**Front of School**

Mara (waving smiling):

Once classes end, I go straight to the front of the school where, sure enough, Mara is waiting. She cheerfully waves at me as I approach, apparently not a trace of this morning’s gloom left.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Hey, there.

Pro: Hey.

I pause to inspect her face, trying to determine whether her smile is forced or not.

Mara (neutral embarrassed): Um…

Pro: Oh, sorry.

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: So? What are we doing?

Mara (neutral thinking): Mmm…

Mara (neutral smiling): We’re going shopping.

Pro: Downtown again? For clothes?

Mara shakes her head.

Mara: For groceries.

Pro: Huh…?

Mara (neutral thinking): I was thinking it might be nice if we went to your place and made dinner or something.

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: Oh, I see. That sounds good.

That wasn’t quite what I expected, but it does seem like an enjoyable way to spend the rest of the day.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Great. Let’s go then.

**Grocery Store**

We spend the trip to the grocery store discussing what we wanna make, and after an in-depth discussion, we decide on a fish stew that my mom used to make. Both Mara and I were particularly fond of it as kids.

Mara (neutral thinking): Um…

Mara: I think we’ll need bean sprouts, tomato, pineapple, lime…

Mara (neutral neutral): What else?

Pro: Fish.

Mara: Oh, right. What kind of fish was it, again?

Pro: Uh…

I rack my brain for an answer that’s probably not there. Like almost everything else, my knowledge of food is somewhat lacking.

“Salmon”

{

Pro: Salmon.

Mara (neutral skeptical):

Mara looks at me quizzically.

Mara: Salmon? I don’t think that’s the right one, cause it’s pink.

Oh, right. My mom’s fish stew usually had some sort of whitefish in it.

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Ah, sorry about that.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): It’s okay, it’s okay.

Mara (neutral smiling): Let’s just go and take a look.

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“Cod”

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Pro: Cod.

Mara (neutral curious): Oh, that’s right.

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

Mara pats me on the head, causing my face to flush in embarrassment.

Mara: Good for you. Let’s go with that, then.

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“Crab”

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Pro: Crab.

Mara (excited excited):

Mara all of a sudden perks up.

Mara: Can we!?!?

I almost answer yes, but then I realize that I’m probably the one who will be paying for everything.

Pro: Um, actually let’s not. Don’t know how to cook it.

Mara (excited neutral): …

Mara (neutral sigh): I guess so…

}

Mara (neutral satisfaction):

Forgetting about all the other ingredients, we head straight to the fish section, where Mara, after browsing through all the possible options, picks out a couple filets of cod. Satisfied with her selection, she quickly bags them and thanks the fishmonger before we leave.

Mara (neutral neutral): Let’s get everything else now.

Mara (neutral thinking): For pineapple, do we have to buy it canned? Could we get a fresh one?

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Do you really wanna cut a fresh one?

Mara (neutral thinking): Um…

Mara (neutral neutral): I do not.

Pro: That’s what I thought.

After picking up a can of pineapple, we head to the produce section, where Mara quickly collects everything that we need. Well, everything we remember that we need.

Mara (neutral expressionless): Is there anything else…?

Pro: I don’t think so. We got quite a bit here.

Mara (neutral thinking): Yeah.

Mara: …

Mara (excited earnest): What about snacks?

Pro: Snacks?

Mara nods earnestly, and I sigh.

Pro: Alright. Pick one, and only one. I’ll go and line up.

Mara (excited excited): Yay!

Mara (exit):

She dashes off to make her choice, and I line up. Hopefully she won’t take too long…

Mara (neutral smiling): Here we go.

I start, having not expected her to return so quickly. She hands me a box of Pocky, and I have to suppress a smile. Pocky is a great choice.

Pro: That was fast. Pocky, huh?

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Yup.

Pro: I commend your selection.

Mara (neutral happy): Right?

Mara (exit):

Mara joins me in line, and after waiting for a little bit we pay and head home, bags of groceries in hand.