**Coffee Shop**

Lilith guides us into a small alleyway and then through a somewhat obscure door on the right, revealing a small but trendy coffee shop hidden away in a sea of busy shops and restaurants.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Petra (neutral curious):

Pro: Wow, this is pretty nice. And it’s not busy either.

Lilith: Yeah.

Lilith: I usually sit over there.

Lilith (exit):

Petra (exit):

She gestures to a small table in the corner, and we head over and take our seats. A middle-aged waiter comes by shortly afterwards, slipping menus in our hands with a professionalism I find almost unsettling.

Petra (neutral fufu): You know, times like these make me forget that you’re a baseball bat wielding fiend most of the time…

Lilith (neutral confused\_slightly): A baseball bat wielding fiend…?

Lilith (neutral annoyed):

Petra (neutral grinning): It’s nice to know you have a classy side as well.

Lilith: …

Petra (neutral hehe):

Lilith (neutral sigh):

Unimpressed and probably a little annoyed, Lilith lets out a sigh as Petra tries to hold down a fit of giggles.

Petra (neutral geh):

Lilith (neutral neutral): Once you order we’re starting.

Petra (neutral embarrassed): Right, right.

Petra (neutral neutral):

After a few purposefully extended minutes of deliberation, I order a tea and Petra decides to get a latte complete with every imaginable topping. Lilith, on the other hand, gets a drink that suits both her setting and outfit pretty well.

Petra (neutral curious): Black coffee…?

Petra (neutral expressionless): I have no idea how you drink that…

Petra (neutral frowning):

Lilith: It’s an acquired taste. Or so I’ve heard.

I’ve heard a lot of people say that too, but is it really true? I’ve always hated the sharp bitterness of pure coffee, and I can’t really imagine drinking the stuff without a lot of milk and sugar to drown it out.

Petra (neutral curious):

Lilith (neutral thinking): I’ve always liked it this way, though.

Lilith (neutral curious):

Pro: Wait, for real?

She nods as if it were the most normal thing in the world. A high school girl liking black coffee.

Pro: Do you not like sweet stuff, or something?

Petra (neutral disappointed):

Lilith: I think I like sweets as much as anyone else. Although they’re really bad for your weight.

Petra (neutral expressionless):

Petra makes a small sound of displeasure at Lilith’s words, probably regretting her excessively unhealthy choice.

Petra (neutral smiling\_nervous): Every so often should be fine though, right?

Lilith (neutral neutral): Yeah, but…

Petra (neutral geh):

Lilith: …I don’t think I’ve seen you drink anything without whipped cream and added sugar.

Petra (embarrassed embarrassed): …

Petra (neutral expressionless): Let’s just start studying…

Petra (neutral neutral):

A little nervous, I tentatively pull my homework from my bag, knowing that my academics aren’t exactly the best. Hopefully Lilith won’t think of me too badly, but regardless if she does or not I’ll still need to put in a lot of work…

Petra (neutral curious):

Lilith (neutral curious): Can I see?

Petra (neutral smirk):

Pro: Huh? Oh, sure…

I hand over the messy stack of papers in my hand, doing my best not to let my discomfort show.

Lilith (neutral thinking):

Lilith starts reading through my notes thoroughly and efficiently, only pausing briefly here or there to decipher my messy handwriting. I can almost see the wheels turning in her head, undoubtedly accurately determining my ability level.

Petra (neutral fufu):

Lilith (neutral neutral): So…

I sit up straight instinctively, my heart beating a lot faster than it should.

Petra (neutral curious):

Lilith (neutral confused\_slightly): It’s actually not that bad. At least, not as bad as I thought it’d be.

Petra (neutral confused):

Lilith (neutral neutral): I’d say you’re still doing better than Petra.

Petra (neutral surprise): Huh?!? For real?!?

Petra (neutral embarrassed):

Lilith (neutral curious): What did you get on our last test?

Pro: Mmm…

Pro: Apparently I almost passed. She said if she marked it a bit easier, I would’ve.

Lilith (neutral neutral): I see. With a little more work, you’ll probably make it.

Pro: Oh, that’s good to hear.

Petra (neutral skeptical): Yeah, but are you really satisfied with just passing? What about your future?

Suspecting that Petra primarily said that to salvage her injured ego, I ready a retort, but just before it leaves the tip of my tongue I catch myself.

She’s right. I decided to do better, to put myself in a position where I can make sure that my mom can take it easy. And I don’t think barely passing will cut it. At all.

Lilith (neutral curious):

Petra (neutral smirk):

Pro: I guess not…

Seeing her smug expression, however, I decide to slip in a snarky remark after all.

Petra (neutral confused):

Pro: But are you sure you really should be worrying about me? After all, Lilith said that you’re worse off, and I’m not even passing so…

Petra (neutral geh): Geh…

Petra (down disappointed): Alright, alright. Point taken.

Petra sombrely turns back to her worksheet, filling me with a sense of victory that lasts only five seconds, since reality strikes in the form of Lilith.

Lilith (neutral neutral): I think we should start with this concept. It seems like you had a lot of trouble with it.

Pro: Yeah…

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): You got most of these questions wrong…

Lilith: …

Lilith (neutral sigh): Well, I guess everyone’s gotta start somewhere.

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly):

Yikes…