**Classroom**

Feeling a little better, the rest of the school day passes by more quickly than it usually does, perhaps because I skipped out on the first half of classes. Despite this, though, I feel a tinge of impatience as the minutes leading to dismissal time tick by.

Once we’re finally let go, I bid goodbye to Asher and quickly head out, wanting to get to the hospital as soon as possible.

**Hospital Room**

Once I arrive, I sign in and head straight to my mom’s room, my anxiety starting to resurface with every step I take.

However, it turns out that my worry was for nothing, because the first thing I see when I open the door is my mom standing by the window.

Mom (neutral curious): Oh, you’re here.

Mom (neutral smiling): How was school? You manage to wake up on time?

Pro: I, uh…

Mom (neutral smiling\_nervous): I thought you might’ve taken the opportunity to sleep in.

Mom (neutral neutral): But starting the day after tomorrow, it’ll be back to your normal schedule.

Pro: So you’re getting out tomorrow?

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Yeah. Tomorrow at around noon.

Mom (neutral sigh): Honestly, I feel fine, but because of my age or something they wanna keep me here for one more night.

Mom (neutral worried\_slightly): You’ll have to take care of yourself for another day, sorry…

Pro: It’s fine, don't worry.

Mom (neutral neutral):

I take a seat in the chair beside her bed, letting out a small sigh of relief.

Mom (neutral curious):

Pro: Anyways, should you really be standing up right now?

Mom (neutral smiling): It’s fine, it’s fine. I feel perfectly normal.

I eye her skeptically, slightly suspicious of her unusually chipper attitude.

Pro: You seem to be in an exceptionally good mood.

Mom (neutral thinking): Well…

Mom (neutral smiling\_nervous): Someone from work came in today to apologize, and they told me that they’ll give me the rest of the week off and a pay raise.

Mom (neutral smiling): And I won’t have to work overtime from now on.

She walks over, sits down on the edge of her bed, and ruffles my hair.

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): See? I told you everything’s gonna be alright.

Mom (neutral curious):

Pro: I dunno about your definition of “alright,” though…

Mom (neutral worried\_slightly): I know.

Mom (neutral smiling\_worried): I’m really sorry about all this. You must’ve been worried.

Pro: Well, yeah…

Mom (neutral smiling): But don’t worry. I’ll be able to start taking care of you properly again soon.

Mom (neutral smiling\_nervous):

Pro: That’s not exactly what I was worried about…

I stand up, recalling how much Mara and even Prim have done to cheer me up today. It really is a blessing to have so many people care about your wellbeing, but I can’t keep taking forever…

Mom (neutral curious):

Pro: I’m going to do better in school so I can get a good job and let you take it easy.

Pro: But that’s still a long way off…

Pro: So please…

Pro: If there’s anything I can do to help you out and be less of a burden, please let me do it. Even if you don’t want me to get a job, if I could help out more at home, or…

I trail off, unsure of what I could do. When it comes to the skills department, I’m severely lacking in almost all areas.

Mom (neutral curious): …

Mom (neutral gentle): I guess I’m lucky to have such a caring son, huh?

Pro: I dunno if you’re lucky…

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Nope, I’m definitely lucky.

She smiles and runs her hand through my hair once more before letting go.

Mom (neutral smiling): You should start heading home. I bet you didn’t eat anything for lunch, so go buy yourself something for dinner.

Pro: Are you sure? I can stay for longer.

Mom (neutral curious): There’s no point in you hanging around here for too long. Besides, I’ll be home more often now, and soon enough you’ll get sick of me.

I pause to study her face for a moment before standing up.

Pro: I dunno about that, but I guess I’ll get going then.

Mom (neutral smiling):

Pro: See you tomorrow, then.

Mom: See you tomorrow.

Mom (exit):

As I leave the room I remember my mother’s promise to herself, the one she made to make sure I would be happy. And as I close the door, I make a similar little promise to myself as well.

I’ll do better in school. I’ll work hard. Like a certain shy junior of mine, I’ll work, and work, and work until one day I can let you take it easy and enjoy yourself.

I promise.