I never truly expected much from each moment in this fleeting life: as long as I could still fulfill what was required of me, everything would still feel like enough.

BANG!

I still remember the sound of that door. The sound of wood being slammed so hard that the family portrait in the living room trembled. Even without looking at the clock, I knew father had just come home. I automatically stopped typing my nursing care report on my laptop. My fingers hovered above the keyboard as mother's voice came from the direction of the kitchen, asking me to check on my younger sibling again.

Days like these were nothing out of the ordinary. A continuation so constant that I never even wondered when moments like this would finally come to an end.

Whenever father started raising his voice, the first thing I did was never to argue or ask what had happened. I made sure my youngest sister went into her room. After that, I checked whether my younger brother was wearing his headset so he wouldn't hear the commotion. Then I hoped my older brother hadn't been provoked into losing his temper yet. Because once father and my older brother started shouting back at each other, it was obvious this house would turn into a battlefield.

The moment I arrived at my younger sister's room, I felt relieved to find her quietly doing her homework without the slightest disturbance. I let out a breath—warning her to stay in her room so she wouldn't add any more chaos.

My sister wasn't entirely a child anymore. Or rather, not too young to understand what was happening in this house. Let me be the one to face that temper. Even if I was scolded over and over again, if not for this love I still carried; I probably never would have endured.

The moment I stepped out of my sister's room, my father raised his voice. His fierce eyes landed on me. “Stop wasting money!”

I didn't respond to anything, knowing that behavior was something I had memorized by heart. There were better things to focus on instead, to divert part of my mind elsewhere: to ignore the things that would only hurt me even more and replace them with something more useful.

This family—*at least part of it*—was filled with broken people. Perhaps that was too harsh a way to describe dysfunctional emotions, but at least that was how it felt to me. Ever since I was little, I had never been good with words. When father got angry, I stayed silent. When my older brother shouted at me, I chose to listen and fix whatever was considered my fault. When mother cried quietly in the kitchen, I chose not to say anything—or rather, I deliberately held myself back so that this ticking time bomb would never explode one day.

This habit was painful. And because of it, everyone, even after I had grown into an adult, always said the same thing: *that I was* a quiet and patient child. When in truth, I was simply someone who didn't know how to deal with people pouring out their problems without feeling my entire body start to tremble.

A final-year nursing student had more than enough terrible moments trying to maintain good grades. Even though my GPA was excellent, stability alone could never save me from a broken family. My academic advisor probably liked me. But what was the point—when recognition from the people closest to me felt almost nonexistent, without a single compliment or even the slightest appreciation for everything I had accomplished?

It didn't matter that I had been accepted for clinical practice at a fairly large hospital or that patients said I was kind—it didn't matter that, despite all those problems, I genuinely loved my work. That recognition never came.

What was it that I actually... hoped for?

"Good job."

Was I hoping to hear those simple words come from my father's lips—or at the very least, from my mother; one of the people I still loved?

Father never saw any of that. The only thing he saw was one thing. I had failed to graduate *cum laude*, and he mocked me for it over and over again. And all my efforts throughout the years were nothing more than meaningless elements because there was never any mark of recognition printed on my diploma.

Then what was the true meaning of all the effort I had put in all this time—why had none of it ever felt meaningful?

If I graduated, the first face I imagined was my mother's. Or my younger sister's, who would probably hug me. Praise from my father? I had never expected it from him, not even once.

I only wanted him to be proud. *Just once*; of the graduation I was about to dedicate to him. So that he would never complain about my failure again.

"Putri!"

For some reason, someone's voice sounded far away, something that felt so faint I couldn't truly make it out. And when I listened more carefully, that voice... was telling me to wake up.

"Putri! Wake up!"

My eyelids felt unbearably heavy—I wasn't exaggerating. Combined with the fact that every inch of my body ached terribly, yet somehow even lifting a single finger felt impossible.

And the next sensation I felt? Cold. I found myself wondering, shouldn't I be in the nurses' station? I tried to remember what had happened last night, only to realize that I really hadn't gone back to sleep.

The reason was always simple: finishing the revisions for Chapter V until three in the morning. After that, I immediately got ready to head to the hospital for the morning shift. Even during my break, I still had time to open my laptop, check my academic advisor's comments, then run back to the ward when the patient call bell rang.

I had even forgotten the last time I ate properly. Yesterday's bread? Or... the day before that? Wait, had I even eaten at all this past week?

