**Kitchen**

I get home around ten minutes after 9:00, finding my mom sitting at the kitchen table still dressed in her work clothes. She looks at me oddly at first, as if she didn’t expect me to appear from the front door, but then her face softens into a warm smile.

Mom: Just ate dinner?

Pro: Yeah. Forgot about it earlier.

Mom: At least you didn’t completely forget.

Mom: What did you eat?

Pro: Takoyaki.

Mom: For dinner? That’s interesting…

Mom: Well, I guess if you enjoyed it then it’s fine.

She stretches her arms above her head, obviously exhausted.

Pro: How was work? You’re taking the day off tomorrow, right?

Mom: Work was busy, but I finished everything I needed to do.

Mom: And yeah, I get tomorrow off. Although I feel a little bad since a lot of my coworkers are still working…

I guess that’s fair. It always feels bad when someone else seems to slack off while you work hard, although I can’t really say I’m speaking from experience…

Pro: You should still rest, though.

Mom: I will, I will. I’ll sleep most of the day away tomorrow, don’t worry.

Mom: Although I’ll still make you breakfast and lunch.

Pro: You don’t have to. I can buy something.

Mom: But then you’d be eating out for three meals in a row. I couldn’t let you do that, both for your health and your happiness.

Mom: Unless you’d rather not eat my food…

Pro: It’s not like that…

Mom: I know, I’m joking.

Mom: Don’t worry about me, I’ll still get plenty of rest in. I like cooking, anyways.

I pause, wondering if she actually does like cooking, or if she’s saying that just to put my mind at ease…

But I guess it doesn’t matter. If it’s an expression of motherly love, then instead of trying to push it away I should try repay it later.

Mom: Maybe I’ll try making pancakes. How does that sound?

Pro: Sounds good.

Mom: Great.

Mom: You’ll need to get up early in order to enjoy them, though, so try to go to bed early, alright?

Mom: I’m pretty tired, so I’m gonna take a bath and then go to sleep.

Mom: Have a good night.

Pro: Oh, alright. Good night.