**Playground**

After Lilith leaves, I head home too, feeling a little dejected about how today ended despite knowing that I chose for things to happen this way. Wanting to clear my head, I decide to take a detour down a side road.

I find myself at a small playground that Mara and I used to play at. It’s been repainted since the last time I was here, but apart from that nothing has changed.

As I approach, I notice that a lone figure sits on the swings, and upon closer inspection, I notice that I know who that lone figure is…

Prim (shy surprise): …!

Prim (shy worried\_slightly):

Having been spotted, I walk over and sit on the swing beside her.

Prim: Pro?

Pro: Hey, Prim. What are you doing here?

Prim (shy worried): Oh…

Prim: …

Prim (shy down): Nothing, I guess.

Prim looks away, obviously upset about something. Her voice, which is as timid as always, trembles a bit.

Prim (shy worried\_slightly): How about you?

Pro: Oh, I live around here actually. When I was little I used to play here all the time.

Prim (shy down): Oh, I see.

Pro: …

Pro: Um, is something wrong?

Prim purses her lips, as if deciding whether to tell her what’s on her mind or not.

Prim: …

Prim (shy disappointed): My parents…

Prim: My parents told me that I couldn’t go to music school anymore.

Prim (shy down): Not by myself, anyway.

Prim (shy worried): I know that they’re worried about me, but…

Prim (shy hurt): But I still want to play…

Prim (shy disappointed): So we got into a big fight.

Prim (shy down): And now I’m here.

Pro: I see.

“You can’t go by yourself?”

{

Pro: So, you can’t go by yourself?

Prim (shy disappointed): Yeah.

For some reason, something stirs in my chest. Despite seeming so shy and feeble, when it comes to music, Prim is surprisingly determined. It’s obvious how much she cherishes it, and having it taken away from her must be tearing her apart…

Prim (shy disbelief):

Pro: If you want, I can go with you to practices.

Pro: There should be no problem if I go with you, right?

Prim: But…

Prim: …

Prim (shy bambi): Are you sure?

Pro: Yeah.

Prim (shy disbelief):

Prim stares at me for a few seconds.

Prim: …

Prim (shy smiling\_crying\_eyes): Thank you.

Pro: Don’t worry about it. It’s not like I have anything better to do, anyways.

Prim (shy hehe): I guess that’s true.

Prim (shy smiling\_crying): Well, I’ll go tell my parents.

Prim (shy smiling\_crying\_eyes): And I’ll tell you more tomorrow.

Prim (exit):

And after giving me one last smile, Prim leaves. I get up as well, and even though my chest still feels heavy from my talk with Lilith, I can’t help but smile a little as well.

**Kitchen**

I text Mara about everything that happened on the way back, and a few minutes later 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?

Did I?

Pro: I guess so.

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): That’s good. I’m 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 in to my exhaustion.

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

}

“That sucks.”

{

Prim (shy disappointed):

Pro: That sucks.

Unsure of what else to say, we sit there awkwardly for a few minutes before I decide to go.

Prim (shy worried\_slightly):

Pro: Sorry, I should probably go home now.

Pro: Good luck with your parents. I hope everything will work out.

Prim (exit):

Prim nods and I get up and walk away, forcing myself to not look back. My chest feels heavy enough already from what happened with Lilith, and if I see Prim holding back tears again, I think that it might burst.

**Kitchen**

I text Mara about everything that happened on the way back, and a few minutes later 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 activities 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.

}