

# Accidentally become a father

Chapter 81: The System

---

Not falling behind.

Not pulling ahead.

---

The automatic doors opened.

A short beep from the sensor.

The cold air hit immediately.

Different from outside.

---

We walked in.

Bright lights.

Long rows of shelves.

Goods lined up.

Organized.

---

I paused for a moment.

Looked at the layout.

Unchanged.

Still the same as before.

---

The most efficient route:

left → back → right → cashier.

I walked.

Without hesitation.

---

Yuna followed.

Half a step behind.

Her eyes moved more actively.

Looking at the shelves.

The items.

The prices.

---

I grabbed a basket.

Handed it to Yuna.

"Hold this."

She took it.

---

We entered the first aisle.

Rice.

I grabbed one bag.

Standard weight.

Enough for a week.

Nothing more.

---

Yuna looked at the label.

"...why not buy the big one?"

I didn't stop.

"Heavy."

---

She thought about it.

"...if we buy more, we won't have to buy it again later..."

"We can't."

She turned to me.

"...why?"

"No space."

---

Yuna tried to recall.

The apartment.

Limited space.

"...Ooh..."

We moved on.

Next aisle.

Eggs.

I opened one carton.

Checked inside.

No cracks.

Closed it.

Into the basket.

---

Yuna watched.

Closer now.

"...Do you really have to check them?"

"Have to."

She nodded.

Committing it to memory.

---

We moved on.

Vegetables.

Cabbage.

I pressed it slightly.

Firm.

Fresh.

Took it.

Carrots.

Picked the straight ones.

Not the bent ones.

---

Yuna watched.

"...what about the bent ones?"

"They're fine."

I paused for a moment.

"...but they're harder to cut later."

She looked at the carrots in my hand.

Then at the others.

"...oh..."

---

We moved on.

Tofu.

Tempeh.

Grabbed two.

Enough.

Next aisle.

Meat.

---

I paused longer.

Checked the prices.

The weight.

Chicken was cheaper.

Took it.

---

Yuna looked at the labels.

Didn't speak.

But her eyes were reading.

We moved on.

Seasoning powders.

Onions.

Garlic and shallots.

Tomatoes.

Grabbed. Grabbed. Grabbed.

Grabbed.

Just enough.

---

Sugar.

One bag.

Half a kilo.

Salt wasn't needed.

Oil.

Still enough at home.

Skipped.

---

Last aisle.

Coffee.

I stopped.

For a few seconds.

---

Many choices.

Different brands.

Different prices.

I grabbed the same one as before.

Consistent.

No need to try anything new.

---

Yuna watched.

"...Papa always buys that one..."

"...don't you want to try another?"

"No."

She fell silent.

For a few seconds.

---

"...do you like that one?"

I looked at her.

Briefly.

"Yes."

She stopped talking.

Processing.

---

We moved on.

Toiletries.

Body wash.

Took it.

Shampoo.

Took it.

Toothpaste.

I grabbed one.

---

Yuna watched.

Then—

she grabbed another one.

I looked at her.

"...This is for backup..."

She spoke softly.

I didn't answer immediately.

Looked at the item.

---

Right.

A backup.

"Yeah."

She placed it in the basket.

Faster than before.

A small smile.

Formed on her face.

---

We headed to the cashier.

The basket was almost full.

Enough for a week.

Maybe more.

The items were placed down one by one.

The beep of the scanner.

Repeated.

---

The total appeared.

Quite a bit.

Not a problem.

They had to be bought anyway.

I paid.

A plastic bag was provided.

"One more."

I took two.

To distribute the weight.

Lighter.

---

I handed one to Yuna.

She took it.

No protests.

No complaints.

We walked out.

The automatic doors opened again.

The warm air returned.

Our steps returned to the street.

The load had increased.

But it was steady.

---

Beside me—

Yuna held her bag.

Not complaining.

"...Papa..."

"Hm."

"...if we bought more earlier..."

A few seconds.

"Heavy."

"Yeah."

She fell silent.

For a few seconds.

---

"...even this is already pretty heavy..."

"Want me to carry it?"

Yuna answered immediately.

Quick.

"No, I can do it."

Up ahead—

something came into view.

Something.

That was too big to be ignored.

---

Chapter 82: What Is Visible

---

Something too big to be ignored.

---

Up ahead—

a billboard.

Tall.

Wide.

Blocking a portion of the sky.

