

Accidentally become a father

Chapter 61: A Third Grader's Negotiation

Yuna remained standing in front of the bathroom.

Water from her hair was still slowly dripping onto the floor.

She stared at the shower.

Then she looked back at me.

It seemed she was still thinking about something.

A few seconds passed before she spoke again.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"If I shower by myself..."

She paused for a moment.

"...can I ask if I get confused?"

"You may."

She gave a small nod.

But she did not move right away.

She remained standing in the same spot.

Her hands twisted the edge of the towel.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"If soap gets in my eyes... it hurts."

"Yes."

"...it happened to me before."

"When?"

"At school."

She touched the corner of her eye.

"...it stung."

"It does."

She looked at the shower again.

Then she said quietly,

"...if Papa is there... I won't be scared."

I did not answer.

She added quickly,

"...Papa doesn't need to shower too."

She pointed to the corner of the bathroom.

"Papa just has to stand there."

I looked at her.

"That is still unnecessary."

She fell silent.

A few seconds passed.

Then she tried again.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"What if I fall..."

"You will not fall."

"...what if there is too much soap..."

"Use only a little."

"...what if I can't rinse my hair?"

"Rinse it until it is clean."

She fell silent again.

It seemed she had thought through every possibility.

Then she let out a small sigh.

"...showering is hard."

"No."

She stared at the shower as if it were a complicated object.

Then she said honestly,

"...I have never washed my hair by myself."

"Now you will learn."

She looked down slightly.

Not out of fear.

More like she was weighing something.

A few seconds later she spoke again.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"What if Papa just... watches?"

I raised an eyebrow slightly.

"...watch?"

"Yes."

She explained seriously.

"Papa doesn't need to help."

"Papa doesn't need to shower."

"Papa just... watches."

She pointed at the shower.

"In case I do it wrong."

I thought about it for a moment.

The risk was small.

The bathroom itself was quite narrow.

Technically, I could stand near the door without doing anything.

Yuna was still waiting for my answer.

Her eyes looked serious.

Like someone presenting a proposal.

I finally said,

"...alright."

Yuna immediately looked up.

"I can?"

"Yes."

Her face instantly brightened a little.

"Thank you, Papa."

Then she paused for a moment.

"...but."

I looked at her.

"What?"

She looked a little hesitant.

"...when I wash my hair..."

She pointed at her own hair.

"...I can't see."

"Indeed."

"...so if the soap is not gone yet..."

She looked at me.

"...Papa will tell me, right?"

I nodded.

"Alright."

She looked relieved.

Then she walked into the bathroom.

Then stopped again.

Turning back to look at me.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...Papa is really just going to watch?"

"Yes."

She thought for a moment.

Then she said with a serious face,

"...don't laugh."

"I do not intend to."

Yuna nodded in satisfaction.

Then she started undoing the collar of her uniform very seriously.

Like someone about to conduct an important experiment.

Chapter 62: Observation of the Hair-Washing Experiment

I stood near the bathroom door.

Yuna stood under the showerhead.

She was still wearing a towel, wrapped in a... rather precarious way.

She stared at the shower controls with a serious expression.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"This one?"

She pointed at the water lever.

"Yes."

She turned the lever slowly.

Water poured out instantly.

"Ah—!"

Yuna took a step back.

The water hit the floor.

"...Startled."

"That's water."

"I know..."

She tried again.

This time, she put her hand under the stream first.

"...It's warm."

She looked a little relieved.

Then, she stepped under the shower.

The water hit her hair.

Her long hair immediately fell straight down, covering her face.

She blinked a few times.

"...Weird."

"What's weird?"

"There's a lot of water."

"That's the point."

She lifted her face a little so her hair wouldn't cover her eyes.

Water dripped from the ends of her hair.

Then, she reached for the shampoo bottle.

She read the label with utmost seriousness.

"...Use a little."

"Correct."

She squeezed out the shampoo.

Too much.

The white liquid almost filled her entire palm.

She stared at her hand.

"...A little."

I spoke flatly.

"That's a lot."

Yuna panicked slightly for a moment.

