**Classroom**

Nothing notable happens in the morning, and once classes end I start to unpack my lunch, finding with delight that it’s one of my favourite meals.

Asher (neutral sincere): So that was more or less all the material for tomorrow’s test. How do you feel?

Pro: How do I feel…?

Pro: Dunno.

Asher (neutral hopeful): Same. I don’t think it’ll be that bad, though…

Asher (neutral worried\_slightly):

He trails off, something at the front of the classroom having grabbed his attention. I turn around to see what he’s looking at.

It’s Mick.

Asher: He’s probably here for you.

Pro: Huh? Why?

Asher (neutral neutral): Dunno. Love triangle things, I guess.

Pro: …

Asher (neutral smiling\_nervous): I’m joking, I’m joking.

Asher (neutral worried\_slightly): You should go talk to him, though. See what he wants.

Pro: Alright.

Asher (exit):

I get up and close my half-eaten lunch before moving to the front, hoping that Mick actually isn’t here for me.

Unfortunately, things usually aren’t that convenient.

Mick (arms\_crossed neutral): I need to talk to you.

Pro: What’s up?

Mick (arms\_crossed away):

He glances around our classroom.

Mick (arms\_crossed neutral): Not here.

Mick (exit):

He turns around and starts walking away, and, a little worried now, I follow after him.

**Stairwell**

He takes me to the stairwell Prim took me to just a few days ago, but this time it feels entirely different. The air is chilly, and I start to get the feeling that this encounter will be less than pleasant.

Mick (neutral annoyed): Prim didn’t want to go to school today.

Huh?

Pro: Why?

Mick (neutral skeptical): You don’t know?

I rack my brains, trying to think of anything.

Mick (neutral sigh):

Pro: Maybe something with her sister…?

Mick (neutral cold):

He approaches me, studying my face with cold eyes.

Pro: Look, I really have no idea…

Mick: Last night she received a bunch of love notes from some creep. And there’s really only one person that I can think of that might’ve done something like that.

Pro: Huh? Who…?

I trail off, realizing what he means.

Pro: Me? Why?

Mick (arms\_crossed cold): You show up out of nowhere, do so much for her even though she does nothing for you in return…

Mick: Why wouldn’t it be you?

Pro: Because…

I desperately try to think of a reason why, but I can’t come up with anything concrete. More importantly, does Prim actually have a stalker? If she does, then things could turn ugly really quickly...

Pro: ...it’s just not me…

Mick: …

Mick (embarrassed sigh):

Somehow, that worked because Mick backs off after a few seconds.

Mick (neutral skeptical): I’ll trust you for now. Only for now.

Mick (neutral indifferent): Regardless, if there is a stalker then it would probably be best for both of you to hold off on going to practices from now on.

Pro: But-

Mick (neutral serious): It’s not a matter of whether Prim will want to or not. The priority right now is her safety.

Mick: She’s still young and has a lot of time to develop her skills. Skipping a few practices won’t affect her ability much.

I bite my lip, knowing that Mick’s right but at the same time wishing that he weren’t. So much has happened recently, and Prim already almost quit once, but if there really is someone following her then the consequences could be much worse…

“I’m sorry, but...”

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Pro: I’m sorry, but…

I take a deep breath, knowing that Mick won’t be happy with what I’m about to say.

Pro: But I don’t think this is something for us to decide.

Pro: At the end of the day, I think it’s Prim who should decide whether or not she goes.

Pro: And if she does, I’ll be there to make sure she’s safe.

He eyes me contemptuously, perhaps debating whether he should argue with me or not. However, after a while he apparently decides against it.

Mick (neutral sigh): I don’t agree. But I don’t think there’s any point trying to change your mind, either.

Mick (neutral serious): If anything happens, though, it’ll be your fault.

Mick (neutral cold): And yours alone.

Mick (exit):

Mick walks past me and leaves, and after waiting for a bit to make sure we don’t run into each other again I follow after him, ready to finish up my lunch.

I can understand why he’d suspect me, but did he have to be so unpleasant about it? And why would he call me out immediately instead of waiting to confirm his suspicions…?

Strange.

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“You’re right.”

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Mick (neutral sigh):

Pro: You’re right. If it’s for her safety…

Mick (neutral neutral): I’m glad you understand.

Mick (exit):

Without another word Mick walks past me and exits the stairwell, leaving me alone. Even though I know this is for the best, it still feels terrible…

And apologizing to Prim later will probably feel worse.

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