An image of a woman.

Perfect lighting.

Flawless skin.

A calculated smile.

---

Sayaka.

---

The product in her hands wasn't important.

The only visible focus was her face.

Yuna's steps slowed.

Slightly.

Almost imperceptibly.

Then, finally stopped.

---

I stopped too.

Half a step ahead of her.

No sound for a few seconds.

Only the noise of passing vehicles.

Fading away.

Yuna didn't speak.

---

I looked back.

Her eyes were pointed upward.

Unblinking.

Unmoving.

Her expression...

Didn't change much.

But it was enough to understand.

Longing.

---

No smile.

No anger.

Just... silence.

That was enough.

---

I looked at the billboard once.

Not for long.

No need to.

The problem couldn't be erased.

Too big.

Too exposed.

---

Solution:

divert attention.

I shifted my position slightly.

One step to the side.

Line of sight, cut off.

Partially.

Not completely.

---

"...Papa."

Yuna's voice was quiet.

"Yeah?"

She didn't continue.

---

I looked around.

Quickly.

A small shop across the street.

A freezer up front.

Ice cream.

---

"Come on, follow me."

I started walking.

Without waiting.

Yuna's steps were delayed for a moment.

Then, she followed.

---

We crossed the street.

Quick steps.

The shop door opened.

The chime of a small bell.

Cold air.

Different from outside.

---

I went straight to the freezer.

Opened it.

Cold air spilled out.

Many choices.

Different colors.

I turned to Yuna.

"...which one do you want?"

She looked at the freezer.

For a few seconds.

---

"...that one..."

She pointed.

I grabbed it.

Closed the freezer.

To the cashier.

Paid.

Quick.

---

We stepped outside again.

The billboard was still there.

Unchanged.

I opened the ice cream wrapper.

Handed it to Yuna.

---

"Here."

She took it.

She didn't eat it right away.

Just stared at it.

---

Then took a small bite.

I stood in front of her.

Same position as before.

Blocking part of her view.

She didn't look up again.

---

"...it's cold..."

"Obviously."

She took another bite.

A bigger one.

Silence.

---

Our footsteps started again.

Heading home.

The plastic shopping bags swayed gently in our hands.

A steady rhythm.

---

Behind us—

the billboard was left behind.

Still there.

But no longer looked at.

---

Chapter 83: The Park

---

The park.

A low iron fence.

Lined with ornamental plants.

The paint slightly faded.

Swings on the left.

A slide on the right.

A sandbox in the middle.

A water fountain.

A walking path.

---

I stopped at the entrance.

No gate.

Just an opening.

Yuna stopped beside me.

Her eyes immediately darted around.

Searching.

---

Two kids stood near the swings.

Waving their hands.

"...Yuna!"

Their voices were louder than usual.

Lighter.

Yuna raised her hand slightly.

A simple reply.

"...yeah..."

She didn't run straight away.

Just walked a bit faster.

Heading toward them.

---

I entered after her.

A normal pace.

Unrushed.

The ground was a little dry.

Uneven grass.

Paved walkways.

Some parts shifted out of place.

Yuna had arrived.

Standing in front of them.

"You took so long..."

One of them said.

"...sorry, I went shopping with Papa for a bit..."

Yuna replied.

The other one gave a small laugh.

"...that's fine, let's play..."

---

They moved toward the swings.

Without waiting any longer.

Yuna followed.

Her steps lighter than usual.

I stopped near a wooden bench.

Sat down.

---

The wood was slightly rough.

Uneven.

Not a problem.

I looked straight ahead.

Yuna sat on a swing.

Pushed gently by her friend.

Small movements.

Not too high.

The sound of creaking chains.

Repeating.

---

The other one tried the slide.

Up.

Down.

Up again.

A simple pattern.

Repeating.

Yuna didn't talk much.

But she wasn't completely silent.

She had made friends.

Good.

---

"...my turn..."

"...yeah, yeah..."

"...careful, don't push too hard..."

I looked at the other children.

In the corner of the park.

Playing by themselves.

Or with their parents.

---

No one was looking this way.

Alright.

An opportunity.

I leaned back slightly.

Looked at the sky.

Enough light.

Not too hot.

---

A few minutes passed.

Without any changes.

It was time.

I stood up.

I stepped toward the sandbox.

The corners of my lips lifted slightly.

There was a bit of hesitation.

But, there was excitement.