I only remembered feeling thirsty, something that kept irritating my throat, yet I always put it off because I felt there was still work that needed to be finished. Because that morning I remembered, there was an elderly patient struggling to breathe.

Compared to my own needs, that patient was the more urgent priority. A senior nurse called me to grab some equipment... but for some reason, the edges of my vision suddenly went dark.

And then it became like this.

I paused for a moment to think.

Maybe my blood sugar had dropped. But then why were those shouts becoming clearer? A sharp, piercing pain throbbed through my head. Had I hit something?

“Putri! She's not breathing!”

“Call the doctor!”

“Resuscitation, hurry!”

I wanted to say that I was fine. That I just needed to sleep—maybe for a little while. Because my eyes, ah... they were so heavy. But why couldn't my lips move? Every sound gradually drifted farther away, and everything went dark. When I regained consciousness, for some reason I was standing in a place that was completely black.

"Where am I?"

And it was a question filled with imbalance, curiosity, every fear—and confusion that could never have an answer.

Strangely enough, I heard my own voice echo. There was no reply. I walked without knowing where I was going for a length of time I never even counted. Every second in this place felt slow, and had the concept of hours ever existed here to begin with? Time itself seemed meaningless. I didn't know where my feet were carrying me.

In the midst of a despair that could never be answered by that question, I heard the sound of someone sobbing. The heartbreaking cries belonged to a little girl; standing beyond a faint light in the distance.

Her thin body reminded me of children who had never received proper nutrition. It was easy to picture, considering she had white hair that was terribly tangled as well. But the strangeness of her appearance truly began when I noticed a pair of small furry ears on top of her head... and why was there a striped tail curled limply behind her?

She hugged her knees as she cried. I slowly approached her, not to introduce myself. I simply wanted to make sure whether she needed help, whether she was alright—and what had happened to her.

The little girl turned her head, and the second she saw my face, she cried even harder. I crouched down in front of her in a panic. Then, hesitantly, I asked, "What's wrong?"

She lifted her face. Her pink eyes were filled with fear. I felt that surge of empathy without realizing it—especially when her trembling lips suddenly called out for her mother. The sound cut deeply through me.

“Mommy won't wake up anymore...”

My chest tightened. That was the painful reality every child had to face, especially when an unwanted farewell came without anyone being able to stop it. I didn't even know this child. And yet the sense of loss filling her eyes felt so real. Without thinking, I opened my arms.

“Come here.”

The little girl hesitated, wondering what I was about to do. But I hugged her. Tightly. Her body was cold—but that didn't stop me from gently rubbing her back, just as I used to comfort my little sister whenever she had a nightmare.

“It's okay now. You're not alone.”

Little by little, her crying subsided. That sense of comfort managed to ease the weight in her chest, even if I hadn't truly done much. Still, hearing that she was no longer sobbing like before made me feel relieved.

I didn't know why. But when her smile slowly appeared, something about it left me mesmerized—it softened little by little, followed by the words that slipped from her lips.

“Thank you.”

I was about to answer, or say something. But that tiny body began to glow. And as the light radiating from her body grew brighter, she simply disappeared into thousands of tiny fragments drifting away like fireflies.

What... was that?

Unfortunately, the darkness swallowed me once again.

The first thing I felt at that moment was how badly my stomach hurt. And the cause of that sensation wasn't because something had stabbed me or because I had fallen. Rather, it was hunger.

I had felt hungry before, or at least whenever I forgot to eat properly, and usually my friends would remind me to take care of my health despite how busy I was on campus. But the definition of 'hunger' had long since drifted away as I became more focused on dealing with matters that were far more urgent in my work. This hunger, however, was the kind that came when I couldn't eat because there was *nothing* to eat, not because I *didn't want* to.

I coughed violently, and dust rushed into my nose. Before me stretched a narrow room with rotting wooden walls. The roof was riddled with holes, allowing dull gray light to seep through the cracks. The damp, suffocating smell made me uncomfortable, and because of that I forced myself to sit up. That was when I noticed something strange about my body, especially when I saw how short my arms were.

"Huh?"

My voice came out high-pitched, like that of a small child. I tried to process everything as I touched my own face. These round cheeks, this tiny jaw—long white hair cascading over my shoulders. I noticed something moving above my head.

My heart began pounding even faster. This wasn't my body. This wasn't... Indonesia. This wasn't even—

Creeeak.

In the middle of the room, a woman hung motionless from a rope tied to a wooden beam.

“AHH—!”

