way out of the bank. But that was even more idiotic. He couldn't rob anybody, certainly nothing as well protected as a bank and mugging an old woman was just too far over the line to even consider.

But he could rob the store.

The thought was fleeting but Hitoshi brought it back. It was definitely out there. Dangerous and stupid but...possible. It wasn't like he would be robbing the *entire* store,

anyway; he would just be taking the doll. It would be easy, too. He would just have to sneak in after hours and take her from the window. He wouldn't even need to mess with any other part of the shop. But then the storekeeper knew who he was, had seen him looking at her all those times, masturbating over her. If Kuniko was suddenly to go missing, it would be obvious who had taken her. Only an idiotic wouldn't be able to figure it out. But still...

Yes. There you go. He could just trash the rest of the place, maybe take a few other things, make it look like a real robbery. Then the guy at the store would expect it to be some hard nosed criminal who had broken in.

Hitoshi rolled onto his side, his bulky weight pushing up the blanket and pulling it off his feet. Sweat was still dripping off his body and he felt disgusting, like a fat pig who is being sweated out under a heat lamp.

This was what it would be like, a voice inside him warned, if he ever got caught. The police would sweat the truth out of him and then stick him like a god damn pig. But the course of true love knew no bounds and all love cost something, some part of yourself. Really, it was a small price to pay.

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The next night, after a more nutritious dinner of spaghetti and sauce, Hitoshi sat on the floor in front of his PC and drank beer. It was a little after ten and tonight was the night. He had already spent the last hour on the forum, chatting to the other collectors, explaining his plan. He knew that it wasn't the most sensible thing to do, to tell others about your plans to commit a crime, but none of them knew who he really was so he figured it would be okay. It wasn't like he had told them the exact shop or anything like that, only that this very night he would be getting Kuniko; that he was giving in to the calling of true love and taking what he knew was really his.

A little after twelve, Hitoshi switched off the computer and pulled on his jacket, readying himself for what lay ahead. His head was a little fuzzy from the beer, but only in a nice, warming way. The night outside was chilly but Hitoshi was kept warm by his thoughts, dreaming of the night that lay ahead. In only a few hours, he would be lying with Kuniko in his arms, his hands caressing her soft skin. He would savour every moment of it, imprinting each fine detail onto his memory. It would be magical.

Hitoshi decided against the lift and took the stairs, breathing in the air, tasting its freshness; it felt like the cleanest air he had ever known in \_\_\_\_\_. The streets were deserted as Hitoshi stepped out of his apartment block entrance and crossed over the road. Everyone would be in bed now, as should he be really. It was work again tomorrow but he wasn't due in until eleven. He wouldn't get much sleep tonight, but that was okay. Even his shitty job didn't matter anymore in comparison to being with that angel.

He headed down an alley, stepping over the litter, the discarded fish crates and beer boxes. This was the quickest way and kept him off the main street. Even though it was late already, if he had gone along the main stretch, chances were he would still encounter drunken businessmen on their way home after wasting their wages at the hostess bars. That was one thing that Hitoshi would never understand; why pay some dumb woman thousands of yen just to talk to you for an evening? Surely there were normal Japanese girls out there who were perfectly sociable and wouldn't mind whittling

away an evening talking to some man in a bar. He knew that many men liked to talk to the foreign girls that you sometimes found in hostess bars and that, Hitoshi could understand. Many foreign girls were wary of Japanese men, thinking them all to be sleazy perverts; but why pay all that money just to talk to a girl who had probably grown up just down the road? What was the point? At least with Kuniko it was a one time expense. She may not be able to talk back, but you could still get a lot of company from her.

Hitoshi soon reached the shop, though the shutter had been brought down over the front, so he had to guess it was the right place just by its location; the dry cleaner's next to it having no night shutter to cover its front windows.

With his heart pounding in time with every one of his quick steps, Hitoshi headed into the little alley at the side of the hobby shop and skulked his way through the darkness, his feet kicking at and treading in all many of things that he was glad he could not make out in the dark. He reached a thin, wooden door that he thought must be the back entrance to the stop and with only a few attempts, managed to force his way inside, using his round shoulders to put enough pressure on the frame to make it buckle.