---

Dry sand.

Not compact.

Couldn't be shaped.

I stopped at the edge.

Looked around.

A small water tap nearby.

---

I walked over.

Cupped a little water.

With my hands.

Returned.

Poured it onto the sand.

A little.

Not much.

I repeated it.

A few times.

---

The sand changed.

Heavier.

More compact.

Enough.

I crouched down.

My hands dug into the sand.

Pressing down.

Forming a base.

Flat.

---

I began.

---

Chapter 84: Structure

---

I began.

The base was already compact.

Enough to hold a shape.

I looked around.

No tools.

I took a pack of cigarettes from my pocket.

Opened it.

Half full.

Took one out.

Lit it.

Smoke drifted upward.

Then faded.

---

The box was sturdy.

Flat.

It could be used.

I pressed it into the sand.

Forming a straight edge.

Pulled it back slowly.

---

The first line was formed.

I repeated it on the other side.

Connecting them.

Making a corner.

A square.

The foundation of the first block.

---

I took my lighter.

Held it like a ruler.

Drew a thin line down the middle.

A road.

Consistent width.

It couldn't change.

I stopped for a moment.

Checked the proportions.

Enough.

---

I gathered more sand.

Piled it on the side of the road.

Pressed it with the cigarette box.

Gently.

Compact.

The first house.

Simple.

A small block.

---

I smoothed the sides.

Pressed gently.

Sharper corners.

A roof wasn't necessary.

Inefficient.

No tools.

I drew another line.

A second road.

Intersecting.

An intersection.

---

I stopped.

Calculating the distance.

Too close.

I erased a part of it.

Leveled it out again.

Built it again.

Wider.

---

Now it was enough.

I looked around again.

A used plastic cup near the bench.

Empty.

I picked it up.

Cleaned the inside a bit.

---

Went to the water tap.

Filled it.

Not full.

Returned.

Poured a little water onto a specific spot.

Not every part needed to be wet.

Only the main structures.

I pressed down again.

More compact now.

---

I used the cup as a mold.

Pressed it into the sand.

Lifted it.

A cylinder.

A water tank.

---

I made two.

No need for more.

I picked up a small twig from the ground.

From who knows where.

Straight enough.

I planted it.

On the side of the road.

A utility pole.

A streetlamp.

---

I drew a thin line from one to the other.

With the tip of the lighter.

Lines.

I stopped.

Looked at the whole thing.

---

The first block was done.

I moved on to the right side.

Repeated the pattern.

Not identical.

No need to be.

Small variations.

For spatial efficiency.

---

The sand was starting to dry in some parts.

I added a little more water.

Not too much.

If it was too wet—

the structure would collapse.

I pressed down again.

Reinforcing it.

---

A few minutes passed.

More roads.

More houses.

The intersections were clearer.

The form began to take shape.

---

A small town.

---

I didn't look around.

Focused.

My hands kept moving.

Without hesitation.

Small mistakes were instantly fixed.

Not left unchecked.

The structure expanded.

More complex.

---

It was enough.

For now.

---

Chapter 85: Observer

---

It was enough.

For now.

---

I stopped.

Looked at the whole thing.

The main road.

The side streets.

The housing blocks.

The tanks.

---

It could still be expanded.

But not now.

---

Footsteps approaching.

Light.

I didn't turn around.

"...Papa..."

---

Yuna.

"Yes? What is it."

She stopped beside me.

Not too close.

Her eyes fell to the sand.

Silence.

A few seconds.

Then longer.

---

"...what is this..."

"A sand city."

She didn't answer right away.

Looked again.

In more detail.

---

Her fingers moved slightly.

As if wanting to touch it.

But stopped.

"A main road..."

She pointed slightly.

"...are these houses?"

"Yes."

Silence again.

---

Two quick sets of footsteps approached.

"...what's that?"

One of her friends.

"...when did you make it?"

The other one.

They immediately stopped on the other side.

Leaning in a bit.

Looking.

---

"...wow..."

A small sound slipped out.

"...it's so pretty..."

"...how is it so straight..."

I didn't answer.

I wasn't being asked directly.

---

Yuna remained silent.

Still watching.

One of them pointed at the road.

"...is this for cars?"

"Yes."

"...where are the cars?"

"There aren't any yet."

Because they were hard to make.

---

She paused.

Thinking.

"...oh..."

The other one pointed at the water tank.