"...What now?"

"Just use it."

She gave a quick nod.

Then she pressed the shampoo into her hair.

A few seconds later...

Suds began to form.

And kept multiplying.

There was so much of it.

Yuna stopped moving.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...This is too much."

"Yes."

The suds were already covering almost half of her head.

She tried to scrub her hair like she had seen on television.

Her movements were extremely cautious.

"...Does it sting?"

"Not yet."

"Good."

She scrubbed some more.

Then she suddenly stopped.

Her eyes squeezed shut.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...I think it got in my eye."

I said simply.

"Rinse."

She immediately ducked under the water.

The water flowed over her hair.

The suds started to wash away.

But there was still a lot left.

She blinked a few times.

"...It stings a little."

"That's normal."

She nodded slowly.

Then she went back to rinsing her hair.

About thirty seconds later...

She turned to look at me.

Her hair was sticking to her cheeks.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...Is there still any left?"

I inspected her hair.

There were still suds.

"Still some left."

She let out a small sigh.

"...Washing hair is hard."

"You used too much shampoo."

"Important data."

I stared at her.

She gave a faint smile.

Probably mimicking the way I speak.

She went back to rinsing her hair.

This time, she took longer.

The water kept flowing.

The suds finally washed away almost entirely.

She turned to me again.

"...Now?"

I looked more closely.

"All clear."

She immediately looked relieved.

"...Success."

"Yes."

She turned off the shower.

The water stopped.

Yuna stood still for a few seconds.

Wet hair clung to her face.

Then she gave a faint smile.

A very satisfied smile.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...I can wash my hair by myself."

"Yes."

She looked very proud.

Then she added in a small voice.

"...But if Papa helps... it might be faster."

Chapter 63: Additional Request

I stared at her.

"...but if Papa helps... it might be faster."

It wasn't a complaint.

More like a scientific observation.

I gave a short reply.

"Maybe."

Yuna nodded.

As if we had just agreed upon a fact.

She took a small towel from the shelf.

Then, she started wiping her face.

Her movements were still a bit awkward.

A few strands of wet hair stuck to her cheeks.

After that, she stood still for a few seconds.

It seemed she was thinking again.

Usually, that meant something was coming.

Sure enough.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

She looked at me with a very serious expression.

"...the back of my hair..."

She twisted her body a little.

"...I can't see it."

"That is because it's in the back."

She nodded.

"...so if there's still shampoo left... I wouldn't know."

"I already told you it's clean."

"Right."

She thought for a moment.

"...but I can't dry it either."

She tried to rub the back of her head with the towel.

Her movements were ineffective.

Most of her hair remained wet.

She tried again.

Same result.

Then she stopped.

She turned to me.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...could you help me dry it a little?"

The request sounded very cautious.

As if she was trying to make sure she didn't break some unwritten rule.

I walked closer.

I took the towel from her hands.

"Sit."

Yuna immediately sat down on the small bathroom stool.

Her back was facing me.

Her hair was long for a third-grader.

And very wet.

I started drying it with the towel.

The motion was simple.

Pressing gently so the water would be absorbed.

Yuna was quiet.

Very quiet.

A few seconds later, she said softly.

"...feels nice."

I didn't answer.

She continued.

"...it's like this on TV too."

"TV again."

"Yes."

She let out a small giggle.

Then she spoke again.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...can I ask for one more thing?"

I paused for a moment.

"What?"

She turned her head slightly.

Her eyes looked hesitant.

"...wash my hair for me."

I stared at her.

She quickly explained.

"Not now."

"Next time."

She twisted the edge of the small towel in her hands.

"...my friend said it feels nice."

I said flatly.

"You just washed your hair."

"I know."

"...but that was an experiment."

That statement sounded perfectly logical to her.

I let out a small sigh.

Yuna waited for my answer with absolute seriousness.

Finally, I said,

"...maybe."

Her eyes immediately sparkled a little.

"Really?"

"If necessary."

She gave a small smile.

A smile that she clearly didn't learn from television.

Once her hair was dry enough, I stood up.

"Done."

