**Front of Music School**

We arrive at Prim’s practice a few minutes before 10:00, which, fortunately, is on time. Barely on time, but on time nonetheless.

Prim (shy sigh):

Pro: We made it...

Prim (shy sleepy): Yeah…

Prim (shy curious):

I take a look around, having not taken in our surroundings as we rushed over. It’s strangely peaceful, and the absence of large buildings and bustling streets suddenly brings to mind my first encounter with Prim.

Pro: Um…

Pro: The mall’s near here?

Prim (shy confused):

She nods a little confusedly.

Prim: About a fifteen-minute walk.

Pro: For real? Huh.

Prim (shy curious):

I look around one last time before turning back to Prim.

Pro: Um, don’t you have a practice to go to?

Prim (shy embarrassed): Oh, right.

Prim (shy down): Um...

Prim (shy embarrassed): Thanks again. For taking me here.

Pro: No problem. Sorry I was late.

Prim (shy smiling\_eyes\_closed): It’s okay.

Prim (shy worried\_slightly): I think we’ll be done in about an hour and a half...

Prim: Is that okay?

Pro: Yeah. I’ll just take a look around or something, since I don’t know this area too well.

Prim (shy shy): Okay.

Prim (waving shy): See you, then.

Pro: See you.

Prim (exit):

And with that, she turns around and heads inside the building. I watch through the window to make sure she’s okay, for some reason feeling a little concerned.

She’ll probably be fine, right? Despite her shyness, she’s probably pretty capable, so I don’t need to worry, right?

Although…

The area looks a little empty. There aren’t any cars in the parking lot, and there’s nobody else around as far as I can tell. It’s a little hard to believe that an entire orchestra will be practicing here…

Prim (shy embarrassed): Ah…

I jump, not having noticed Prim’s reappearance.

Pro: What’s up? Don’t you have practice?

Prim: Um…

Prim (shy down\_blushing):

She blushes so bashfully it makes me start to feel a little embarrassed as well.

Prim (shy embarrassed\_blushing): It was cancelled.

Pro: Cancelled?

She nods sheepishly.

Pro: I see.

Pro: They didn’t tell you?

Prim (shy down\_blushing): Um…

Prim: They might’ve, but I don’t check my phone too often.

Pro: I see.

Prim (shy embarrassed\_blushing):

We stand there awkwardly, unsure what to do. I guess we could just go back home, but it would feel like a waste of a trip if we did…

Prim (shy surprise\_blushing):

My thoughts are interrupted by a low gurgling sound, just barely loud enough to be audible. I instinctively look around, trying to determine where it came from…

Prim (shy embarrassed\_blushing\_profusely):

...and then I hear it again, but this time it’s turned into a much louder growl.

Prim: …

Pro: Um…

Well, we’re already here.

Pro: Do you wanna get something to eat?

Prim (shy shy\_blushing\_profusely):

Another sheepish nod.

Pro: There should be something around here. Let’s take a look around then.

Prim (exit):

And with that we start walking, searching for any potential food sources. We don’t talk too much, and it’s not until we’ve been looking around for a while that I realize that my heart’s beating a lot faster than normal.

**Park 1**

Prim (shy sigh):

We eventually find ourselves sitting on a park bench, eating steamed buns filled with red bean paste that we found at a local convenience store. I watch in amazement as Prim swiftly and silently goes through hers, almost like an assassin.

Prim (shy curious):

Pro: Wow, that was quick. Did you eat breakfast?

Prim (shy embarrassed): …

Prim: A little bit.

Prim: I woke up a little late, though, so I wasn’t able to finish it.

Pro: Oh, that explains it.

And despite waking up late, she still managed to be at the station on time.

...Unlike me. Yikes.

Prim (shy curious):

Pro: Actually, now that I think about it, I don’t think I ate breakfast either.

Suddenly, the bun in my hand feels very small.

Pro: Um…

Pro: Wanna get more?

Prim (shy embarrassed):

After a brief moment of hesitation she nods.

Pro: Alright.

I stuff the remainder of my food in my mouth and stand up.

Pro: Let’s get round two, then!

**Music School Road 2**

Prim (shy smiling\_slightly):

I end up regretting buying a second one, but it seems like Prim really enjoyed it. I may be mistaken, but as we walk around I realize that on her face is a small, satisfied smile.

It turns out that in our search for food we strayed a little too far from the station. Unable to find our way back, we instead wander around, hoping to come across a bus stop or something.

Prim (shy curious):

Pro: Well, this is quite the situation, huh…

Prim: …

Prim (shy confused): Is it?

Pro: Hm? What do you mean?

Prim (shy neutral): I think…

Prim (shy thinking):

Prim pauses to think, apparently unworried.

Prim (shy hehe): I think just wandering around like this is calming.

Prim (shy shy): And it’s nice outside too.

Pro: I guess.

Pro: Do you wander around in your free time?

Prim: Sometimes.

Prim (arms\_behind embarrassed): Although usually I’d prefer to sit inside and read manga.