"...what's this?"

"A water tank."

"...what for?"

I looked at her for a moment.

".?."

She nodded.

Not fully understanding.

But accepting it.

---

Yuna finally sat down.

Slowly.

Near me.

Her hands sank into the sand.

Slowly.

She scooped up a little.

Placed it on an empty side.

I watched.

"It's empty here..."

---

She pressed the sand.

Messy.

Uneven.

I took the cigarette box.

Pressed it gently against the side she had made.

Tidying it up.

---

Yuna watched.

Closer.

She copied me.

With her own hands.

Not perfect.

But better.

---

Her two friends sat down as well.

Closer now.

"I want to join too..."

They began touching the sand.

Their movements were uncoordinated.

But not destructive.

Still careful.

---

I watched.

Didn't stop them.

Let them be.

Because they were someone else's kids.

Other sounds started approaching.

Small footsteps.

Other kids.

Two.

Then three.

They stopped at the edge.

Didn't jump right in.

---

"...what are you doing..."

"...building a city..."

One of them answered.

"...wow..."

They moved a bit closer.

Still hesitant.

One of them squatted down.

Looking closer.

"...can I join?"

I didn't answer right away.

Looked at their hands.

---

Not rough.

Not destructive.

"Don't destroy it."

They nodded immediately.

Quickly.

"Alright."

They stepped in.

Sat on the empty sides.

---

The sand began to shift more.

No longer just one pair of hands.

Several.

The structure changed.

Slightly.

I fixed the parts that needed it.

Without comment.

---

They watched.

Copied.

Slowly—

the patterns began to match.

Not neat.

But no longer random.

---

In the distance—

an adult was standing.

Looking in this direction.

Not approaching.

Just observing.

A few seconds.

Then closer.

Slow footsteps.

---

Stopped a few meters away from the sandbox.

Their eyes cast downward.

At the structure.

Not speaking.

---

My hands returned to the sand.

Continuing.

The sun rose a little higher.

The light grew brighter.

Shadows grew shorter.

---

Time continued to pass.

---

Chapter 86: What Was Left Behind

---

Time continued to pass.

---

The sand kept shifting.

Added to.

Smoothed out.

The roads multiplied.

Grew longer.

Branched out further.

More houses appeared.

Not same.

But still following a pattern.

A few buildings took shape.

It would be quite terrifying.

If it collapsed.

—

The children's hands began to slow down.

Not as haphazard as the beginning.

They observed first.

Before making a move.

Yuna was beside me.

Still in the exact same spot.

Her hands were dirty, covered in sand.

Left uncleaned.

---

"...there's still an empty spot right here..."

She filled it in.

Neater than before.

I didn't help.

There was no need.

She already knew what to do.

---

The sounds around us shifted.

Growing sparser.

The laughter faded.

Footsteps walked away.

One child stood up.

"...I'm heading home..."

The others nodded.

"...Me too..."

They left.

One by one.

Leaving fewer of us behind.

---

An adult called out from afar.

A name was spoken.

The child who had been helping stood up.

"...I'm going home..."

"Watch out! Don't step on it."

"Sorry..."

He left.

That was close.

The city was almost flattened by a Titan.

Now there were only a few left.

And then—

just two.

---

Yuna's friend stood up.

Dusting off her hands.

"...Yuna..."

"...I'm gonna go home now..."

"...yeah, get home safe..."

She glanced at me for a moment.

"...see you later, Mister..."

"...Yeah, get home safe."

I didn't expect her to speak without hesitation.

Unlike before.

---

She left.

Footsteps fading away.

Silence.

Only the sound of the wind.

And the faint shifting of sand.

---

I stopped.

My hands stilled.

I looked up.

The sun was high.

Higher than before.

It had been too long.

I checked the time.

11:35

---

Past the time we were supposed to leave.

It was already noon.

"...Yuna, let's go home."

Yuna didn't answer immediately.

Still looking down.

---

A city of sand.

A complex yet orderly structure.

A few seconds passed.

"...okay..."

She stood up.

Slowly.

Sand fell from her hands.

Little by little.

---

I took my phone out of my pocket.

And took a picture of it.

From several angles.

Horizontally.

From the top.

The bottom corner.

The top corner.

Up close.

The end of the street.

From above the buildings.

---

Ready to be edited.

Add some visual effects.

A cinematic background.

A scene is brought to life.

---

I stood up.