Yuna touched her hair.

"...it's lighter."

"That is because it isn't wet."

She nodded in satisfaction.

Then she stood up from the small stool.

Before leaving the bathroom, she stopped at the door.

She turned to me.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...bathing together isn't weird after all."

I raised an eyebrow slightly.

She explained innocently.

"Because Papa only watched."

I said flatly.

"That was not bathing together."

Yuna thought for a moment.

Then nodded.

"...a trial version."

She then walked out of the bathroom with the large towel wrapped securely around her body.

Her hair was still a bit messy.

But her steps were light.

Like someone who had just successfully completed a task that previously felt daunting.

Her voice called out from the living room again.

"...Papa!"

"Hm?"

"...tomorrow I'll try washing my hair by myself again!"

I replied briefly from the bathroom.

"Use less shampoo."

A few seconds of silence.

Then a small voice echoed from the living room.

"...just a half-experiment?"

Chapter 64: Instant Noodles After the Rain

After the bath, the apartment felt warmer.

The sound of the rain outside could still be heard, but it was quieter now. Just scattered drops tapping against the window.

I stood in the small kitchen.

The water in the pot was starting to boil.

Yuna emerged from the bathroom a few seconds later.

Her hair was still slightly damp. She was wearing an oversized house shirt and shorts. A small towel still hung around her neck.

She stopped at the kitchen door.

Her nose twitched slightly.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"It smells good."

"It's hot water."

She walked closer.

Standing right beside me.

Her eyes stared at the pot like she was observing an experiment.

"What is that?"

"Instant noodles."

She blinked.

"...noodles?"

"Yes."

"I've eaten noodles before."

"These are different."

She tilted her head slightly.

"What's the difference?"

"They're faster."

Yuna looked even more intrigued.

She stood on a small stool so she could see inside the pot.

I dropped the block of dried noodles into the boiling water.

The noodles slowly sank.

Yuna watched with utmost seriousness.

"...they're hard."

"Yes."

"Will they get soft?"

"Yes."

"Water can change noodles?"

"The heat changes them."

She looked impressed.

"...science."

I didn't answer.

After a few seconds, she asked again.

"How long?"

"Three minutes."

She immediately looked at the wall clock.

Then looked back at the noodles.

Then the clock again.

Ten seconds passed.

"...is it done?"

"Not yet."

"How much longer?"

"Two minutes and fifty seconds."

She let out a small sigh.

"...that's long."

I added the seasoning from the sachet.

A warm, savory aroma immediately spread through the air.

Yuna took a deep breath.

Her eyes widened slightly.

"...it smells even better now."

"That is the seasoning."

She stared at the empty sachet in my hand.

"...magic powder."

I turned off the stove after three minutes.

The noodles were soft.

I poured them into two bowls.

Yuna was standing very close now.

Almost glued to the kitchen counter.

Her eyes followed every movement.

I handed her one of the bowls.

She accepted it with both hands.

Hot steam immediately rose to her face.

"...hot."

"Yes."

She sat down on a chair.

I sat across from her.

Yuna picked up her chopsticks very carefully.

Then she tried to lift the noodles.

A few strands came up.

She blew on them.

Very seriously.

"...fuu..."

Then she tried to eat them.

Two seconds later—

"Ah!"

She covered her mouth.

Her eyes widened.

I said flatly,

"It's hot."

She nodded quickly.

"...hot."

She blew on the noodles again.

For a bit longer this time.

Then she tried again.

She chewed for a few seconds.

Then stopped.

Her expression changed.

She stared at her bowl.

Then stared at me.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...is this emergency food?"

"Yes."

She looked at the noodles again.

Then said with absolute seriousness,

"...why is it so good."

I picked up my chopsticks.

"Emergency food doesn't have to be bad."

Yuna nodded.

Then she started eating with much more enthusiasm.

Several strands of noodles went into her mouth at once.

She stopped again.

"...hot."

"Wait."

"But it's good."

She blew on them again.

Then ate some more.

A few minutes later, her bowl was almost empty.

She stared at the bottom of the bowl.

