**Bedroom**

I start awake, and after my heartbeat slows down, I realize that I broke into a cold sweat.

I glance around the room, slowly distinguishing dream from reality. However, a familiar voice makes everything clear.

Mom: Pro, get up! You’re gonna be late for school!

School. Right. It’s Monday. And I have to go to school.

With a groan, I force myself out of bed, pull on my clothes, and shuffle out of my room and down the stairs. While I personally wouldn’t mind missing out on the first few minutes of class, Mara doesn’t like to be kept waiting.

**Kitchen**

I enter the kitchen and find my mom drying a plate. She must’ve eaten already.

Mom (neutral frown): You’re finally up, huh. Here, eat your breakfast quickly or you’re going to be late.

Mom: Also…

Mom (neutral sigh): Your bedhead is incredible.

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed):

With a little smile, she returns her focus back to the dishes while I scarf down my meal as fast as I can. After a few minutes, I wash down my toast with a glass of milk and trot towards the door. Mom follows with a small box.

Mom (neutral smiling): Here’s your lunch. Have a good day at school, okay?

Pro: I’ll try.

**Front of House**

I wave her goodbye and head out the door, scanning the area for any signs of life. However, it seems like she hasn’t shown up yet.

Suddenly I feel a tap on my shoulder.

?Mara: Hey.

Mara (waving smiling\_eyes\_closed):

I spin around and come face to face with the cheerful face I see before almost every school day. Unlike me, Mara is quite fond of the morning, a trait that I could never understand.

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: Mara, don’t scare me like that…

Mara (neutral hehe): Hehe, sorry.

Mara: Couldn’t help it.

Mara (arms\_crossed lecturing): Also, it’s partly your fault for getting up so late. I had to wait a while, you know.

Mara (arms\_crossed thinking):

Mara suddenly pauses, seemingly lost in thought.

Pro: Um, Mara?

Mara: Your hair is horrible. Did you brush it today?

Pro: Ah, no. I didn’t have time.

Mara (patting\_head concentrating)

Mara reaches for my hair and fiddles with it for a bit before backing off, seemingly satisfied.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): That should do. Let’s go!

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

For as long as I can remember, Mara and I have walked to school together almost every day. Even after she decided to go to a different (and better) high school than me, we both made it a point to still go at least part of the way with each other.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): It’s a nice day today, huh?

She’s right – it’s an exceptionally nice day. Warm weather like this makes waking up on time a little more tolerable, I guess.

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: Yeah, it is. Almost makes me want to go to school.

Almost. But not quite.

Mara (neutral thinking): You know, I think school would be a lot more enjoyable if you got involved with something. You’re in second year now, and you still haven’t joined a club, but if you did you might become a bit more motivated.

Pro: Ah, I think it’s too late. It’d be weird joining a club now.

Mara (neutral sigh):

Mara sighs.

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): Still, I think it would be good for you.

Mara (surprise geh):

Pro: You haven’t joined a club yet either though, right?

Mara (neutral smiling\_nervous): Uh…

Mara: Heh, you got me.

Mara (neutral earnest): But if I joined a club, we wouldn’t be able to do things like getting food after school, right? So aren’t you happy I haven’t joined a club?

Pro: If I joined a club, we wouldn’t be able to do those things either, you know.

Mara (neutral neutral): Oh, right.

Mara (neutral sigh): Ah well. I guess it’s okay if you don’t join a club then.

Mara (neutral thinking):

Mara pauses, thinking.

Mara: Still, it’s such a nice day. It’d be a waste not to do anything today.

Mara: Hmm…

Mara (neutral smiling): Hey, Pro.

Pro: What’s up?

Mara: Are you doing anything after school?

I stop to think for a moment.

Pro: Nothing comes to mind. What do you wanna do?

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Well, you see...

Mara (excited excited): There’s this new store that opened recently, and I really wanna check it out. Wanna come with?

Sure **OR** I think I’ll pass

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Pro: Sure, let’s go.

Mara (yay yay): Yay!

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): I’ll meet you in front of your school after classes end then.

**Intersection 1**

Mara (neutral smiling):

As we approach the intersection we usually part at, Mara runs ahead and turns around.

Mara (waving happy): I’ll see you later, Pro!

Mara (exit):

And with a wave, she skips off to the right. I wave back while suppressing a smile. Mara’s cheerfulness can be contagious, especially on days like these. Maybe today won’t be that bad.

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Mara (excited neutral):

Pro: Ah, sorry, I think I’ll pass today.

Mara (neutral neutral): Oh, I see. That’s too bad.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): I guess we can always go another time.

**Intersection 1**

Mara (neutral smiling):

As we approach the intersection we usually part at, Mara runs ahead and turns around.

Mara (waving smiling): Well, I’ll see you tomorrow!

Mara (exit):

And with a wave, she trots off to the right. I wave back, feeling a little guilty about letting her down. I guess I’ll try to make it up to her another time.

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