Taking one last look.

Unconsciously.

The corners of my lips lifted.

A faint smile forming without me even realizing it.

The main roads remained intact.

The houses still stood.

The tanks were still in place.

A few tall buildings defied the sky.

---

It wasn't perfect.

But.

It stirred the urge to become a Titan and trample it all.

---

I turned around.

Yuna followed.

Her steps slow at first.

Before falling into step with mine.

We walked out of the park.

---

Behind us—

the little city remained.

Unguarded.

Unprotected.

Undestroyed.

We didn't look back again.

---

Chapter 87: Bored

—

Midday.

I lay on the floor.

One hand behind my head.

The other holding a cigarette.

A thin trail of smoke rose.

Drifting and swirling.

Then vanishing.

—

On the low table—

a glass of coffee.

Half full.

Already cold.

Beside it—

Yuna's notebook.

A pencil.

An eraser.

All neatly arranged.

—

Yuna sat at the table.

Her back hunched slightly.

Still writing.

One final stroke.

She stopped.

Her pencil hovered in the air for a moment.

As if making sure she hadn't missed anything.

Then she set it down.

Slowly.

She closed the notebook.

Pushed it slightly forward.

Finished.

She didn't move right away.

Just sat there.

Staring at the table.

—

"Papa..."

"Hm."

"...I'm bored."

I exhaled the smoke.

Slowly.

Formed a ring.

It floated for a long time.

The corner of my lips tugged upward.

Nice.

—

"Bored?"

"Yeah..."

"Why."

Yuna gave a slight shrug.

"...I don't know..."

"...There's nothing to do."

I looked up at the ceiling.

The smoke ring was still there.

It touched the plaster.

And dissipated.

—

"Same here, then."

Yuna turned her head slightly.

Looking at me.

"...You too, Papa?"

"Yeah."

She fell silent.

Then shifted her posture slightly.

Relaxing a bit more.

"Who says you're bored? You're busy playing with smoke by yourself."

"Haha, fair enough."

"Umm... Papa..."

"...Do you have any ideas?"

"Ideas?"

I turned my head.

"Yeah..."

I thought for a moment.

"How about a nap?"

Yuna immediately shook her head.

Quickly.

"No."

"...I'm not sleepy."

"Watch TV, then."

She glanced at the television.

Paused for a moment.

"...There's nothing good on."

"Read a book."

"No."

A swift reply.

"Go play with your friends."

Yuna shook her head again.

"...I'd just be a bother..."

Silence.

—

I pushed myself up.

Sat.

Stared at Yuna.

She stared right back.

A deadpan expression.

But her eyes weren't entirely empty.

I averted my gaze.

Looked around the room.

The low table.

The kotatsu.

The kitchenette.

The blank walls.

Nothing of interest.

—

"...Yeah..."

I muttered quietly.

"...How boring."

Yuna didn't argue.

Just gave a slow nod.

I reached for the phone beside me.

Lit up the screen.

Checked the data plan.

Still active.

Plenty left.

I held it out toward Yuna.

"Here."

"...Watch some videos or play a game."

"...Whatever you want."

Yuna took it.

Carefully.

Like an object that didn't belong to her.

Which it wasn't.

—

She stared at the screen.

Then started swiping.

Slowly.

Up.

Down.

She didn't open anything.

Just scrolled back and forth on the home screen.

Yuna's eyebrows furrowed slightly.

"How do I use this."

I let out a short sigh.

Raised a hand.

Brushed my hair back.

Mildly exasperated.

What a pain—a kid from the modern era, yet somehow completely tech-illiterate.

"Figure it out yourself."

"You'll get the hang of it eventually."

Yuna stared at the screen again.

Looking more serious now.

Her finger tapped an icon.

Nothing happened.

No internet connection.

Please turn on mobile data or connect to Wi-Fi.

—

She tried again.

Tapped another icon.

Compass. (Needs recalibration.)

Maps. (No internet.)

Gallery. (Empty.)

Settings. (Too much text—immediately returned to the home screen.)

She hesitated.

A few minutes later.

She finally set the phone back down on the table.

Gently.

She lowered her head.

Rested her cheek against the tabletop.

"I'm bored..."

—

Her voice was slightly muffled.

Her hair fell messily over her face.

She didn't bother fixing it.

I let out a soft sigh.

Then picked up the phone again.

Sat back against the wall.

"Come here."

