**Bedroom**

I wake up, and as usual, I feel like I could’ve used another few hours of sleep. With a groan, I push myself out of my bed in a... creative half-rolling half-flopping motion. I probably look ridiculous. And Mara would definitely have laughed at me if she could see me.

As I groggily stand up and pull my school uniform on, I notice the clock and freeze up. It’s pretty late, and Mara’s probably been waiting for a while.

**Kitchen**

In a panic, I dash out of my room and into the kitchen, where a plate of eggs and toast waits for me on the table. I grab a slice of toast and stick it in my mouth as I put on my shoes and run out the door.

**Front of House**

As expected, Mara’s already waiting for me.

Mara (waving happy): Good moooorning!

Mara (surprise geh): Geh, did you just wake up?

Mara (neutral thinking): You look really…

Mara: ...

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Cliché.

Mara (patting\_head smiling):

Mara reaches for my hair and fiddles with it yet again.

Mara: You should really wake up earlier, though. To eat and brush your teeth and stuff.

Mara (neutral fufu): Do you want me to sneak in and wake you up every morning?

I try to speak, forgetting that I still have a piece of toast in my mouth.

Pro (muffled): No fanks.

Mara (neutral giggling): You should swallow before you talk, you know.

Mara (patting\_head smiling):

Mara finishes up with my hair as I wolf down my toast, still a little tired.

Mara (neutral smiling): There we go. Since that’s out of the way, let’s get going, okay?

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

Strangely enough, Mara doesn’t seem bothered that I barely left the house on time today. Not that I’m complaining, of course, but it’s still a little odd. However, since she seems like she’s in an exceptionally good mood today, I decide to leave it be.

Mara (neutral neutral): Hey, Pro. Remember that idol group that I really like?

Pro: Mmm… the one with the sunglasses girl?

Mara (excited excited): Yeah, that one. They released a new single yesterday, and it’s so good!

Mara (neutral smiling): They’ve come so far, even though they only debuted a couple years ago.

Pro: Their debut song, huh? Yeah, it was pretty catchy.

Mara (neutral happy): Yup! I’m so proud of them.

Pro: You’ve been a fan from the start, right?

Mara (neutral fufu): Of course.

Pro: And now they’re one of the more popular groups.

Mara (neutral smiling): Yep, yep.

Mara (neutral neutral): Oh, look over there.

Mara stops to admire a particularly colourful flower bed. She’s always been especially fond of flowers.

Mara: Roses, tulips, even hibiscus...

Mara (neutral smiling): Isn’t it pretty?

Pro: Yeah, it is...

I trail off, distracted by the figure that appeared on the other side of the road.

Mara (neutral curious): Hm? What’s up?

Pro: Over there, that girl. I met her yesterday.

Mara: Who?

Mara (neutral surprise):

Mara looks over, and her eyes widen.

Lilith (holding\_bat neutral):

Mara (neutral earnest): Whoa, her hair’s so pretty! Do you think she’s foreign? Or did she dye it?

Pro: I’m not sure.

Lilith (exit):

Mara (neutral curious): How’d you meet her? Is she in your class, or…

Mara (neutral fufu): …maybe a secret lover?

Pro: I don’t even know her name…

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: She kinda, uh, threatened me, I guess? Cause I was staring at her. A little.

Mara (neutral skeptical): …

Mara: What…?

Mara (neutral neutral):

Mara looks at Lilith again, and eventually the realization hits her.

Mara: Oh. She has a baseball bat.

Pro: She has a baseball bat.

Mara: I see.

Mara (neutral hehe):

Mara glances at me a certain way, and suddenly I feel a sense of déjà vu...

Mara: …

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): You should go talk to her.

Ah, yes. There it is.

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: ...

Pro: Could you explain how exactly you came to that conclusion?

Mara: She’s probably just pretending to be a delinquent and is actually really soft inside. You know, that common trope. I think.

Pro: You think.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Yup!

Pro: …

Mara (neutral pensive): And besides, you should learn to get to know new people anyways. You’ve already met her, so now’s a perfect chance to *actually* meet her, you know?

Pro: Not really following your logic…

Mara (neutral smiling):

Not really listening to me, Mara continues on.

Mara (arms\_crossed fufu): Good, good. Now, I’m gonna take this road to school, so you go talk to her, okay?

Mara (exit):

And with that, Mara shuffles down a side road, leaving me alone. As luck would have it, the girl chose that exact moment to cross the street, and eventually we come face to face.

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): It’s you again.

Pro: Oh… hello.

She stops and stares at me, and I uncomfortably stare back. I have no idea what’s going through her mind, but I really hope that it has nothing to do with her baseball bat.

?Lilith (holding\_bat confused): Aren’t you going to school?

Pro: …

Pro: Oh, that’s right.

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral):

I start to walk to school again, and oddly enough, the girl joins me. She looks like she wants to say something, but whenever she comes close she changes her mind.

Pro: Um…

?Lilith (holding\_bat curious):

She looks at me expectantly.

Pro: You have your baseball bat again.

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): Oh, yeah. I do.

?Lilith: I’m sorry about yesterday. It was pretty rude of me.

Taken aback, I take a while to respond.

Pro: Oh, don’t worry about it. It was a misunderstanding.

Pro: Why do you have a bat though? It’s an odd accessory to have on hand.

?Lilith (holding\_bat confused):

She looks at me as if I just said the earth is flat.

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): I’m on the baseball team, and we have practice after school sometimes.

Ah. Baseball bat. Baseball. Makes sense.

Pro: Oh, I see.

?Lilith (holding\_bat curious): What did you think it was for?

Pro: I wasn’t sure.

I can’t really tell her that I thought she was a delinquent.

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): I see.

?Lilith (holding\_bat thinking): I guess it kind of makes me look like a delinquent, huh?

She said it.

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral):

Pro: Yeah, I guess.

?Lilith: I get that a lot. Even when I don’t have the bat.

“Must be the hair.” **OR** “That’s strange.”

{

Pro: Must be the hair.

?Lilith (holding\_bat curious): You think so? It’s natural, though.

Mara would be happy to hear that bit of information.

Pro: Oh, I see.

}

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Pro: That’s strange.

?Lilith (holding\_bat curious): Is it?

Pro: Yeah.

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): I see.

}

**Front of School**

We walk in silence for the rest of the way to school, and when we arrive the girl suddenly stops and turns towards me.

?Lilith (holding\_bat curious): You’re Pro, right? In class 2B?

Pro: Yeah, I am. How’d you know?

?Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): I’ve seen you with Asher before.

Pro: Oh, I see.

Pro: Um…

Pro: Sorry, I don’t know who you are.

Lilith: I’m Lilith from class 2A.

That name sounds familiar. Have I really never seen her around?

I stand there, trying to think of where I might’ve seen her before, but she interrupts my thoughts.

Lilith: We should probably get to class now.

Pro: Oh, you’re right.

Lilith: I’ll see you later, then.

Pro: Yeah. See you.

Lilith (exit):

Lilith walks around the building, presumably to enter through a side door, while I go straight to the front doors. As she disappears around the corner, I realize that my original perception of her was completely wrong – it turns out that Mara was right after all.