**Bedroom**

It’s morning, and strangely enough, I wake up feeling refreshed. I sit up and stretch luxuriously before getting out of bed, finding that I’ve woken up on time for the first time in a while.

After grabbing all the stuff I’ll need for school today and shoving it in my bag, I pull on my clothes and head downstairs.

**Kitchen**

Mom (neutral neutral): Well.

Mom (neutral smiling): Look who got up early for a change.

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Good morning.

Pro: Morning.

Mom (neutral smiling): I just finished making your breakfast. Eat it before it gets cold.

Pro: Okay, thanks.

Mom (exit):

I sit down and start to eat my breakfast, which is good as usual. Despite being busy enough already, my mom has always done her best to make me warm meals whenever she can.

I glance over at her as she washes the dishes, wondering how she manages to work this hard every single day. What drives her on, keeps her going? Even though I hate to admit it, I don’t think I’m exactly the best child.

Her job doesn’t pay well and sometimes requires her to work early mornings or late nights, but even though she comes home exhausted every day she won’t allow me to get a job, saying that I should instead try to do well in school and, more importantly according to her, enjoy myself while I’m still young.

Mom (neutral frown): What are you looking at? Is there something in my hair?

Pro: Oh, no there isn’t.

Pro: It’s nothing.

Mom (neutral neutral):

I finish up my food and bring her my plate and cup.

Pro: Thanks, Mom.

Mom (neutral smiling): You’re welcome. Now, go brush your teeth and go to school.

Mom (neutral neutral): Also…

Mom (neutral smiling): You have time today, so do something about your hair as well.

And after making my job harder by ruffling it, she turns back to her work.

**Front of House**

After I finally manage to arrange my hair in a presentable manner, I trot outside, hoping that for once I’ll leave the house before Mara arrives.

However, that dream quickly dies.

Mara (neutral neutral): Oh, you’re actually kinda on time today.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Good for you!

Mara (patting\_head smiling\_eyes\_closed):

She starts to pat my head, and even though I’m a little annoyed I have to desperately hold back a smile.

Pro: Stop that…

Mara: No.

Pro: I even brushed it today. You’re messing it up.

Mara (patting\_head neutral):

Suddenly she stops.

Mara (surprise fearful): …

Mara: You’re not Pro, are you…

Mara: Who are you? And where’s the real Pro?

Pro: I’m the real Pro.

Mara (neutral skeptical): That’s something an imposter would say.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Well, real or not, I don’t wanna be late for school, so even if you are fake you’ll do for today.

Mara: Let’s go!

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed)

Showing no sign of yesterday’s disappointment, Mara’s as playful as ever. She skips ahead of me, telling me what she did after school yesterday.

Mara (neutral smiling): On the way home, there was this kitten, and it was the cutest thing ever. I wanted to take it home with me, but it kept running away whenever I tried to catch it.

Mara (neutral disappointed): Eventually it disappeared though, and I ended up just going straight home afterwards. Kinda sad.

Mara (neutral hmph): Well, if a certain someone didn’t refuse to go shopping with me, then maybe I could’ve avoided this tragedy. We could’ve had a lotta fun, but nope. I bet that someone went straight home too.

So it turns out that she didn’t go without me. A pang of guilt stabs my heart, and I silently pledge to do whatever she wants to do next time.

Mara (neutral neutral): What did you end up doing, by the way?

Pro: Oh, uh…

Pro: I helped my friend clean the classroom. And then I got chewed out by my teacher.

Mara (neutral thinking): Hmm…

Mara (neutral neutral): Why’d you get chewed out?

Pro: I kinda fell asleep in class.

Mara: Once?

Pro: A few times.

Mara (neutral fufu): Pfft…

Mara: I’d say that’s pretty typical of you.

Mara (neutral neutral): And what’d you do after that?

Pro: I, uh…

Pro: …went straight home.

Mara (neutral sigh): I knew it.

Pro: We can do something next time though. I promise.

Mara (neutral disappointed): You promise, huh?

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Alright, I’ll take you up on that one day then.

Mara (neutral pout): But still, would it kill you to spoil me a little more?

Pro: Yup, yup, I know.

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Oh yeah, I was gonna tell you about something. I almost died yesterday.