"...it's gone."

"Yes."

She looked a little disappointed.

"...I thought instant noodles were small."

"That is one serving."

She thought about it for a moment.

Then she said very logically,

"...two servings might be safer."

I drank a little broth from my bowl.

"Not every day."

Yuna leaned back in her chair.

Her stomach looked slightly rounder.

She stared out the window.

The rain was still falling.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...what are we doing after this?"

I stood up.

"Want something to drink?"

She immediately sat up straight.

"What kind of drink?"

"Milk or chocolate."

Her eyes immediately sparkled.

"...chocolate."

I opened the cupboard.

Meanwhile, Yuna was already walking toward the living room.

A few seconds later, her voice called out from there.

"Papa!"

"Hm?"

"...the kotatsu is warm!"

I poured some milk into a small pot.

Then I replied flatly,

"That is indeed its function."

[Chapter 65: The First Kotatsu](#)

When I brought two mugs into the living room, Yuna was already half-buried inside the kotatsu.

Only her head was visible.

The thick blanket puffed up in the center.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"It's very warm."

I set the mugs down on the low table.

One was hot chocolate.

The other was coffee.

Yuna still hadn't emerged from the kotatsu.

She only reached a hand out from beneath the blanket.

"The chocolate one?"

"The chocolate one."

She carefully grasped the mug.

Then retreated back inside the kotatsu.

A few seconds later, she emerged again.

Up to her shoulders this time.

She held the mug of chocolate with both hands.

A wisp of steam rose to her face.

She blew on it slightly.

"...warm."

I sat on the other side of the table.

I slipped my legs under the kotatsu.

I could immediately feel the heat from the small heater beneath the table.

Yuna took a small sip of her chocolate.

Then stopped.

Her eyes widened.

"...this is good."

"It's chocolate."

"But it's warm."

"Indeed."

She took another sip.

A longer one this time.

Then she leaned back.

Half of her body was still under the kotatsu.

"...I understand now."

"What?"

"Why people never want to leave a kotatsu."

I looked at her.

She pulled the blanket up a little higher.

"...it's like a warm trap."

"It's not a trap."

"But if you leave... it's cold."

"Yes."

She thought about that for a moment.

Then she said very seriously,

"...that is the definition of a trap."

I drank my coffee.

The TV was on in the corner of the living room.

A variety show was playing.

The sound of audience laughter came from the screen.

Yuna watched the television.

Then drank some more chocolate.

Then she shifted her legs under the kotatsu.

I could see the blanket move.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"It's like a secret heater."

"It is a heater."

"But it's hidden."

"Under the table."

She nodded in satisfaction.

As if her theory had just been confirmed.

A few minutes passed.

Yuna was sitting much more comfortably now.

Her legs were clearly stretched deep into the kotatsu.

She stared at the TV.

Then suddenly said,

"...I don't want to come out."

"You don't have to."

"Good."

She drank her chocolate again.

Then said in a serious tone,

"...we could eat noodles in here."

"We already ate."

"...tomorrow."

I didn't answer.

Yuna took another sip of her chocolate.

Then she suddenly looked at me.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"Do adults like kotatsu too?"

"Yes."

"Because they're warm?"

"Yes."

She thought about it for a moment.

Then said very logically,

"...that means the kotatsu is an important invention."

I nodded slightly.

"Quite important."

She gave a small smile.

Then leaned deeper into the kotatsu.

Once again, only her head remained outside.

A few seconds later, her voice came from under the blanket.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...I'm like a turtle."

I stared at the puffed-up kotatsu blanket.

"Inside your shell?"

"Yes."

She moved her legs again.

The blanket shifted.

"...very cozy."

The TV kept playing.

The faint sound of rain could still be heard outside the window.

The apartment felt warm.

And for a while, Yuna didn't say anything else.

She just held her chocolate mug with both hands.

And stayed hidden inside the kotatsu, like a little turtle that had found its new home.

Chapter 66: Bitter Things

The program on the TV changed.

Now it was a quiz show.

Colorful lights flashed on the screen.

Yuna watched it very seriously.

