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# 1 What's Up with Femi?

"I'm getting myself some breakfast," Femi called up the stairs.

Femi's mum had shouted down to remind him to eat breakfast while he was putting out the rubbish, but she didn't have to worry. There was one thing Femi had become brilliant at over the last year – fitting things in.

Femi yawned as he popped two pieces of bread into the toaster and filled the kettle with just the right amount of water. He then poured himself a glass of juice and got out his mum's favourite mug. If things went to plan, he'd be able to make his mum a cup of tea and still be leaving the house in five minutes.

As Femi waited, his mind drifted back to what his mum had told him last night about her latest visit to see Dr Patel.

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He hadn't been able to sleep after that. In the end, he'd got up and played computer games until he finally fell asleep on the sofa.

"Good morning Femi," said his mum, shuffling into the kitchen.

Femi's mum had started to need a walking support to get around. Femi had noticed how recently she held on to the banisters with two hands when she went up and down the stairs.

"Would you like some toast, Mum?" asked Femi as he finished preparing her tea. "I've got time."

Femi knew his mum preferred to get her own breakfast, but he was already making toast anyway.



“I’m sorry if I upset you last night, Femi,” said his mum.

Last night, when she’d told him that Dr Patel wanted her to start having visits from a carer, Femi had reacted badly.

Femi had told his mum that he could look after her, whatever happened.

“And that’s what I told Dr Patel,” his mum had reassured him. “So, nothing’s going to change for now.”

Femi had always helped his mum around the house even before she got this horrible illness called MS. Everything had been fine then. But things were changing now. Only in small ways, but Femi noticed it. Like, how his mum was finding it harder to stand up by herself and how she found it difficult to put clothes on sometimes.

“These are all normal symptoms of multiple sclerosis,” Dr Patel had told both of them the day she’d first visited them at home.



But what would happen if these ‘normal’ things got even worse?

Femi watched as his mum slowly lowered herself on to a kitchen chair. He handed her the mug of tea.

“We’re coping with everything really well, aren’t we?” said his mum.

“We’re a team,” said Femi, forcing a little smile.

“Good,” said his mum firmly. “That’s exactly what I told Mrs Wilde.”

Mrs Wilde? What was his mum doing talking to his headteacher? Femi was about to ask when his toast popped up. As he quickly spread butter on it, Femi noticed how his mum carefully wrapped both hands around her mug so that she could drink the tea without spilling any. A few months ago, she would have used the handle.

“Now go and have a great day with all your friends,” she said. “Don’t worry about me.”