I tapped the floor next to me.

"...Watch with me."

Yuna lifted her head.

Slowly.

She stood up.

Walked over to me.

And sat down by my side.

—

I unlocked the phone.

Saw that the mobile data wasn't on yet.

I toggled it on.

Tapped one of the icons.

**YoTube.**

The home screen loaded.

Random videos.

In no particular order.

I tapped one.

Wood being cut.

Sawdust falling.

I watched.

Yuna watched too.

Quiet.

A few seconds passed.

I swiped down.

Another video.

A machine.

Loud noises.

Swiped again.

A painting.

Colors bleeding into one another.

Yuna leaned forward slightly.

"...This one is pretty..."

I didn't reply.

Just swiped again.

Music.

Someone singing.

—

Yuna glanced up at me.

"...Which one do you like, Papa?"

I paused for a second.

"...I don't know."

Yuna didn't reply.

But she didn't complain about being bored anymore.

—

Chapter 88: Moving Things

—

"...I don't know."

I swiped the screen again.

Another video appeared.

Someone fixing an engine.

Hands covered in oil.

A socket wrench lying on the floor.

Fast movements.

---

Yuna leaned in slightly.

"...His hands are dirty..."

"Yeah."

"...Why didn't he wash them first..."

"...If he kept washing them, he'd never finish."

"...Oh..."

She gave a small nod.

Not entirely convinced.

I swiped again.

A video of someone drawing.

A straight line.

Slow.

Yuna held her breath for a second.

"...Don't mess up..."

The line stayed straight.

"...Safe..."

I glanced at her.

"...Why are you the one getting tense..."

Yuna fell silent.

"Yeah... I don't know..."

---

I swiped again.

A few videos passed by.

Without pausing for long.

I exited the app.

Opened something else.

A game.

A black screen.

A small image.

A dinosaur.

I tapped the screen.

The dino ran.

Then—

jumped.

Over a cactus.

Yuna immediately leaned forward.

"...Is it running by itself?"

"Yeah."

"...Why?"

"...That's just how the game works."

"...What if it hits something?"

"Just watch."

A few seconds passed.

The dino hit a cactus.

Game over.

Yuna immediately lifted her head a little.

"...It died..."

—

I restarted it right away.

Running again.

Jump.

Jump.

Faster.

Yuna moved slightly every time the dino jumped.

As if she were dodging too.

"...Watch out..."

"...There's another one..."

"...Jump..."

I tapped too early.

The dino crashed again.

"...Ah..."

Restarting again.

Yuna was completely focused now.

Her eyes never left the screen.

"...Papa..."

"Hm."

"...I want to try."

I stopped.

Handed over the phone.

"Here."

Yuna took it immediately.

Faster than before.

—

She stared at the screen.

Serious.

The game started.

The dino ran.

Yuna tapped the screen—

too early.

The dino jumped for no reason.

"...Eh..."

She waited.

A cactus approached.

She panicked.

Tapped repeatedly.

The dino jumped too high.

Then fell—

hitting the cactus right in front of it.

Game over.

Yuna fell silent.

"...It runs too fast..."

"Noob."

"No, it's my first time playing... so it's only natural, Papa..."

She tried again.

This time—

she waited longer.

Too long.

Crashed again.

—

"...This is hard..."

"Okay, okay."

I didn't help.

She tried again.

Now she was starting to learn.

Waiting.

Tapping.

The dino jumped perfectly.

Yuna immediately sat up a little straighter.

"...I did it..."

Then the second cactus came.

She panicked again.

Tapped twice.

The dino did a weird jump.

Crashed.

"...I can't do it..."

"You should be able to."

She paused for a moment.

Staring at the screen.

Then tried again.

—

Her movements were slower now.

More careful.

I reached for my coffee glass.

Took a sip.

I finished it.

Beside me—

"...Eh..."

"...Eh..."

"...Eh..."

With every jump.

Her tone shifted.

"...Yeah..."

"...Yeah..."

Then—

"...Ah!"

Game over again.

—

I set the glass down.

Yuna didn't give up.

She restarted it immediately.

Even more focused now.

I leaned back against the wall.

Slowly lowered my body.

Lying down again.

The quiet sounds from the game could still be heard.

"...I can do this..."

"...Come on, jump, come on..."

"...Eh..."

I closed my eyes.

The sounds lingered.

They weren't bothersome.

In fact...

Like background noise.

