**Home Station**

Still unable to wrap my head around everything that just happened, I leave the station, Prim’s disheartened face fresh on my mind. Was that the right thing to do? I’m not so sure anymore.

As I drag myself home, I detect the smell of coffee in the air. After looking around for a bit, I discover its source – a small coffee shop that I’ve never noticed before.

Maybe I’ll get something to drink to clear my head.

**Coffee Shop**

The first thing I notice as I enter the shop is its warmth, which permeates my body as I look at the menu. Wanting to be able to sleep tonight, I order an herbal tea and look around as they make it.

The shop is small and has a homely atmosphere, but right now it’s empty except for a lone student sitting at a table in the corner…

Lilith (neutral neutral): …

The barista hands me my drink, and I stand there, unsure of what I should do. However, Lilith gestures at me to join her, so I do.

Lilith (neutral curious): It’s you, huh?

Pro: That’s right. What are you doing here?

Lilith (drinking\_coffee satisfied):

Lilith takes a sip of her drink.

Lilith (neutral curious): I come here a lot. How about you?

Pro: Just wanted a drink, I guess.

Lilith (neutral neutral): I see.

She looks out the window, watching as people pass by.

Lilith (neutral wishful): Everyone’s so busy with their own lives, huh?

Pro: That’s something I wouldn’t have expected you to say.

Lilith (neutral confused): Why’s that?

Pro: Oh, um…

Pro: I dunno.

Lilith (neutral sigh):

Lilith sighs.

Lilith (neutral neutral): It’s not good to judge people by their looks, you know.

Pro: Sorry…

Lilith: It’s fine, I guess.

Lilith (neutral thinking): …

Lilith (neutral curious): You seem kind of miserable. Something happen?

Pro: Well…

Should I tell Lilith about Prim? No, I don’t think that would be right. But still, I think it would be helpful if I talked about the situation with someone.

Pro: I had this… friend. Kind of.

Pro: But then stuff happened, and it turns out that she might’ve befriended me so she can use me for her own ends.

Pro: And that really doesn’t sit well with me, so I decided to stop associating with her.

Pro: But I don’t really know if that was the right thing to do, and I think I’m starting to regret it.

Lilith: I see. That does sound pretty bad.

Lilith (neutral thinking): But in the end, aren’t friends just a means to fulfill some end? Like to satisfy the need for companionship, or to combat boredom.

Pro: I guess.

Lilith (neutral neutral): But then I understand why you wouldn’t want to be friends with someone like that. I–

Lilith: …

Lilith (neutral thinking):

Lilith suddenly stops, apparently lost in thought.

Pro: Um…

Lilith (neutral neutral): Oh.

Lilith: Sorry about that. I was thinking about one particular person who seems to already have plenty of people to hang out with, and despite that she wouldn’t leave me alone.

Lilith (neutral annoyed): She’s hyper and energetic, and she unrelentingly kept pestering me until I agreed to become her friend…

Ah. Petra.

Pro: Is she on the baseball team?

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Lilith nods.

Pro: Then I guess it kind of makes sense. It would be best if you were all on friendly terms if you’re all on the same team, right?

Lilith (neutral sigh): Yeah, I guess.

Lilith (neutral annoyed): Still, though.

Lilith (neutral curious):

I let out a small laugh in spite of myself.

Pro: Yeah, I know what you mean. Petra can be a bit much.

Lilith (neutral smiling\_slightly): Yeah.

We continue to talk about Lilith teammates and their quirks, and as the minutes pass by I find that I’m finally able to push my thoughts about Prim towards the back of my mind.

**Home Station**

Eventually we leave the coffee shop, finding that the sun has already disappeared below the horizon.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Pro: You know, I never knew that place existed until today.

Lilith (neutral curious): Is that so?

Lilith (neutral neutral): I’ve known about it for a while. It’s usually pretty empty, so it’s a really good place to study.

Pro: Oh yeah, that makes sense.

Lilith stops to look at an advertisement for a second before turning to face me.

Lilith (neutral embarrassed\_slightly): Um…

Lilith: I hope you feel better soon. About your friend.

