

The Figure Shop

Anna was bored as hell. Her roommate had kicked her out for “boyfriend time” and Anna had been wandering around at the mall for four hours, waiting for the all clear to go back home. And she’d forgotten her wallet so she couldn’t even go see a movie or something, she was stuck. She had been lucky enough to have a \$20 in her pocket, so she’d had lunch, but there wasn’t much one could buy with \$7.59 in change. And nothing that would take hours to peruse through. She moaned as she sat on a bench, fiddling with her phone, hoping a message would come through soon, but no luck.

Before Anna could decide to give up and just barge in on her roommate anyway, she noticed that a closed storefront opposite her seat was being pushed open by a tall, thin man. The sign above the door just said “Figures” and all Anna could see inside was row after row of empty glass cases. When the storefront was open, the man looked over and gestured to Anna, pointing in the store, before walking in himself.

Eh, she thought, might kill some time.

Anna wandered in and looked around, seeing nothing but the glass cases. Many of them were on the walls in orderly rows on shelves, each a cube about a foot in diameter, but there were ones of various sizes scattered about the floor on stands and pedestals. A couple, framing the door, were over two meters tall, and there were others of that size spaced here and there through the store. There was a long, smooth white counter along one wall near the door, and the man was standing there with a big grin, next to a huge ring binder on the counter.

“Hello there,” said the man, “You’re my first customer!”

“Uh, hi,” said Anna, hesitantly, “What do you sell here?”

“We sell figures. Mostly anime, video games, tokusatsu shows, the occasional movie. None of that funko pop garbage though, those things creep me out.”

“You don’t have any figures though,” said Anna.

“Not yet,” replied the man with a shrug. “We have a special ordering process that can be rather...haphazard and random, but we *can* special order anything and bypass that if necessary. I have our catalogue here.” He gestured at it.

Anna decided that while it seemed really weird, she might as well look. She began to flip through the catalogue and it was extremely full of detailed figures. Giant robots, sentai heroes, anime and video game characters she both recognized and didn’t, but with a really distinct skew towards male, or at least masculine characters. It was a bit odd. She chanced upon one image

of a figure of Inuyasha, remembering that she'd had a huge crush on him when watching the anime as a kid and looked at it for a moment.

"Inuyasha huh? Great choice, I love that show," said the man, "That figure is about \$40."

"Oh, sorry," said Anna, "I don't have my wallet and I've got less than \$10 on me."

"Hmm..." said the man, "Well, I'd have to prepare the figure properly and you *are* my first customer, so how about this? You give me \$5 for a down payment, and the rest of the cost on delivery?"

"Well, I could do that, it does look really cool."

"Great!" He said, clapping his hands together. "Oh, but first, would you be able to help me out with something?"

"What is it?" Anna said warily.

"I'm also starting up a cosplay photo studio and I need someone to help me test the lights. To stand on the pedestal and smile for a moment, I'll knock \$10 of the price if you help me with that."

"...okay," said Anna, "But no weird stuff."

"I promise," he replied with a grin.

He led Anna into the back where, true to his word, there was a round pedestal surrounded by lights and cameras.

"Hold this," he said, handing her a sword in its sheath, "and wear this," handing her a necklace of what looked like black beads and teeth. "You might not be doing a full cosplay, but these two items are at least something, right? You bought Inuyasha, so have a couple of pieces of him in the picture."

"Alright."

Anna stepped onto the pedestal, noticing there was a clear plastic layer on top of it about three inches thick. She put the necklace on and held the sheathed sword over her shoulder and looked back at the man.

"Okay, so look over here," he said, as a light appeared slightly to Anna's left on the wall, and make a smile but don't open your mouth."

Anna complied and before she could say anything, a blinding light flashed. When it faded away, Anna tried to say something, but discovered she couldn't move. At all. She was entirely fixed in place. She couldn't even move her eyes, but that was the least of her worries when a glass tube lowered from above, over her. It was mirrored glass, but she could kind of see the lights from outside. *One way mirror?* She thought.

She was looking at herself but noticed something weird. Her hair was getting longer. A lot longer, and it was turning silver as her eyes turned gold. Her clothing started to rip as something began to bulge out from under it and as it finally gave way, she recognized Inuyasha's red robes underneath. Her shoes dissolved completely and eventually, she looked like a woman doing an extremely accurate cosplay of Inuyasha.

But then the tube began to vibrate and she saw her chest flatten out and she could feel a slim sort of musculature form under the robes as she gained at least a foot in height and two silver furred ears poked out at the top of her head. She now exactly resembled Inuyasha, and was waiting to be let out before there was another flash.

She felt really weird this time, before realizing that she didn't feel like she was really herself, like she was just a solid mass of something, when she began to shrink in place. Eventually, she was only about seven inches tall and it finally clicked completely. The figure she had ordered...it was going to be *her*.

The tube lifted up and the man picked her up. "This is excellent quality," he said, "You made for some really good materials, miss. You'll be in a place of honour and now, whenever anyone orders an Inuyasha, I can just copy you!"

He walked back out into the storefront and went to one of the display cases near the front. He opened it and placed Anna inside, closing her within the mirrored cube so all she could see was her new figure self.

"Eventually," she heard, slightly muffled, "You'll forget what you ever looked like before and you might make a good assistant for the cosplay side of my business. But for now, you'll be a wonderful display model."

Footsteps moved away as Anna stood there, unable to move or breathe as she was now an Inuyasha model. *Maybe my roommate will come find me?* She thought, hoping desperately that someone, against all odds, might figure out what happened.

