**Classroom**

After waiting around in the parking lot for a good amount of time to make sure I don’t run into Petra and Kari again, I head back to our classroom to eat my lunch.

Asher (neutral curious): Oh, you’re back. How was it?

Pro: Not too bad, actually. Where are they?

Asher (neutral smiling): They left a while ago. Got bored of waiting for you.

Pro: I see.

As I pull out my lunch, I notice a pair of our classmates glancing in our direction, whispering excitedly.

Asher (neutral neutral):

Pro: Everyone knows now, huh.

Asher (neutral smiling\_nervous): Well, it’d be pretty hard to ignore someone as hyperactive as Petra is…

Pro: Yeah…

Asher (neutral smiling): Don’t worry, it’ll blow over eventually.

Pro: I guess. I don’t really mind, though.

Asher (neutral curious): Really?

Pro: Yeah.

Throughout middle school, I’d get the same looks and worse when I was seen with Mara. You could say that I’ve built up a tolerance to it.

Asher (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Heart of steel, dude.

Pro: Yup, yup. That’s right.

Asher (exit):

Asher and I talk as I eat, but I don’t really pay attention to what either of us says. Instead, I start wondering where I’ll go with Lilith after school again, and by the time lunch ends I’m almost completely stuck in a daydream.

**Front of School**

I manage to maintain consciousness for the rest of the day, and after we’re dismissed I pack up my bags and head straight to the front of the school, where after a few minutes Lilith shows up.

Lilith (neutral embarrassed\_slightly):

Pro: Hey.

Lilith: Did you wait long?

Pro: No, just a few minutes.

Lilith (neutral neutral): Oh, I see.

Lilith (neutral curious): …

Lilith: Shall we get going, then?

Pro: Oh yeah, sure.

As Lilith and I walk together, I have to make an effort to ignore all of the stares of everyone around us. Lilith seems unfazed, but as we continue on I find that a small part of me wishes that I were invisible.

Maybe I do mind. Just a little bit.

**Neighbourhood Road 2**

Thankfully, the farther away we get from school the less curious students there are, and eventually we’re the only ones around, save for the certain group that not-so-sneakily follows us.

LIlith (neutral neutral):

Pro: I guess they would follow us, huh?

Lilith (neutral sigh):

Lilith glances at her prying teammates and sighs.

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): Sorry about them…

Pro: No, it’s fine. Can’t really do anything about them.

Lilith (neutral expressionless): They wouldn’t stop asking me about today. After practice yesterday, and today as well.

Pro: Ah yeah, they paid me a visit at lunch too.

Lilith (neutral neutral): Really?

Lilith (neutral expressionless): Sorry…

Pro: It’s fine, it’s fine don’t worry. My teacher saved me, so it’s all good.

Lilith (neutral curious): Your teacher?

Pro: Yeah, um…

Pro: She chewed me out. For sleeping in class.

Lilith (neutral disappointed): So you did end up sleeping in class…

Pro: Oh…

I suddenly remember the conversation we had this morning.

Pro: Yeah, I guess…

Lilith (neutral suspicious): Weren’t you in remedial classes on Saturday?

Pro: Um…

Pro: Yes.

Lilith: …

Wanting to get away from this uncomfortable topic, I try to change the subject.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Pro: Oh yeah, where are we going? You can tell me now, right?

Pro: Are we seeing a movie again?

Lilith (neutral thinking):

Lilith shakes her head and pauses for a second before replying.

Lilith (neutral neutral): There’s this place I like to go to. It’s a coffee shop.

Pro: A coffee shop?

Lilith nods, and I think about all the different cafés that Mara’s dragged me to over the years. She’d always get excited about how each shop was special and different from the rest, but to me every place seemed more or less the same.

Pro: Where is it?

Lilith: It’s nearby, by the station.

Pro: I see.

I rack my brain for memories of coffee shops by the station, and a few come to mind.

Pro: Do you know what it’s called?

Lilith (neutral thinking): Mmm…

Lilith (neutral neutral): I can’t remember, sorry.

Pro: Oh, don’t worry about it.

Well, I guess I’ll have to wait and see. Mara’s appetite for both food and knowledge about it is almost limitless, so there’s a good chance that I’ve been to it before.