Inside, the first thing that struck Hitoshi was the smell; it was musty and dank, as if many things had been left to rot, going mouldy, their decomposing left unchecked. It was dark in here too, but he dared not flick on a light. Instead, Hitoshi slipped a small pen light from out of his jacket pocket and let its beam feed along the floor. There were stacks of boxes and unopened cartons all around him, but none of them held any interest for Hitoshi. He was here for one reason and one reason only. Maybe later, on his way out, Kuniko hooked in his arms, he might rip open or overturn some of these boxes to help create the robbery façade; but for now he simply passed by them, winding his way through the back room and out into the main part of the shop. It was just as it had been the last time he had been inside a couple of weeks ago, the layout the same, but of course, why wouldn't it be? Hitoshi shook his head to clear such random, distracting thoughts and ploughed on, fighting his way past all the merchandise that seemed to tower up around him, like he had stepped into some weird Aladdin's cave.

There she was, standing dutifully in the window as always, surrounded by plastic race tracks and child sized robots. She seemed so out of place there, surrounded by such manufactured ugliness; hers was a beauty that deserved to be elaborated not diminished.

Tentatively, Hitoshi walked over to her. He stood before her and looked up, her height exaggerated by the small platform she was set upon. Hitoshi felt himself weaken. He was so close to her, inches away from touching. He couldn't believe that he was here at last, after so many months of waiting and dreaming, fantasising. He reached out a shaking hand, having to hold his right wrist with his left hand to steady it enough to keep going in the same direction. He watched his outstretched fingers, the gap between them and Kuniko's soft, synthetic flesh closing rapidly. He closed his eyes as the tips of his fingers brushed against the rubbery texture and simultaneously came into his pants. He lurched with the orgasm and suddenly lost his balance, toppling forward and crashing into the window display; toy cars and plastic robots flying in all directions. Hitoshi fell straight on top of Kuniko as if he were embracing her, as if he had planned it all along.

There was a crash, dust shooting up and swirling into the air and then everything was still, quiet. Hitoshi let out the breath he had been holding. He listened for a minute, still in the silence, for anybody who might come after hearing the commotion, but there

was no one. Opening his eyes now, Hitoshi gazed down into the sweetness of the delicate face lying beneath his. His heart ached as he gazed into her painted eyes, their pupils shining up at him, almost like she was crying with happiness. Hitoshi began to cry too, his heart flourishing as he tightened his grip around her and hugged himself into the crook of her bolted on neck.

He was here and so was she; together at long last. He moved against her, wanting to feel the curves of her body underneath the bulk of his. His trousers rubbed more wetness against his groin but he didn't care. He lifted his head up and then buried it into her long, black hair. Apparently, according to her product description on the website, they used real women's hair, donated usually by university students who were always strapped for cash. But as Hitoshi sniffed against the dark strands that wafted up against his nose, he did not think of the young girl that this hair might have come from. To him, it was Kuniko's hair and it smelled wonderful.

Hitoshi moved his hands up and caressed the flexible breasts, squeezing ever so delicately, feeling the permanently hard nipples that were housed underneath the thin film of a bra.

"I love you, Kuniko," he whispered into her ear, "I've always loved you. Do you love me? I'm sure you will."

He took one last, long sniff and then buried himself back into the space between her shoulder and neck, the way a child embraces into its mother.

"I'll never let you go," he promised, full on tears now falling from his eyes, their warm wetness spotting the rubberised flesh. "I'll always take care of you; cherish you. You understand, don't you Kuniko? You believe me?"

Hitoshi never expected a reply, that would have been crazy! but he felt better having said those words aloud, having had her hear them. He had told them to the picture of her he kept on his bedside table, and now he had said them to her face.

"What would I do without you Kuniko? I don't think anyone else could ever understand that."

There was a little idea that formed inside Hitoshi's head then; a daring little notion. His fingers began to creep, to explore that perfectly flat belly, tracing along those wide, but not too wide, hips. They were travelling south with only one destination in mind. He wondered what it would feel like, if it would envelop his fingers, if they would sink into its wet, warmth. But at the last moment, just as his fingers were playing with the lace trim of her panties, Hitoshi suddenly snatched them back.

There was time for that later, when it would be more appropriate. For now, he was content just to snuggle, just to have her in his arms. Like this he felt like he could sleep, really sleep for the first time in his life.

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When Takashi Yamamoto opened up his shop door the next morning, his mouth fell open at what awaited him. His well planned window design had been ruined, a mess of different products, some broken, all scattered. He cried out and almost dropped the plastic bag containing his breakfast, onto the floor. Someone was here, sleeping in his front window, his shabby body entwined around the love doll that had taken pride of place as the centrepiece.

Despite his shock and growing anger, Yamamoto almost didn't want to wake the strange fellow. He had never seen any one look so peaceful.

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