After a few minutes, I stood up.

I picked up my coffee mug.

Then walked to the window.

I cracked the window open a little.

The cold air slipped in.

Yuna immediately looked over.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"Why did you open it?"

"To let the air out."

She watched me pull a cigarette from my pocket.

Then looked at the window again.

"...oh."

I lit the cigarette.

A thin trail of smoke drifted upward.

Yuna watched it.

Her eyes traced the smoke as it moved higher.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"That smells."

"Yes."

"Why do you smoke it?"

I answered briefly.

"Habit."

She thought for a moment.

"...does it taste good?"

"No."

She immediately looked confused.

"...no?"

"It's bitter."

Yuna tilted her head.

"If it's bitter... why?"

I exhaled the smoke toward the window.

"Adults often do unnecessary things."

She stared at me for a few seconds.

Then said very honestly,

"...strange."

I didn't deny it.

Yuna sipped her chocolate again.

Then looked at my coffee mug.

"...coffee is also bitter."

"Yes."

"Do you like bitter things, Papa?"

"Not always."

"Then why drink it?"

"So I don't get sleepy."

She thought about that.

"...chocolate can do that too."

"It's not enough."

She looked dissatisfied with that answer.

Then she stared at the empty noodle bowl on the table.

"...instant noodles aren't bitter."

"True."

"They're good."

"Yes."

She looked at me again.

"...that means instant noodles are better than cigarettes."

I exhaled smoke again.

"A logical conclusion."

Yuna looked satisfied.

She leaned back against the kotatsu.

Half of her body sank back beneath the blanket.

The TV was still on.

A quiz contestant answered a question wrong.

A loud buzzer sounded.

Yuna gave a small laugh.

Then she looked at me again.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"When I grow up..."

She paused for a moment.

"...I don't want to smoke."

"That's a good choice."

"And I don't want bitter coffee."

"That's fine too."

She nodded.

"...but instant noodles are okay."

I said flatly,

"Sometimes."

She drank her chocolate again.

Her mug was almost empty now.

For a few seconds, she just watched TV.

Then suddenly she spoke again.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"If it rains again..."

I looked at her.

"What?"

She smiled a little.

"...can we play in the rain again?"

I thought about it for a moment.

Then answered briefly.

"If there is no lightning."

Yuna looked very satisfied with that answer.

She leaned deeper into the kotatsu.

Her eyes were still on the TV.

But her movements were starting to slow down.

Like someone who was getting sleepy without even realizing it.

Chapter 67: The Overly Comfortable Kotatsu

About ten minutes passed.

The program on the TV had changed again.

Now it was an afternoon drama.

I had already put out my cigarette and closed the window.

The air in the living room was warm again.

When I sat back down at the kotatsu, Yuna was still in the same position.

Only now, her eyes were half-closed.

She was still holding her chocolate mug with both hands.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"The TV right now... it talks a lot."

"It's a drama."

"...they're sad."

She stared at the screen for a few seconds.

Then said quietly,

"...I don't understand."

"You don't need to."

She gave a small nod.

Then sipped her chocolate again.

But it was a very small sip this time.

Her mug was almost empty.

A few seconds later, her head tilted slightly.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...the kotatsu makes me sleepy."

"That's normal."

She pulled the blanket up a little higher.

Now only her head was visible.

Her eyes began to blink more slowly.

The TV was still playing quietly.

The sound of the rain outside was barely audible anymore.

The apartment had become very quiet.

A few seconds passed.

Then Yuna spoke again in an even smaller voice.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...can we have instant noodles tomorrow?"

"Not every day."

"...once every two days?"

"Sometimes."

She thought about that for a moment.

"...once every three days?"

"That's still too often."

She let out a small sigh.

"...negotiations failed."

I didn't answer.

A few seconds later, her chocolate mug tilted slightly.

I took it from her before it fell.

Yuna didn't protest.

Her eyes were almost completely closed.

She was still leaning against the kotatsu.

Her half-dry hair was a little messy.

"...Papa."

"Hm."

"...today was fun."

I turned off the television.

