

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



Hanako of Hokkaido by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | Oct. 2019

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by Mike Bozart

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Snow was lightly falling in Sapporo, Japan at 8:02 PM on Thursday, November 29, 2018. In a compact, 21-square-meter (226-square-foot), third-story studio apartment in Teine Ward, an English-language TV station was airing a program about lotteries around the world. The current segment was on the popular, semiweekly, American one: Powerball.

The slender, attractive, young, long-black-haired Asian woman relaxing on a blanketed futon turned up the volume via remote control.

A short, blonde-hair-disheveled, pot-bellied, middle-aged man in a college sweatshirt: “That’s right, folks; your chances of winning the jackpot are that slim. Here, I’ll give you keen viewers a tangible example. Imagine driving 3,620 miles [5,826 km] from Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West, Florida to Pysht, Washington. Where is Pysht, you ask? psst ... It’s a secret.” [winks]

A lanky, light-brown-haired, middle-aged, vest-clad man: “Bill, did you get into math and science because you bombed at comedy? [chuckles] Ok, tell us where it is?”

Bill: “Steve, Pysht is a very small township northwest of Seattle on the Strait of Juan de Fuca.”

Steve: “Why couldn’t we just stop in Seattle? Seems plenty long enough already.”

Bill: “We needed a little bit more mileage [distance] to make it just right. You know that I’m a stickler for precision, Steve.”

Steve: “Bill is a stickler for sticking me with the bill, folks. [chuckles] Ok, back to your longwinded and mentally exhausting driving illustration.”



[image now on TV screen]

Bill: “All along the interstates and U.S. highways on our route are two unbroken strands of ping-pong balls – one line on each shoulder marking. Inside one of the 40-mm-diameter [1.57”] white balls is a note that says ‘Winner’; all of the

others are empty, null-and-void losers. Now, do you serendipitously pluck your table-tennis orb just outside of Omaha, Nebraska? Or, do you think that the lucky one is somewhere in western Montana? Do you snatch one coming or going?" *He forgot about exit and entrance ramps.*

Steve: "Going? I think I'm going to sleep." [chuckles]

<click>

Hanako mused as the oh-so-tiny granular snowflakes mixed with intermittent sleet pinged against her main window. *Lotteries. Games of random chance. Keno slips during the Han Dynasty. Everyone hopes that they will be the lucky one. Wonder how many Takarakuji [Japanese lottery] winners were actually anticipating winning, and how many resigned themselves to not winning the jackpot, and didn't even check their ticket until days after the drawing. What would that ratio be? 9:1? Or, 80.2% for the former? Why did I think of 80.2%? Must have seen that number in an article recently. Would make for a good research paper. Well, if the winners could be found and agree to an interview. Would they be honest? Would they lie and say that they never expected to win? And, would the ones who never expected to win claim that they knew deep-down that they would win because of some retroactively imagined portent just before buying the golden ticket? Hmmm ... Maybe I could do it via e-mail. But, how could I learn their identities? Those names are confidential. 'Oh, Hanako, you are having silly thoughts again, girl. Cease and desist.'*

The lilac-colored pad of paper on the low-profile tea table caught her eye. Hanako grabbed the top sheet and reviewed what she had written thus far. And then added to it.

Ideas for a memo to someone (or robot) in the future. Make the year 2442 - it's palindromic. That's 424 years from ... Wow! 424 is palindromic, too. And the numbers are only 2s and 4s. Two evens make for an odd tale. Well, actually they never do; they always stay in their own parochial lane. Smug bastards! Ha! Might be onto something. Address this future entity as 'Most Perspicacious 2442'. Begin memorandum here. || Dear Most Perspicacious 2442, I'm a 20-year-old, $\frac{3}{4}$ Japanese - $\frac{1}{4}$ Mongolian female, and I think I love you (or

once did, as I have been dead for four centuries by the time you are reading this). Hee-hee. But I'm not sure if you would (have) love(d) me, for I am/was a bit schizoid they say/said. I like(d) to try to look pretty like most girls, but I really don't have (never had) much interest in falling in love with another human - male or female. And that makes/made me very odd for my time, Most Perspicacious 2442. I am/was an outlier in my milieu. Oh, could I just (have) call(ed) you, 2442? I believe(d) that I heard a 'Sure' murmuring through an invisible wormhole in the kitchenette. Relax, I am/was not overtly nihilistic (even though I think/thought the human race is/was doomed and just doesn't/didn't know it yet/ever). I smile(d) when I stroll(ed) about, and I like(d) to see people smiling and having fun. I am/was not a gloomy person - just secretly skeptical of Homo sapiens. I play(ed) along. For if I truly hate(d) this existence, why should I (have) stay(ed) alive? No, I am/was not suicidal; in fact, I am/was far from it, 2442. I want(ed) to use my time on Earth to figure out as much as I can/could about we 'highly evolved' primates. Highly evolved should be/should have been in italics, but I can't/couldn't write in italics. How is my English, 2442? I supplemented my English classes by reading the world news in English every night on the internet. I would (have) bet that the term 'internet' is obsolete and forgotten in the 25th century AD. Anyway, 2442, here's what I am/was truthfully wondering (and I have/had never mentioned this to anyone, as it is/was very unpopular): Do they still have human-to-human sex in your modern age? Or, are the humans now having sex with orgasm-on-demand humanoid robots exclusively? Or, nearly exclusively, as there is that procreation thing - extending the species, of course. Or, is that all done by way of artificial insemination? Or, by 'sperm-loaded' robots? Hee-hee. Is human sexual intercourse looked upon as an act of crude animalistic vulgarity in your time, 2442? Is it something that only the crass segment of society still engages in? But, the human ape is by and

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