**Bedroom**

Mmrph…

For some reason, my back aches immensely as I wake up. It’s not until a few seconds later that I realize that I’m not in my bed, and instead am hunched over my desk, a blanket draped around my shoulders.

It appears that I fell asleep while doing homework last night. After my call with Mara, it turns out that, through sheer willpower, I was able to lock in and focus, and despite my aching body a sense of satisfaction fills me as I look over all the pages of work I completed.

However, as I sort through them, I realize that I still haven’t filled out my career form. Maybe I should just do what Lilith did and put something random down…

My stomach growls as I take out a pencil, and I remember that I skipped out on dinner yesterday, having eaten a late lunch. Time to eat, I guess. My career form’s waited this long already – I’m sure it can wait a little longer.

**Kitchen**

My mom is already in the kitchen as per usual, washing her dishes. She notices me as I walk in and smiles, apparently finding something amusing.

Mom (neutral smiling): Good morning.

Pro: Morning. What’s so funny?

Mom (neutral smiling): Oh…

Mom (neutral smiling): It’s just that you don’t have a bedhead today.

I instinctively reach up and touch my hair, finding that it is indeed quite flat.

Pro: Oh, you’re right.

Pro: Well, I did fall asleep at my desk last night.

Mom (neutral smiling\_nervous): I know. You’ve gotten much too big for me to carry, and I didn’t want to wake you up, so I just left you there.

Pro: I see.

Pro: Oh yeah, thanks for the blanket.

Mom (neutral smiling): You’re welcome.

Mom (neutral raised\_eyebrow): Did you get a lot done?

Pro: I did.

Mom (neutral smiling): That’s good.

Mom (neutral smiling): Now, eat your breakfast before it gets cold.

Pro: Alright.

I sit down and start to eat, ravenously wolfing down everything in front of me.

Mom (neutral smiling): Wow, you must’ve been hungry. I guess you did skip out on dinner yesterday, though.

Mom (neutral smiling): That reminds me. Are you doing anything today?

Pro: Nope. Why?

Mom (neutral smiling): Could I ask you to go grocery shopping? I have to go to work today.

Pro: On a weekend?

Mom (neutral worried): Yeah, things have been getting busier…

Mom (neutral smiling\_nervous): I won’t be working for the whole day, though.

Pro: Alright, I’ll go.

Mom (waving smile): Thanks. I’ll give you a list of things to get before I leave.

Pro: Okay.

**Neighbourhood Road 2**

Around half an hour after I finished eating my mom headed off for work, leaving the shopping list on the kitchen table. I initially forgot about it on my way out, but after realizing I ran back to grab it.

Even after another few hours of thinking, I still haven’t been able to come up with anything for my career form. For some reason it seems like too large of a wall to scale, even though logically it should be very easy to do. Should choosing what you want to do really be this difficult?

I guess I’m just really indecisive.

**Grocery Store**

I eventually arrive at the grocery store, which is unusually empty. Not that I’m complaining, but it is a little eerie picking out produce with nobody around.

After picking up everything my mom wrote down, I head back to the front to pay. There are no customers here either, but sitting in the cashier booth of an empty checkout lane is someone very familiar.

Asher (waving smiling): Hey.

Pro: Asher? What are you doing here?

Asher (neutral neutral): I work here.

Pro: Oh.

Pro: Wait, you work?

Asher (neutral smiling): Yup.

Pro: I never knew that.

Asher (neutral happy): Well, I started recently.

Pro: Oh, I see. That’s pretty cool.

Asher (neutral smiling):

Asher starts to scan the items I picked out.

Asher (neutral curious): So, I heard you went to watch a baseball game yesterday.

Asher: How was it?

Pro: It was fun.

Asher (neutral disappointed): That’s it?

Pro: What else do you want to know?

Asher (neutral playful):

Asher smiles not-so-innocently, and I feel a shudder running up my spine.

Asher: Have you made any progress?

Pro: With what?

Asher (neutral grinning): With Lilith.

Asher (neutral laughing):

I sigh, and Asher laughs.

Pro: Why are you so interested?

Asher (neutral smiling): What? I can’t be interested in my friend’s life?

Pro: No.

Asher (neutral hehe): Aw.

Asher (neutral smiling): Well, to be honest, it intrigues me.

Pro: Yup, because I’m some random nobody…

Asher (neutral curious): Not that…

Asher (neutral thinking): It’s more like…

Asher (neutral neutral): I’ve known about Lilith for a while, and it just surprises me that she seems so friendly around you. Especially because she’s always pretty hostile towards me and some of my other friends.