The room instantly grew quieter.

"Yes."

Yuna didn't say anything more.

A few seconds passed.

I looked at her.

Her breathing was slow and steady.

She had fallen asleep.

Still half-buried beneath the kotatsu.

Like a little turtle that had truly found its nest.

I pulled the kotatsu blanket a bit tighter.

So the heat wouldn't escape.

Yuna shifted slightly in her sleep.

Then murmured softly.

"...Papa..."

I waited.

"...noodles... are good..."

I turned off the living room light.

Only the kitchen light remained.

And beneath the kotatsu, Yuna continued to sleep very comfortably.

As if the world today, was already warm enough for her.

Chapter 68 - 38.7°C

The sound of the rain was gone.

All that remained was the cold morning air.

Thin, seeping in through the gaps in the window.

I woke up as usual.

No alarm.

The wall clock read 06:12.

I looked toward the kotatsu.

The blanket was still lumped up.

Yuna was still inside.

Not moving.

Normally, she would be awake by now.

Not today.

I stood up.

Walked over.

Pulled back the kotatsu blanket a little.

Yuna's face came into view.

Pale.

Cheeks slightly flushed.

Her eyes were closed.

Her breathing was heavier than usual.

"...Yuna."

No answer.

I touched her forehead.

Hot.

Higher than normal.

I didn't say anything.

Stood right up.

Fetches the digital thermometer from the kitchen drawer.

Returned.

I nudged her shoulder slightly.

"...wake up."

Yuna winced slightly.

Her eyebrows twitched.

Her eyes half-opened.

"...Papa..."

Her voice was faint.

Hoarse.

"Open your mouth."

She didn't ask questions.

Just obeyed.

I slipped the thermometer in.

A few seconds.

A short beep.

I looked at the numbers on the screen.

38.7°C.

I put it away.

"You're taking the day off."

Yuna blinked slowly.

As if she needed time to process it.

"...today is... P.E. ..."

"You're staying home."

She didn't argue.

Her eyes closed again.

Her body curled up a little.

Her hand reached for the kotatsu blanket.

I pulled the blanket away.

Moved it aside.

"Move."

"...cold..."

"If you stay here, you'll only get colder."

I lifted her.

Light.

Lighter than a child her age should be.

She didn't resist.

Just loosely gripped my shirt.

I carried her to the futon.

Set her down gently.

She curled up again immediately.

I grabbed a blanket.

Covered her.

Only her face was visible.

Her eyes were half-open.

Unfocused.

"...Papa..."

"Hm."

"...Am I sick?"

"Yes."

"...I'm sorry..."

I looked at her for a moment.

"It's fine."

She fell silent.

Her breathing was slow.

I stood up.

Headed to the kitchen.

Filled a glass with water.

Grabbed a small cloth.

Dampened it.

Returned to the futon.

I sat beside her.

Lifted her head slightly.

"Drink."

She tried to sit up.

Failed.

I supported her back with one hand.

She drank a little.

Not much.

I didn't force her.

It was enough.

I set the glass down.

Picked up the damp cloth.

Placed it on her forehead.

Yuna winced slightly.

"...cold..."

"It is."

She didn't protest anymore.

Her eyes closed.

Her hand moved weakly.

Reaching for something.

Finding nothing.

Then stopped.

I watched her for a few seconds.

Sat there.

My hand touched the cloth on her forehead.

Making sure it didn't slip.

The room was quiet.

Only the sound of Yuna's breathing.

A little heavy.

Irregular.

I looked at the clock.

06:21.

Still early.

It seemed today was going to be a long day.

Chapter 69: Efficient Search

Today was going to be a long day.

I didn't move for a few seconds.

Watched her breathing pattern.

Still heavy.

But stable.

No coughing.

No strange noises from her throat.

Just heat.

A fever.

I stood up.

Picked up my phone from the small table.

Opened the browser.

Typed.

"child fever 38.7 what to do"

Several results came up.

I tapped the top one.

Scrolled.

Read.

The gist was simple.

Rest.

Fluids.

Monitor temperature.

Cold compresses.