Pro: You read manga?

Pro: Wait, I feel like we’ve talked about this before.

Prim (arms\_behind down): Um…

Prim (shy disappointed): We have.

Prim: At the library.

I rack my brain, trying to remember.

Pro: Uh…

Pro: That time it was really busy?

She nods a little disappointedly, and I feel a touch of guilt.

Pro: I’m sorry…

Prim (shy smiling\_nervous): It’s okay.

Prim (shy embarrassed):

We continue walking in awkward silence for a while, both of us too embarrassed to continue the conversation. To my surprise, it’s Prim who speaks up first.

Prim: Um…

Prim: What’s your favourite manga?

I think back to all the manga I’ve read. For some reason recalling things about them comes a lot easier to me than remembering interactions with others…

Pro: I dunno, actually.

Prim (shy shy):

Pro: Typically I like romance comedy ones, though. Especially the ones with happy endings.

Prim (shy smiling): I like those too.

Prim (shy wishful): They make you wanna fall in love, right?

Prim (shy neutral): …

Prim (shy embarrassed\_blushing\_profusely):

Pro: Um…

Trying my best not to turn furiously red, I try to change the subject.

Pro: What’s your favourite manga?

Prim (shy down\_blushing): Um…

Prim (shy embarrassed\_blushing): The one about the pianist and the violinist. The one where the girl dies.

Pro: Oh, Your Lie in April?

She nods bashfully, and I let out a chuckle.

Pro: You really like the piano, huh?

Pro: Although that manga was really good. Made me cry.

Prim (shy down\_blushing): Me too.

Prim (shy shy\_blushing): Especially when I read the letter at the end.

Pro: Yeah…

Pro: Who was your favourite character?

Prim (shy embarrassed\_blushing): The pianist.

I guess that’s not surprising.

Prim (shy shy\_blushing): How about you?

Pro: Um…

Pro: To be honest I liked the childhood friend. Reminded me of someone I know.

Prim (shy curious): Someone you know?

Pro: Yeah. I’ve known her for the longest time.

Pro: Actually, she was the one who introduced me to the manga, but she kept spoiling the good parts…

I stop, realizing that for some reason I’ve started to tear up.

Whoa now. Now’s not the time to be crying over manga.

Prim (shy neutral): I see.

Prim (shy wishful): Having a friend to read manga with sounds nice.

Pro: Ah, I guess it is…

Prim (shy curious):

Pro: Although in her case, it makes reading new chapters as soon as they come out more of a responsibility...

Prim (shy hehe): I guess so.

Prim (shy shy): Still, though…

Pro: Yeah, it’s nice.

Prim (shy curious):

Pro: Oh yeah, I heard that Mick’s your childhood friend. Does he read manga too?

Prim (shy shy): Ah…

Prim (shy down): He grew out of it a long time ago.

Prim (shy shy): And we liked reading different genres. He liked shounen manga more.

Pro: Oh, I see.

Prim (shy curious):

We’re interrupted, however, by a small girl pulling on my shirt, holding a stick of chalk in her other hand. Beside her is an even smaller boy, presumably her brother, who looks at us curiously.

I notice that the house’s driveway is full of pastel scribbles, which form the messy shapes of animals and people. The sight can’t help but make me feel a bit nostalgic, as Mara and I would hang out as kids and spend our days doing things like this.

The girl points to the drawing she’s working on, and I make out the image of a dog sticking its tongue out. Then she gestures to her brother’s work - a more avant-garde dog, with an abnormally long neck and spikes coming out of its body.

Prim (shy surprise):

She then asks which one I like better, but after giving it some honest thought and picking the girl’s the boy starts to cry…

Prim (shy smiling\_nervous):

However, thankfully Prim intervenes before things get out of hand.

Prim (shy smiling): Now, now, they’re both very good.

She pats both of them on the head. Both the children blink at her, before the girl breaks into a smile and the boy nods happily before they turn back to their drawings, completely forgetting about Prim and I. After watching for a little while longer we go on our way as well.

Prim (shy curious):

Pro: Ah…

Pro: Thanks.

Prim (shy down): Um…

Prim (shy smiling\_nervous): I guess you’re not very good with kids.

Pro: Yeah, probably not…

Prim (shy smiling):

Pro: I’m sorry…

Prim (shy hehe): It’s okay.

Prim: They were really cute though.

Pro: Yeah, I guess.

Prim (shy curious):

Pro: Kinda nostalgic, don’t you think?

Prim (shy hehe): Yeah.

Prim: I used to love drawing with chalk.

We continue to talk about our childhoods, recalling all of the things we used to do for fun that we no longer do. The list is surprisingly long, and we end up spending a good portion of the afternoon talking about them, occasionally visiting small cafes and shops that we come across.

Prim (exit):

Eventually we find a train station, and after a moment of hesitation we go inside, deciding that it’s probably about time we headed back home.

Although honestly, I wouldn’t have minded walking around for a little longer.