**Kitchen**

I tried to sort out my thoughts on the way back home, but it didn’t really work so I eventually gave up and made a mental note to talk to Mara later. She’s uncannily adept at navigating these situations, and I guess she also has experience in this area as well…

…

Maybe I shouldn’t, after all.

The kitchen light is on when I get inside, and my mom walks in as I take off my shoes.

Mom: Welcome back. Did you eat already?

Pro: I, uh…

I forgot to tell her. Oops…

Pro: Yeah, I did. Sorry.

Mom: It’s alright, don’t worry. I have to go to work early tomorrow, so maybe you could eat it for breakfast?

Pro: That works.

Mom: Great.

Mom: You look exhausted.

Pro: Do I? I don’t really feel tired…

Mom: You have bags under your eyes, and you seem a little sluggish…

Mom: Where’d you go?

Pro: Another study session. With Lilith and Prim.

Pro: And afterwards Lilith and I got dinner.

Mom: Hmm…?

Mom: I see, I see.

Mom: I’ve been thinking about it, but, um…

Mom: Do you have any male friends?

Pro: Of course I do. You’ve met Asher before, and there’s also…

Huh? Now that I think about it, Asher’s really the only guy I could consider a friend…

Mom: I see, I see.

Mom: Well, there’s nothing wrong with that. And besides, all your friends are rather cute so-

Pro: Alright, alright, that’s enough…

She chuckles at my disgruntlement, which causes my face to soften ever so slightly. Hopefully it’s not noticeable, though.

Mom: The bath’s ready, if you want to take one.

Pro: Did you take one already?

Mom: I was going to, but you go ahead.

Pro: Huh? Are you sure?

Mom: Of course.

Mom: Try to go to bed a little earlier tonight though, okay?