Pro: Oh yeah, I think you mentioned something like that before…

Pro: What exactly happened?

Asher: Ah…

Asher (neutral thinking): …

Asher (neutral curious): You know what? I’m almost done my shift, you wanna get lunch?

Pro: Hm? Oh, sure I guess.

Asher (neutral happy): Alright. I’ll finish bagging these for you and then we can go.

**Diner**

Twenty minutes or so later we find ourselves at our local family restaurant, browsing through their menu. I’m not particularly hungry, so I order something small along with a warm drink.

Asher (neutral neutral):

Pro: So?

Asher: So…

Asher (neutral thinking)

Asher pauses for a moment, thinking.

Asher (neutral thoughtful): So, I told you earlier that Lilith seems pretty hostile towards me and some of my friends, right?

Pro: Yeah.

Asher (neutral thinking): So um…

Asher (neutral sincere): Apparently she’s like that towards most guys. Well, she’s not exactly hostile towards everyone, but she’s normally pretty icy. So there’s this rumour going around that she hates guys.

Thinking about it, Lilith did seem pretty wary around Asher before, but I don’t think it’s *that* extreme.

Asher (neutral thoughtful): So, of course everyone was surprised when you came into the picture, not because it’s you, but because you’re a guy she seems to be fine with.

Pro: I see.

Asher (neutral neutral):

Kari (neutral neutral): Oh, Asher. And Pro.

We’re interrupted by another familiar face.

Pro: Hey.

Asher (waving smiling): Hey Kari. Didn’t expect to see you here.

Kari: I work here.

Does everyone that’s not me have a job?

Asher (neutral smiling): Oh, I see. I just got off.

Kari (neutral smiling): Nice.

To my surprise, she sits down at our table.

Kari (neutral curious): What are you guys talking about?

Pro: Don’t you need to get ready for work…?

Kari (neutral smiling): I’m a little early.

Kari (neutral curious): So?

Asher (neutral grinning): Ah, we were talking about Lilith.

Kari (neutral amused): Of course.

Kari: Be honest. How far have you two gotten?

Pro: We haven’t gone anywhere…

Kari (neutral sigh):

Kari sighs.

Kari (neutral neutral): I know, I’m just joking.

Asher (neutral curious):

Kari: I was surprised, though. Out of all of her suitors it was you.

Pro: Ouch…

Kari (neutral curious): Oh, I didn’t mean it that way. You kinda came out of nowhere, you know? I didn’t know who you were two weeks ago.

Pro: I see.

Kari (neutral neutral): And besides, it was a surprise that she took interest in anyone at all.

Asher (neutral curious): Have you heard about the rumour?

Kari (neutral thinking): That she hates guys? Mmm…

Kari: I think that rumor was spread by the guys she’s rejected, so it probably isn’t legitimate.

Kari (neutral smiling\_nervous): Although, honestly, I was starting to think it was true, but now…

Kari (neutral amused): Maybe it’s because Pro doesn’t really seem like a guy?

Asher (neutral laughing):

Asher breaks out laughing, and I sigh.

Pro: Yup, yup…

Asher (neutral smiling):

Kari (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Ah, cheer up. Sensitive guys are pretty popular now, you know.

Kari (neutral amused): Lilith seems to enjoy your company anyways, and that’s really all that matters.

Kari (neutral neutral):

Our food comes, and Kari, remembering that she’s not here to talk, immediately stands up.

Kari: Oh shoot, I have to get ready for work.

Kari (waving smiling): Well, I’ll talk to you guys later. You better leave a huge tip.

Kari (neutral smiling): Good luck with Lilith, Pro.

Kari (exit):

And with that she jogs to the back, leaving Asher and I alone again.

Asher (neutral curious):

Pro: You’re the one with the job, so I think you should be the one to tip.

Asher (neutral skeptical): Really…?

It’s my turn to laugh.

Asher (neutral sigh): Alright, fine…

Asher (neutral neutral):

Asher takes a sip of his drink before continuing on.

Asher (neutral smiling): Well, regardless of what Lilith is actually like, I think hanging out together is good for both of you. You’ve been livelier recently.

Pro: Really?

Asher (neutral happy): Yup. And seeing you in a good mood puts me in a good mood too.

Asher (neutral smiling): So I’ll tip. Just for today.