Lilith (neutral embarrassed): And also…

Lilith (neutral embarrassed\_slightly): …

Lilith (neutral embarrassed): If you’d like, we can hang out again.

Huh?

“Sure, I’d like that.”

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Lilith (neutral relief):

Pro: Sure, I’d like that.

Lilith (neutral embarrassed\_slightly): Could I get your number, then?

Lilith and I exchange phone numbers. Mara would be proud.

Lilith: Well, I should probably get going now.

Lilith (waving embarrassed\_slightly): See you later.

Pro: Yeah. See you.

Lilith (exit):

I watch as Lilith walks away, thinking about the first time I met her. At the time, I thought that she would be unsociable and aggressive, but after getting to know her a bit more, I realize how wrong I was.

After Lilith disappears, I also head home, an odd feeling spreading in my chest. On one hand, I still feel terrible about Prim, but on the other, discovering Lilith’s tender side was a pleasant surprise.

**Kitchen**

On the way back I text Mara about everything that happened on the way back, and after around ten minutes I arrive back home, where I find my mom in the kitchen.

Mom (neutral frown): You didn’t call me.

Ah.

Pro: I forgot, sorry.

Mom (neutral sigh):

My mom sighs and moves to the fridge, pulling out a plate.

Mom (neutral neutral): Here, your breakfast from this morning.

Pro: Oh, thanks.

Mom (neutral smiling):

I sit down and start eating, and after a few moments, I realize that my mom is seated across from me, watching with a small smile on her face.

Mom: Did you have fun?

Pro: Mmm…

Mom (neutral curious):

Pro: I don’t think so. In fact, by the end of the day I felt horrible.

Pro: But I think something good will come out of it.

Mom (neutral thinking): Is that so?

Mom (neutral smiling):

My mom eyes me carefully for a moment, but then smiles.

Mom: Well, that’s how it is sometimes I guess. Have to take the bad days with the good ones.

Mom (neutral neutral): Still though, to see you this optimistic about it…

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): That makes me glad.

**Bedroom**

A few minutes later I finish up and head upstairs, realizing on the way how tired I am. I lay down on my bed, checking for a reply from Mara. Nothing yet, though.

My eyelids start to droop as a full day’s worth of activities starts to take its toll. I put down my phone and close my eyes, giving into my exhaustion.

Ah well. I guess I’ll answer all of Mara’s questions tomorrow.

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“Sorry, I think I’ll pass.”

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Pro: I’m really sorry, but I think I’ll pass.

Lilith (neutral disappointed):

Pro: To be honest, I’ve been doing really badly in school recently, and I think for now I should focus on my studies.

While that’s partially true, the real reason that I denied Lilith’s offer is because of what happened with Prim today. After hurting her like that, I don’t think that I could hang out with Lilith without it weighing on my conscience

Lilith: Oh, I see. I understand.

We stand there in silence for a few seconds.

Lilith: Well, I should probably get going now.

Pro: Yeah. Thanks for talking with me today, it really helped.

Lilith: No problem.

Lilith: See you around, I guess.

Pro: Yeah.

Lilith (exit):

I watch as Lilith walks away, wondering if I’ll regret turning her down as well.

**Kitchen**

On the way back I text Mara about everything that happened on the way back, and after around ten minutes I arrive back home, where I find my mom in the kitchen.

Mom (neutral frown): You didn’t call me.

Ah.

Pro: I forgot, sorry.

Mom (neutral sigh):

My mom sighs and moves to the fridge, pulling out a plate.

Mom (neutral worried):

Pro: I’m not too hungry. I think I’m gonna turn in early.

She puts the food back and pauses for a moment, looking at my tired face.

Mom: All right. Have a good night.

**Bedroom**

I head upstairs and crash on my bed, checking for a reply from Mara. Nothing yet, though.

My eyelids start to droop as a full day’s worth of walking around starts to take its toll. I put down my phone and close my eyes, giving in to my exhaustion.

As I drift asleep, I try to find a word to describe how I feel. Sad? Frustrated? No.

…

Ah.

Hollow.

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