Mara (neutral curious): You what?

Pro: Yeah, I was walking home, and then I almost got hit by a baseball in the head. It was heading directly at me.

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): Oh, really? It didn’t hit you, though, right?

Pro: No, it didn’t.

Mara (neutral fufu): Oh, good. You really can’t afford to lose any more brain cells.

Pro: …

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): I’m kidding, I’m kidding!

Mara (neutral curious): Did you dodge it or something?

Pro: Actually, I was saved by this blonde girl. Her name was Lilith, I think.

Pro: Apparently she goes to my school. She recognized me, even though I don’t think I’ve ever seen her.

Mara (neutral thinking): Hmm, that’s interesting.

Mara: Blonde, huh…

That’s what she found interesting…?

Mara (neutral earnest): Do you think she’s foreign?

Pro: No idea.

Mara (neutral pensive): I think she might be. Lilith isn’t a very common name, you sure it wasn’t Lilly or something?

Pro: Yeah, I’m pretty sure it was Lilith.

Mara: Hmm…

Mara (neutral wishful): I wish I could’ve seen her…

Mara (neutral neutral): Oh.

Mara: Is that her?

Mara (exit):

Lilith (holding\_bat neutral):

Mara points towards someone, and upon further inspection it turns out that it is indeed Lilith. Does she always walk this way to school?

Lilith (exit):

Mara (excited excited):

Pro: Yeah, it is.

Mara: Go on, talk to her!

Mara starts shoving me towards her, despite my panicked but also muted protest.

Pro: Wait, wait, wait. Why?

Mara (excited earnest): You should try to make more friends at school. She already knows who you are, so go and say hi!

Pro: But that’d be really awkward…

Mara: I bet you didn’t even thank her properly yesterday. So get going!

Mara (exit):

And after one last shove, Mara disappears down a side road, leaving me wondering if she left for school or is looking for a way to secretly watch me fumble through a conversation with Lilith.

I slow down and try to stay undetected, but it’s too late.

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

Pro: Oh, uh, hi.

My eyes unintentionally drift towards her bat. An odd accessory to have on hand, but I guess she plays baseball.

At least, I hope it’s for baseball...

Lilith (holding\_bat curious): Do you remember who I am this time?

Pro: Lilith…right?

I silently pray that I’m right, both as a common courtesy and for my own safety.

Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): So you do.

Pro: Thanks again for the other day.

Lilith: Don’t worry about it. It was our fault that you almost got hit in the first place.

Pro: I guess that’s true.

Pro: …

Pro: Do you always go to school this way?

Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): Yeah. Although, I usually go earlier.

That would explain why I’ve never seen her.

Pro: Oh, for baseball?

She nods.

Pro: Wow…

Pro: I don’t think I could do that. That kinda sounds like a pain…

Lilith (holding\_bat thinking): Hmm…

Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): Getting up and going to school early is a pain, but if you like something enough then it becomes easier I guess.

Pro: Still…

Pro: And you guys practice in the afternoon as well, right?

Lilith: Our season’s about to start, so we sometimes practice after school.

Pro: I see. Your dedication is amazing.

Lilith (holding\_bat thinking): Well, this is the last season for some of the older players, so we all want to make it a memorable one.

Pro: Wait, but then wouldn’t that happen every year? Since every year there would be graduating players.

Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): Yeah, I guess so.

Kinda a cheap way of motivating club members, but I guess it works...

Lilith (holding\_bat curious): What about you? Are you in any clubs?

Pro: Ah, no.

Lilith (holding\_bat neutral): To be honest, I kinda thought so.

Ouch.

Lilith: Oh, sorry, I gotta go now.

She gestures towards a pair of her teammates, who I recognize from yesterday. Do we really all go to the same school?

Pro: Oh, alright. I’ll see you, then.

Lilith: See you.

Lilith (exit):

I watch Lilith as she greets her teammates, and I notice with a bit of relief that she looks as expressionless talking with them as she did talking with me. Maybe she’s always like that.

Compared to Mara, Lilith’s company is a lot less energetic. She gives off a certain air of indifference and aloofness, which is a stark contrast from the usual cheer and spirit from Mara that I’ve grown used to.

However, despite that, I can’t say that talking to her was necessarily unenjoyable.