Medication if necessary.

I looked back toward the futon.

Yuna wasn't moving.

I walked back over.

Sat down in the same spot.

I touched the cloth on her forehead.

Still cool.

Not dry yet.

Good.

"...Papa..."

Her voice was even fainter than before.

Her eyes didn't open.

"Hm."

"...I'm sorry..."

I took the cloth.

Rewet it in the small basin I had brought over.

Placed it back on her forehead.

"Stop that."

She fell silent.

No response.

But her shoulders slumped a little.

As if letting go of something.

I stood up again.

Headed to the kitchen.

Opened the fridge.

The usual contents.

Eggs.

Water.

A few vegetables.

No suitable ready-to-eat meals.

I thought for a few seconds.

Then grabbed a small pot.

Turned on the stove.

Filled it with water.

Added some leftover rice from last night.

A simple porridge.

The most efficient option.

While waiting, I checked my phone again.

Scrolled some more.

"child fever danger signs"

A list popped up.

seizures

unconsciousness

refusing to drink at all

rapid breathing

I looked toward the futon.

None of the above.

Safe.

For now.

The water began to boil.

I stirred slowly.

Breaking down the rice.

Added a pinch of salt.

That was enough.

No need for flavor.

Primary function: easy to swallow.

I turned off the stove.

Poured it into a small bowl.

Let it cool for a moment.

Then carried it over to the futon.

I sat back down.

"...Yuna."

Her eyes opened a little.

Slowly.

Unfocused.

"Time for breakfast."

She didn't respond immediately.

As if she needed time to process the words.

"...not hungry..."

"You have to."

I picked up the spoon.

Brought it closer.

She stared at the spoon for a few seconds.

Then tried to sit up again.

Her body wobbled.

I steadied her shoulder.

"Stay still."

"...I can do it..."

I lifted her back slightly.

Let her lean against my arm.

It wasn't the most stable position.

But it was enough.

I brought the spoon up again.

She slowly opened her mouth.

And swallowed.

Her movements were sluggish.

It took time.

I was in no rush.

Another spoonful.

She stopped halfway.

Closed her mouth.

Her brows furrowed slightly.

"...I'm..."

"Just a little more."

She shook her head weakly.

I stopped.

Looked at her for a few seconds.

It made sense.

I lowered the spoon.

"Drink this."

She didn't answer.

Just took a few sips.

Her eyes were already fluttering shut.

Her body went limp against my arm.

I supported her weight for a few seconds.

Then slowly laid her back down.

Pulled the blanket up to her neck.

Her hand slipped out.

Resting outside the blanket.

I stared at it.

For a few seconds.

Then tucked her hand back inside.

Wrapped the blanket tightly around her.

Heat efficiency.

I sat back down beside her.

Phone in hand.

Opened another tab.

"how long does normal child fever last"

Answer: 1-3 days.

I checked the clock again.

06:48.

Still early.

Very early.

I set the phone down beside me.

Stared at the ceiling for a moment.

Then looked back at Yuna.

The cloth on her forehead was getting warm.

I took it off.

Rewet it.

Placed it back.

She didn't react this time.

Only the sound of her breathing could be heard.

A little more regular now.

I sat there.

Not moving.

Waiting.

Chapter 70: Misplaced Priorities

Waiting.

A few minutes passed.

The clock read 07:02.

Yuna stirred weakly.

Her eyes fluttered open.

Clearer than before.

She stared at the ceiling.

For a few seconds.

Then shifted her gaze to the side.

Toward the clock on the wall.

It took time to focus.

But eventually, it settled there.

07:02.

Her eyes widened slightly.

Her brows twitched.

Her body tried to sit up.

Slowly.

Her hands pressed against the futon.

Unsteady.

I watched her.

Didn't move right away.

She forced herself.

Half-sitting.

Her body swayed.

"...Yuna."

She stopped.

Didn't look at me.

Still staring at the clock.

"...I'm... late..."

Her voice was hoarse.

Broken.

I stood up and moved a little closer.

"What are you doing."

She tried to straighten her back.

Failed.

