**Home Station**

When we get back, the streetlights in the area have already turned on, illuminating the area with a bluish-white glow. Dozens of office workers tiredly trudge into the station, finally done with their day’s work.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Pro: It’s dark already, huh?

Lilith: Yeah, it is. I guess we were out for a while.

Pro: Yeah.

Pro: You gonna be okay getting home?

Lilith (neutral confused):

Lilith looks at me oddly.

Lilith: Of course. Why wouldn’t I?

Pro: Oh, sorry. Force of habit.

Lilith (neutral neutral): I see.

Lilith: Don’t worry about me, I’ll be fine. And besides, I don’t think I’ll be going home straight away anyways.

She gestures towards her friends.

Pro: Ah, yeah.

Lilith (neutral expressionless): Well, I guess I’ll indulge them now.

Lilith (neutral curious): You gonna go home?

Pro: Yeah.

Lilith (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Alright. See you later, then.

Lilith (neutral embarrassed\_slightly): Thursday after school, okay?

Pro: Yeah, see you.

Lilith (exit):

Lilith turns around to greet her teammates, and I head home, tired, but also glad that I was able to hang out with her again today.

Even if we were stalked the entire time.

**Kitchen**

I get back home to find it empty, which means that my mom probably had to work late again. I feel a little guilty that while she was out working long hours I was having fun watching a movie and sipping tea.

Well, it’s not like she’d let me get a job, anyways.

I go to the kitchen to grab a bite to eat, but when I get there I notice that the fridge is slightly open. Which is strange because my mom is always careful about things like that.

Ah well.

Not thinking much of it, I heat up some leftovers and head to my room.

**Bedroom**

Mara (neutral neutral): …

Pro: …

Mara (neutral smiling\_nervous):

Pro: It seems like you’ve recently developed this habit of sneaking in whenever you feel like it.

Mara: It does, doesn’t it.

I sigh and take a seat on the bed. Littered on the floor are several manga volumes, all already read and discarded.

Mara (neutral curious): So? How was it?

Pro: It was fun. We went to see a movie, and then we went to a café.

Mara: Oh, I see. Which movie?

Pro: That new horror movie.

Mara (surprise geh): …

Mara: You watched that…?

Pro: Yeah…

Mara: (neutral worried\_slightly):

Like me, Mara isn’t the best with horror either.

Mara (neutral curious):

I tell her about the rest of our outing, about how Lilith chose a horror movie to get back at her friends, how she explained what exactly baseball is over coffee, and everything else.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Well, I’m glad you enjoyed yourself as much as you could. Did you make any future plans?

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Yeah, this Thursday. We’re going to a batting cage.

Mara: Oh.

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): …

Mara: I was gonna ask you if you wanted to do something on Thursday, but I guess not.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Guess it’ll have to be Friday.

Pro: I don’t get a say in this…?

Mara: Nope.

Mara (neutral neutral): Well, it’s getting late so I probably should get back home.

Mara (neutral curious): Oh wow, it’s already really dark out.

Pro: I’ll walk you home.

Mara (neutral hehe): It’s alright, I’ll be fine. Thanks, though.

Pro: Are you sure?

Mara (neutral smiling): I’m sure.

**Kitchen**

I walk Mara to the door and wave her goodbye as she leaves.

Mara (waving smiling): I’ll see you tomorrow, okay?

Pro: Yeah. See you.

Mara (exit):

I lock the door behind her and head back upstairs, a little put out that Mara declined my company home as well. It’s something so small, so insignificant, and yet for some reason it makes me a little sad.

A couple years ago she’d force me to walk her home every day, but now she’s outgrown that. What else will she outgrow in the future?

Or rather, who?