

The Menu in the Laundry Basket



Sal kept one menu from the restaurant he had run for twenty-six years. It was no longer useful for ordering supper. He used its stiff cardboard back to fold his shirts.

At the communal laundry table, his neighbour Mika watched him lay it beneath a shirt and bring the sleeves in around it.

“May I try?” she asked.

Sal passed it over. Mika folded one of her own shirts, slid the card out, and set the tidy rectangle in her basket.

Then Sal pulled out a fitted sheet.

He shook it once. The elastic edges gathered around his hands. He laid it on the table and considered the menu, which offered no assistance.

Mika laughed softly. She had worked in a guesthouse during college. She showed him how she fitted the corners together before laying the sheet down.

Sal followed the movement slowly. She waited while he found the last corner himself. The sheet still made a thicker bundle than hers, but it fitted beside his shirts.

They cleared the table for the next neighbour. Sal tucked the menu upright against the side of his basket.

Mika pointed to the faded lettering on its front.
“You used to make lentil soup?”

“On Wednesdays.”

She carried the basket while he told her what went into it. Neither hurried towards the lift.

To remember

1. Sal shows Mika how an old menu guides shirt folding
2. His fitted sheet defeats the flat cardboard method
3. Mika demonstrates matching the sheet's corners and lets him find the last one
4. They carry the laundry away while talking about his former Wednesday soup.