**Kitchen**

It’s well past noon by the time I wake up and work up the will to get out of bed, and after poking my head into the kitchen I find a bowl of fried rice waiting for me on the table with a note beside it.

Mom: *For you. Had to go to work. Sorry.*

It’s gotten cold. Mom probably made it for breakfast before going to work.

I start eating after I warm it up in the microwave, finding that it still tastes good despite sitting on the table for probably a few hours. It tastes good, but for some reason I can’t fully enjoy it.

Eating alone really does suck, and that paired with the pang of guilt I feel for being the reason she has to work so hard…

…

Once I finish eating I lean back and glance around the room, noticing that I left my bag on the couch last night.

So far, I’ve only ever studied when being pushed by somebody else, someone like Ms. Tran or Mara. It’s hard to want to study something that I don’t enjoy, especially when the material’s difficult but not rewarding.

If I’m not allowed work, then the least I could do is do well in school…

But would I even be able to...?

All of a sudden, Prim flashes into my mind. Even though she says she’s not talented (which I somewhat doubt) she works hard, and it’s clear that her diligence paid off. Maybe I won’t do that well, but I could definitely do better...

Hmm...

After a brief internal debate, I find myself grabbing my bag, heading to my room, and taking a seat at my desk.