Dead! The woman hanging there was clearly dead. Her body had already gone stiff, and her feet no longer touched the floor, making me collapse in fear, trembling all over. My breathing turned ragged, my face drained of all color, and suddenly my breath caught in my throat. This person had committed suicide!

“HELP!”

There was no one else around me. Just me and the corpse. Tears burst from my eyes before I realized it. My stomach twisted painfully again, and my vision began to blur. I didn't have time to think about anything before I ran as fast as I could, trying to understand what was actually happening... and asking myself, *where exactly was I?*

There were many things I didn't understand back then.

I tried to stay calm, at the very least making every effort not to do something foolish by accident. My escape from that place led me into an area of extreme slums. I walked without any clear destination—carefully observing everything around me, analyzing.

“This...”

I looked at my reflection in a puddle, and the figure I was moving within now was clearly not me.

A little child, perhaps four or five years old physically. But what made everything feel so strange was the fact that this ‘human’ body possessed the physical features of a raccoon. A tail, furry ears—and pink eyes that were clearly not the physical traits of an Indonesian.

I took a moment to make sure whether what had happened to me was real or not. I touched myself over and over until I was convinced that what I was feeling wasn't a dream but a reality. Then... what now? What was I supposed to do? What about the woman? Ah—*could it* be that the one who committed suicide was the mother of the child whose body I was using now?

Not even once had I ever imagined experiencing reincarnation—or at the very least, fantasized about leaving my original world to live somewhere completely different, both in its systems and its visuals. So then, had I really died?

I clenched my fists tightly. Lamenting my fate wouldn't lead anywhere. So I returned to that place, at the very least to see the situation.

There were hardly any people around this ramshackle house. And all I could do now was focus on taking down the poor woman's body. If it was left there, decomposition would only make everything worse. The house—or rather, this shack—looked pitiful. I had even completely forgotten the pain caused by my hunger.

"Ugh..." I rubbed my stomach. This body was terribly thin. It barely even had the strength to run. What kind of suffering had that child endured for their parent to commit suicide—ah, no. Just how far could extreme poverty drive someone to give up and abandon the burden of their responsibilities by choosing to harm themselves?

"Please!"

I searched desperately for any adults around the shack. I cried helplessly. Whether it was merely an act or the manifestation of a pressure I couldn't put into words. Whenever I tugged at the hems of the clothes of people who happened to pass by—only a few of them actually turned their heads and took pity on me.

It took several dozen minutes before an adult finally showed me some sympathy. Everyone here shared the same features as I did. Animal ears, tails, and of

course, soft fur. At the very least, they weren't much better off than I was, nor than the woman who was supposedly my ‘parent.’

“You poor thing,” that person—the only man willing to lend me a hand in taking down the hanging body, gently patted my head. He handed me a piece of bread.

I accepted it gratefully. I had never experienced hunger this extreme before, so I ate it without a second thought. The man finally withdrew his hand from my head.

“What will you do after this, child?” he asks.

I stopped chewing for a moment. That’s right. What would I do after this? Even if I decided to stay in this miserable shack, what about the body that hadn't been buried? Could I really live alongside a corpse that would slowly rot away? It’s very impossible... though it didn't mean I didn't feel sorry for her, I had no other choice.

“I'll... leave.”

The man didn't say anything else. He simply left me alone once more in that cold shack. I sat there for a while, lost in thought in front of the corpse after finishing the piece of bread that had managed to dull my hunger, if only for the next few minutes.

I stared blankly at the lifeless body. Perhaps because she wasn't truly my own parent, I didn't feel much emotion. Or perhaps my sense of humanity had already gone numb from the very moment I realized I was no longer in my original world. Right now, the only thing on my mind was how to survive—because even though I possessed knowledge from my human life, I wasn't someone skilled in autopsies, nor could I twist my own morals enough to tamper with a human corpse.

“That's right, I have to leave.”

I looked outside the shack. Night would fall soon. I didn't know where I should go, with this new identity... this new world I knew absolutely nothing about, or how I was supposed to survive without repeating the same mistakes I had made while I was still in my original world.

I didn't want to die from exhaustion. I didn't want to leave my family behind. Even though some of them had caused me pain; I still loved my family for who they were and had always tried to become the person they wanted me to be.

Before night truly settled in, I left the shack carrying one simple hope: that I could come to understand and live in this unfamiliar world a little better. Even though, from that point onward, no one could possibly predict what kind of future awaited me.