**Intersection 1**

Still stunned by Prim’s sudden invitation, I almost forget about my arrangement with Mara. Thankfully, when I reach the intersection she’s already there.

Mara (neutral smiling): Hey.

Mara (neutral neutral): …

Mara: Pro?

Pro: Oh, hi Mara.

Mara (neutral skeptical):

Mara eyes me with suspicion.

Mara: Hmm…

Mara (neutral fufu): Which one was it? The blonde? Or the quiet one?

Pro: The quiet one.

Mara (neutral pensive): Oh, I see.

Mara: …

Mara (surprise surprise): HUH!?!?

Mara: Actually!?!? What happened!?!?

Mara (excited earnest):

I tell her about how Prim asked me to meet her behind the school, and how, after a really awkward exchange, she asked me to go with her to practice.

Mara (neutral surprise): Wow…

Mara (neutral thinking): That’s a surprise. Why’d she ask you to go with her to her practice though? Wouldn’t that be a little boring for you?

Pro: I dunno.

Mara: Hmm…

Mara (neutral happy): Well anyways, congratulations!

Pro: I turned her down, though.

Mara (neutral satisfaction): Of course you did.

Mara (neutral neutral): …

Mara (surprise surprise): YOU DID WHAT!?!?

Pro: Um, I turned her down.

Mara (arms\_crossed lecturing): ...

Mara: So, let me get this straight.

Mara: Your cute junior, who’s extremely shy and reserved, worked up the courage to ask you to go with her to her practice and you said *no*?

Pro: Yeah…

Mara: …

Mara (neutral sigh): This is why you weren’t popular in middle school.

Mara (neutral disappointed): I’ve never once heard of a girl who was remotely interested in you, and when one is you turn her down…

Mara: Why?

Pro: I’m not really sure.

Mara: I see.

Mara (neutral sigh): I don’t personally mind, but if you’re okay with it then it’s fine.

Mara (neutral disappointed): …

Mara (neutral expressionless): Well, that’s that. Let’s go, then.

Pro: Where?

Mara: I was thinking we could go to a café, but now I don’t really feel like it…

Mara (neutral neutral): Let’s go to your place.

Pro: Huh? Why?

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): I miss it.

Pro: ...

Pro: That’s fine, I guess.

Mara (neutral happy): Yay! Let’s go, then.

Mara (neutral smiling): We can have instant noodles for lunch.

**Kitchen**

After eating a quick lunch, Mara decided that she wanted to play video games, since we haven’t played them together since middle school. We picked a fighting game that she used to really enjoy, and after a few warm-up rounds our competitive sides started to come out.

However, Mara doesn’t play video games at home, and even though she was surprisingly good for someone who hadn’t played in over a year I still win every round.

Mara (neutral sigh): I give up…

Mara (neutral disappointed): How much do you play nowadays? You used to never beat me.

Pro: Huh? I’m pretty sure I’ve always been better than you.

Mara (neutral skeptical): Is that so?

Pro: Yep, that’s right.

Mara (laughing laughing):

Mara and I glare at each other before bursting into laughter.

Mara (laughing recovering): Ah, that was fun though. I haven’t played video games in so long.

Pro: If you want, you can take the console home with you. I don’t really use it anymore.

Mara (neutral skeptical): Lies.

Pro: I’m serious…

Mara (neutral hehe): I know.

Mara (neutral smiling): Thanks, but I think I’ll pass. I’d feel kinda guilty.

Mara (neutral wishful): And also…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): I don’t think I’d enjoy it nearly as much if I played at home, you know?

Pro: Ah.

Oh, that’s right. Unlike mine, Mara’s parents are still together, but barely so.

Pro: Sorry.

Mara: It’s fine, don’t worry, don’t worry.

Mara (neutral earnest): Besides, if I don’t take it home, I can come over again to play, right?

Pro: Yeah, I guess.

Mara (neutral skeptical): You guess…?

Mara (neutral expressionless): Ah well.

Mara (excited excited): Well then, since you’re free, how about tomorrow?

Pro: Tomorrow? I don’t know about that.

Mara (neutral pout): Aw, c’mon.

Pro: I mean, we both just had remedial classes. I dunno if we should be wasting our entire weekend playing games. Don’t wanna fail any more tests, right?

Mara (surprise geh): Geh…

Mara (neutral nervous): We can always wait till later to start studying, yeah?

Pro: Um…

Mara (neutral sigh): Yeah, yeah, you’re right.

Mara (neutral thinking): Hmm…

Mara (neutral neutral): How about we go to the library tomorrow and study? Like last time?

Pro: Sure, I’m down.

Mara (excited excited): It’s decided then! Now…

Mara (neutral surprise):

Mara picks up her controller, ready to start another match. However, as the game loads she checks her phone and freezes.

Mara: It’s this late already?

Mara (neutral nervous): Shoot. I told my parents I’d be home for dinner.

Mara: Um, sorry but I have to go now.

Pro: Oh, okay.

Mara (neutral ouch):

Mara gets up and hurriedly shuffles towards the front, and I follow. I unlock and open the door as she puts on her shoes, shivering as a gust of cold wind flows inside.

Pro: It’s a little chilly. You gonna be alright?

Mara (neutral smiling): Yeah, I’ll be fine.

Pro: Alright. Don’t catch a cold.

Mara (neutral satisfaction): I won’t. I’m as healthy as can be!

Pro: After seeing you eat all those instant noodles, I’m not too sure about that.

Mara (neutral hehe): Hehe.

Mara (neutral neutral): Well, gotta hustle. I’ll see you at the library tomorrow, okay?

Pro: Yeah, see you.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): And don’t feel too down about Prim, okay?

Mara (exit):

Mara trots through the door, and I watch as she jogs through my front yard and onto the sidewalk before closing the door.