**Home Station**

Completely and utterly humbled, I timidly listened to all of Lilith’s lessons, trying to soak in everything I could while still attempting to not seem totally hopeless.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Petra (down tired): I’m beat…

Pro: Same…

Lilith’s actually a really good teacher though, and as we leave the coffee shop I note that I feel like I have a solid grasp on everything that she explained.

Petra (down neutral): What are you doing now?

Lilith: I’m gonna meet Kari and a few others from my class. You wanna come with?

Petra (down tired): I’ll pass for today. I’m surprised you still have the energy for that.

Lilith (neutral curious): I’m surprised you don’t.

Petra (down yawn): Well, normally I’d be more than happy to, but my mind is fried.

Petra (down expressionless): I’m tired, nauseous, and I think the beginnings of a headache are starting to set in…

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): Yeah, you should probably head home then.

Petra (down tired): Yeah.

Petra (stretching stretching):

However, she turns to me instead of leaving.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Petra (neutral curious): How about you?

Pro: Dunno. I’ll probably go home too.

Petra (neutral neutral): I see.

Petra (neutral curious): Oh shoot, I have to cook dinner tonight…

Petra (neutral groan):

She lets out a dejected groan, making even me feel a little sympathetic.

Petra (waving expressionless): Well, I’d better get going then. I still need to go shopping, and stuff…

Petra: See you guys later.

Pro: Yeah, see you.

Petra (exit):

And off she goes, slowly trudging her way through the thicket of people hovering around the station, leaving Lilith and I alone.

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): Um-

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Pro: I should probably head home too…

Pro: Oh, sorry, were you gonna say something?

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): Oh, um, if you need to go home you should.

Pro: It’s alright. Go ahead.

Lilith: …

Lilith (neutral sigh): Alright, then.

Lilith (neutral neutral): Do you have a moment? There’s something I’d like to ask you.

I blink twice, having not really processed what she said.

Pro: Pardon?

Lilith: There’s something I’d like to ask you.

So it wasn’t a hallucination.

Pro: Sure. What’s up?

Intrigued, I listen earnestly and intently, wondering what Lilith could possible have on her mind. My weary body starts to revitalize, filling with energy because of the anticipation.

Lilith: Um…

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): If you had someone close to you, but one day you had to part ways…

Lilith (neutral curious): …how would you say goodbye?

Huh…?

All of a sudden, my heart drops, and the bustling crowds around us start to quietly drift away. The excitement I felt moments ago suddenly drains from my body, leaving only a sense of shame, shame that I got worked up over such a serious question…

Pro: Um…

Pro: Why do you want to know?

Lilith: It’s hypothetical.

Pro: I see.

I try to read Lilith’s expression, but as always it betrays no hints about her actual thoughts.

But she wouldn’t have asked the question if there wasn’t something on her mind, right?

I don’t have many people that I’m close to. There’s Mara, my mom, and now probably Prim, which makes a total of three. If I had to part ways with one of them…

The thought is unbearable.

But if I think about it, up till now I’ve purposefully ignored the fact that Mara could potentially have to leave at any time because of her parents’ unstable marriage, and by extension I’ve avoided thinking about what I would do if she did have to go.

What would I do? Would I try to make as many happy memories as I could, so that she could leave with a smile? Or would I try to distance myself from her, so saying goodbye would be easier for both of us? Both options sound so, so painful…

So I probably wouldn’t choose either of them.

I’d try to hold on to her as long as I could, and even after she’d left I would do my utmost to keep her in my life, to delay the sadness for as long as possible…

But that’s a selfish way to say goodbye. And I don’t think it’s right, either.

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): So…

I look at Lilith, wondering if I should tell her or not. She doesn’t seem like someone who would drag things out or cling to something that’s supposed to leave her for good, so…

Don’t tell her.

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Lilith (neutral confused\_slightly):

Pro: I’m not sure.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Feeling a little guilty, I look away, but to my surprise Lilith doesn’t seem disappointed.

Lilith: I see.

Lilith (neutral curious): Do you need more time to think?

Pro: Hm? Oh, I guess.

Lilith: I see.

Lilith (neutral thinking): Um…

Lilith (neutral neutral): Our next test is in a couple weeks, right?

Pro: Yeah, I think so.

Lilith: I’ll tutor you throughout this week, but at the end of it…

Lilith: …I want you to give me an answer. Okay?

Stunned, I stare at Lilith while I try to figure out why she wants her question answered so badly.

Pro: Sure, I guess. But why?

Lilith (neutral confused\_slightly): Why…?

Lilith (neutral worried\_slightly): …

Lilith (neutral neutral): It’s for a manga. Or so I’m told.

Lilith (neutral expressionless): My aunt’s a manga author, but she’s been having trouble coming up with stuff recently so she wanted to get my opinion. But I couldn’t give her an answer, so she told me to ask my classmates.

Lilith (neutral neutral):

Pro: …

Pro: Oh.

So it wasn’t for a serious reason after all.

Pro: Alright then. I’ll gladly take you up on your offer.

Pro: Thanks in advance.

Lilith: No problem.

Lilith (neutral curious): I should probably go meet my friends now. Let’s do Tuesday?

Pro: Oh, sure.

Lilith (neutral neutral): Alright.

Lilith (waving neutral): See you, then.

Pro: See you.

Lilith (exit):

I watch as she walks away, a little embarrassed that I considered my answer so somberly. But then again, the question itself was misleading, and it’s not like I could’ve inferred her intentions by reading her face…

Ah well. What’s done is done, I guess.

Time to go home.

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Tell her.

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YOU FAILED LOL

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