Soft.

Fading further away.

Dark.

...

Suddenly, I felt a touch on my hand.

A voice sounded so close.

"...Papa..."

I opened my eyes.

Slightly.

The lighting had changed.

Warmer.

It was already late afternoon.

Yuna was standing beside me.

Holding the phone.

"...Papa..."

"...The battery died..."

I pushed myself up.

Sat.

—

"Alright."

"...Hand it here."

She handed the phone over.

I took it.

Stood up.

Walked over to the outlet.

Grabbed the charger.

Plugged it in.

The screen lit up.

Faintly.

0%

I set it down.

Yuna watched.

Quiet.

Observing.

A few seconds passed.

"...If it's getting low..."

"...you have to charge it... don't let it completely die like this."

"Okay..."

She gave a small nod.

"Later, when it's full... can I play again?..."

"Sure... but don't play too often..."

"Papa... earlier, I got a score of 700."

"Oh... well, I've gotten 1200 before."

"Really, Papa... I'll beat you soon."

I walked toward the kitchen.

Yuna followed close behind.

—

"Try it, then. If you can."

—

Chapter 89: A Collapsing World

—+—

The television played quietly.

The final episode.

The characters on screen stood at the edge of the world.

A dark sky.

Fierce winds.

The final lines of dialogue.

The music swelled.

Then—

cut to black.

Ending.

Yuna remained seated.

Her eyes glued to the screen.

"...It's over..."

—

I only caught a glimpse of it.

Turns out, it was just an anime.

She picked up the remote.

Click.

The TV turned off.

The room immediately grew quieter.

Outside—

it was raining.

Heavier than usual.

The sound of water drumming against the window.

Yuna stood up.

She walked over to the corner of the room.

Opened a small box.

A witch's hat.

A short wand, about two handspans long.

A cloak.

She took them out, one by one.

And put them on.

The hat was slightly too big.

Covering part of her eyes.

The cloak wasn't long.

But it was enough to make her look the part.

She turned around.

Facing me.

Silent.

Waiting.

—

I looked at her.

Met her gaze.

Then let out a small sigh.

Do I really have to do this...

Alright...

I sat up straighter.

Picked up my phone.

Searched for something.

A movie or anime soundtrack.

Storm & Disaster OST

[Can be found at this link:

Link = <https://> ]

Heavy tones.

The final battle.

The end of the world.

Destruction.

I hit play.

Sound filled the room.

Blending with the rain outside.

A perfect fit.

—

I stood up.

Slowly.

Took a few steps into the middle of the room.

Wiped my face with my hand.

Dampened my hair slightly with some water.

Cold.

I returned.

Standing in front of Yuna.

A moment of silence.

We stared at each other.

Alright, time to begin.

Then—

I spoke.

In a voice lower than usual.

—

"The world is now on the brink of destruction."

The rain outside sounded louder.

"The Demon King has fully awakened..."

Yuna didn't move.

But her eyes were focused.

"Dark clouds shroud the world."

"...thunderstorms rage everywhere."

I paced slowly to the side.

"One by one, the houses burn."

"...and there is no one who can stop it."

I stopped.

Stared straight ahead.

Action.

—

Then, I let out a deep laugh.

"Hahaha...!"

My tone shifted.

"I have awakened..."

"...the world desires destruction."

"...and so, I rise."

I raised my hand slightly.

"The gates of hell..."

I paused.

Took a breath.

"...are open!"

I stomped my foot lightly.

"Craaash..."

Yuna flinched slightly.

But she didn't step back.

Instead, she took a step forward.

Raised her wand.

"Papa—!!"

She stopped.

—

Furrowed her brow a little.

"...Eh..."

She corrected her stance.

"Demon King!!"

Her voice was louder now.

"I am Yuna!!"

She pointed at me.

Her wand trembled slightly.

"If the Demon King is going to destroy the world..."

She took a deep breath.

"...then I will be the one to stop him!"

I looked at her.

Then smiled faintly.

"Let's see you try."

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Chapter 90: The Chosen Hero

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"Let's see you try."

I took a single step forward.

Slowly.

The music was still playing.

Heavier now.

The rain outside beat down harder.

—

I raised my hand slightly.

"And amidst that destruction..."

I began to circle.

Pacing around Yuna.

"...emerges a single hope."

Yuna tensed slightly.

I stopped behind her.

"A hero."

