**Classroom**

I start to feel more and more apprehensive about the mixer as our afternoon classes go on, and by the time they end I find myself considering ditching.

Teacher (neutral neutral): That’s all for today.

Teacher (neutral expressionless): Um, I forgot to tell you guys, but you have a test on Friday.

Teacher (neutral neutral): You’re dismissed.

Teacher (exit):

Struck by the realization that school is already over, I panickedly try to think up a way to escape and go home. However, before I can come up with a concrete plan Asher appears beside me.

Asher (neutral smiling): We still have a little time, so what do you wanna do?

Pro: I wanna go home. I don’t wanna go to the mixer anymore.

Asher (neutral curious): Are you sure? Lilith’s going too you know.

I hesitate for a moment, and seeing this, Asher pushes on.

Asher (neutral thinking): Would you be okay with her maybe meeting some guy she likes, and then hanging out with him instead of you? She might forget you, you know.

Asher (neutral happy):

Pro: Alright, alright…

Asher: That’s what I thought.

Asher (neutral smiling): Well, I guess we can go to your house for now if you really want. It’s on the way.

Pro: Is it? Alright, let’s go then.

**Front of School**

Not in a rush, Asher and I wait for the hallways to clear up before heading out. It’s not that big of a deal, but for some reason to me it feels somewhat momentous. I’ve always gone home as soon as I could, so not doing so for once feels strange.

But then again, if that’s strange then going to a mixer would be the equivalent of an alien invasion.

Asher (neutral smiling): Are you nervous?

Pro: A little.

Asher (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): No need to be afraid.

Asher (neutral neutral):

Pro: I’m just not used to these kind of things…

Asher (neutral thinking): Well it’s only gonna be us, right? Plus two other guys.

Pro: Who’s us? Me, you, Petra, Lilith, and who else?

Asher (neutral curious): Oh, Petra didn’t tell you? The other two girls are Kari and another girl from the baseball team.

Pro: For real?

Asher (neutral neutral): Yeah.

I let out a sigh of relief. Going to a mixer doesn’t seem that bad anymore, now that I know that I know most of the people going.

Asher (neutral curious):

Pro: Oh yeah, earlier…

Pro: You looked a little worried at lunch. What was that all about?

Asher (neutral thinking): Ah…

Asher (neutral neutral): I guess I should probably explain.

Asher (neutral curious): You know how Kari, Lilith, and the other upper year baseball players are like with Petra, right? They treat her more or less like a little sister.

Asher (neutral neutral): So when Petra went up to them asking for them to go, they decided to go more as a favour.

Pro: So…?

Asher (neutral neutral): So they’re not actually gonna be there for the mixer, they’re there for Petra. Which means the two other guys who asked Petra are gonna be sorely disappointed after today.

Pro: Oh, I see…

Asher (neutral smiling): Well, we’ll probably end up going, hanging out for a bit, and then leaving. Not a bad way to kill time.

Asher (neutral happy): And besides, we don’t have to pay for food, so that’s a plus.

Pro: Wouldn’t you feel bad about taking the other two guys’ money?

Asher (neutral skeptical): This from someone who mercilessly scammed his junior yesterday…?

Geh.

Pro: I’m sorry…

Asher (neutral laughing):

After a moment of silence, we both break out laughing.

Asher (neutral smiling): Don’t apologize. I’ll probably buy Petra something later to make up for it, since it’s mostly my fault.

Pro: Yeah…

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

As we continue walking, a thought springs up in my mind.

Asher (neutral curious):

Pro: By the way…

Pro: Why are you going?

Asher: Me?

Asher (neutral neutral): Same reason as the others. I’m doing a favour for Petra.

I feel a smug grin pulling at the corners of my face as I prepare to go on the offensive.

Pro: Not into any of them?

Asher (neutral curious): Not really, no. I’m friends with all of them, but I don’t think it’ll ever be anything more than that.

Pro: Why not?

Asher (neutral smiling): That’s just how it is.

Pro: Then, do you have a girlfriend?

Asher (neutral curious): Hm? Nope.

Pro: Wait, really?

Asher (neutral sincere): Pro…

Asher (neutral expressionless): We talk so much, don’t you think it’d be a little odd if I had a girlfriend and didn’t tell you about it?

Pro: Well, I dunno…

Asher (neutral neutral):

Pro: You always seem to be hiding things. For all I know, you could actually like one of them and just be bashful about it.

Pro: For example, you might like Petra, but because you don’t feel confident in yourself you treat her like a little sister, waiting for the opportune moment to strike…

Asher (neutral expressionless): It’s definitely not like that.

I tried, Petra.

Asher (neutral curious): And things don’t usually work like that in real life, anyways. That sounds like it’s from a manga.

Pro: Does it?

It totally is. One of Mara’s favourites.