Her body slumped forward.

"...I have to go to... school..."

I looked at her for a few seconds.

No change in my expression.

"Don't be stupid."

I held her shoulder.

Pushed her back down onto the futon.

"Sleep."

She didn't resist.

She didn't have the strength for it.

But her eyes remained open.

"...today is... PE..."

"You're taking the day off."

"...my grades..."

"Let them be."

She fell silent.

Her breathing hitched slightly.

Her eyes blinked slowly.

As if she wanted to say something else.

But decided against it.

Her body went limp against the futon again.

Her head sank into the pillow.

I pulled the blanket up.

Covering her to her neck.

Her hand slipped out a little.

I tucked it back in.

She didn't protest.

Her eyes slowly closed.

"...I'm sorry..."

I didn't answer.

I sat back down.

It seemed the fever was making her delirious.

To be expected.

I looked at the clock.

07:11.

Still early.

But her body temperature hadn't dropped significantly.

I grabbed the thermometer again.

Touched her shoulder.

"Sit up a little."

She reacted slower now.

Her eyes half-open.

I put the thermometer in.

A few seconds.

Beep.

38.5°C.

Down a little.

Not significant.

But at least it wasn't going up.

I put it away.

Then looked at the cloth on her forehead.

It was already warm.

I changed it again.

Routine.

Simple.

Repetitive.

The clock ticked.

08:03.

Light streamed through the window.

Brighter now.

The air began to change.

Not as cold as before.

I sat in the same spot.

Phone in hand.

Rereading the same things.

No new information.

Just confirmation.

Fluids.

Rest.

Monitor.

Yuna stirred.

More restless this time.

Her brows furrowed.

Her breathing shifted.

Faster.

Her hand slipped out of the blanket.

Grasping at empty air.

"...hot..."

I touched her forehead.

Still hot.

But different.

Her skin was slightly damp.

I looked closer.

A thin layer of sweat.

On her temples.

On her neck.

I paused for a few seconds.

Grabbed my phone.

Searched again.

"child fever starting to sweat"

An answer popped up.

The body was beginning to lower its temperature.

A normal response.

Good.

I turned back to Yuna.

She shifted slightly.

Uncomfortable.

The blanket was getting too warm.

I pulled it down a little.

Not all the way.

Just enough for ventilation.

Efficiency.

"...cold..."

"Hold on."

I adjusted it again.

Not too exposed.

Not too covered.

She stopped moving.

Her breathing was still fast.

But not as heavy as this morning.

I grabbed the glass of water.

Touched her shoulder.

"Drink."

She didn't respond.

I lifted her head slightly.

Easier this time.

She slowly opened her mouth.

Took a small sip.

More than before.

Good.

I lowered her back down.

The sweat was more visible now.

On her forehead.

On her neck.

At the tips of her hair.

I grabbed a small towel.

Wiped her gently.

She scrunched her face slightly.

"...Papa..."

"Hm."

"...I smell..."

"No."

She fell silent.

Her eyes remained closed.

But her shoulders relaxed a little.

This child overthinks too much.

That was my only thought about her.

I stood up.

Headed to the kitchen.

Grabbed the fever-reducing medicine.

Looked at the label.

Children's dosage.

I read it a few times.

Adjusted it for her weight.

She was lighter than average.

A small dose. Smaller meant safer.

I poured out a small amount.

Returned to the futon.

"Drink this."

She opened her eyes slightly.

Looked at the spoon.

Didn't refuse immediately.

Just hesitated.

"...bitter?"

"A little."

She was quiet.

For a few seconds.

Then opened her mouth.

I fed it to her slowly.

She swallowed.

Her face contorted slightly.

But she didn't protest.

I immediately gave her water.

She drank.

A lot more this time.

Then stopped.

Her head returned to the pillow.

Her breathing was still fast.

But no longer erratic.

I sat down again.

In the same spot.

Took the towel.

Wiped the sweat from her temples.

Then replaced the cloth on her forehead.

The clock read 09:12.

Midday was approaching.

And for the first time since morning—

her condition wasn't worsening.