I raised my hand toward the ceiling.

"Born of divine miracle."

Yuna immediately raised her wand.

Higher.

"Hero Yuna!"

Suddenly, lightning struck.

The window flashed white in an instant.

A deafening boom echoed.

Yuna flinched.

Almost covering her ears.

I lowered my hand.

Slowly.

"The legendary witch..."

Silence.

—

The rain poured even heavier outside.

I backed away again.

And faced her once more.

Yuna took a step forward.

"Firebolt!!"

She swung her wand at me.

Fast.

I tilted my head slightly.

"Missed."

I moved my hand in a clawing motion.

"Claw Slash."

Yuna took a step back.

"Mana Shield!!"

She raised both hands.

Her wand nearly slipped.

I stopped.

Watching her.

"You won't be able to destroy it."

Yuna stared at me.

Serious.

—

I smirked faintly.

"Says who."

I raised my hand high.

"Telekinesis."

I looked up at the ceiling.

"Be drawn in..."

I gripped the empty air.

"...and fall."

I lowered my hand slowly.

"This is a meteor."

Yuna immediately looked up.

Reflexively.

"...me-me..."

She panicked a little.

"...what's a meteor, Papa...?"

I stayed in position.

Hand still raised.

"A meteor is a very large celestial object."

I lowered my hand a bit more.

"And I am bringing it down right now."

Yuna fell silent.

For a few seconds.

"...Oh..."

Then her expression changed.

"That's cheating!"

I didn't answer.

"Use your imagination."

—

Yuna immediately started thinking.

Hard.

Her eyes darted left, then right.

Then—

she raised her hand.

"Mana Hand!!"

I paused slightly.

"...What?"

"I'm going to throw it into the sky!"

She swung her wand upward.

I immediately reacted.

"Gah—!!"

I took a step back.

"Impossible!!"

I stared upward.

"To think Hero Yuna was this strong...!"

I opened my hand.

The meteor—

was "stopped."

Then it flew back up.

And disappeared.

I looked at Yuna again.

She smiled slightly.

Confident.

—

But she didn't stop there.

"Ancient vine seeds!"

She thrust her wand toward the floor.

Using her left hand for support.

"...Grow!"

She raised the wand.

I looked down.

"..."

Imaginary vines began to "wrap" around me.

I shifted my body slightly.

As if restrained.

"These vines..."

I pulled my hand.

"...won't be able to stop me."

I stopped.

Looked at her.

—

"God Mode."

I stomped my foot.

Lightly.

Crackk!

Then I moved fast.

Behind Yuna.

Wrapping my arms around her from behind.

Not tightly.

But enough to keep her from moving.

"I've caught you... Hero Yuna..."

I leaned down slightly.

"Now..."

I paused for a moment.

"what are you going to do? Hmm?"

Yuna froze.

"...Uhh..."

She looked to the right.

To the left.

"...U-Um..."

Yuna remained frozen.

Her hand half-raised.

I stayed behind her.

Motionless.

Waiting.

—

"I..."

She tried to think fast.

"I..."

Nothing came out.

I leaned in slightly.

"Are you done?"

"Not yet."

"Hurry up."

"Hold on..."

Silence.

—

The sound of rain continued outside.

The music was still playing.

Yuna suddenly thrust her wand forward.

"Flash!"

I paused.

"...What?"

"To blind you."

"It has no effect."

"...Why..."

"The Demon King is immune to light."

"Oh..."

She started to panic again.

Trying to move.

Struggling.

To break free.

"...Hmm... a valiant effort..."

I brought my lips close to her ear.

"...but... it is not enough."

I kept my hold on her.

"Your time is almost up."

"...Wait..."

She took a sharp breath.

"...I have one more..."

I stayed silent.

Giving her time.

Right at that moment—

Ding-dong.

The sound of the doorbell.

—

I released my grip.

"Hold on."

I walked to the door.

The music was still playing in the background.

A little out of place now.

I grabbed the doorknob.

And opened it.

The door swung open.

Someone was standing outside.

Before I could get a clear look—

"Explosion!!"

THUD!

Something hit my face.

Soft.

But hard enough.

A pillow.

I didn't move.

The pillow dropped to the floor.

I looked straight ahead.

The person at the door—

froze.

I remained silent too.

—

Behind me—

Yuna was standing.

In a dramatic pose.

Her wand pointing forward.

"...Direct hit..."

—+—