**Downtown**

It’s dark by the time we get outside, and after paying the massive tab we accumulated we head back to the station, where Prim’s family is waiting.

Petra: Man, that was fun.

Petra: Although I’m out of pocket money for the rest of the month…

Prim: I really don’t mind pitching in…

Petra: Too bad, we won’t let you. It’s your birthday, after all.

Petra: Oh, that reminds me…

She holds out the heavy-looking bag she’s been lugging around for Prim to take.

Petra: Here’s my gift for you.

Petra: I was actually going to get you something else, but it didn’t work out so I got you this instead.

Prim: This is…

Petra: The manga series I told you about, yeah.

Petra: Happy birthday.

Lilith: Here’s mine.

Asher: And mine. I heard you playing Debussy in the music room before, so I thought you might like trying Ravel…

Prim: Oh, thank you…

Lilith and Asher hand over their gifts, which means it’s my turn next. For some reason I can’t seem to give over mine, though - even though it’s in my hand, my body just won’t move.

What if it pales in comparison to everything else she’s received? What if she flat-out doesn’t like it? Questions like these swirl around in my head as I try to muster up the courage to extend my arm…

Pro: Um, he-

Iris: You guys done?

And just like that, whatever little momentum I built up shatters.

Prim: Um…

Iris: …

Iris: Actually, I need to ask our parents something, or something like that…

Lilith: I wanted to ask them something too, so I’ll go with you. Come with us, Petra.

Petra: Huh?!? But I wanna see-

Asher: I need to take a call quickly.

And just like that, my confidence takes an even deeper dive, even though I know they’re trying to help me out. The pressure feels like it’s doubled now, and the last thing I wanna do is hand over my gift…

But when I think about everything that’s happened over the past few week, I know that’s not an option.

Pro: Um…

Pro: Actually, I bought something for you too.

Prim: Huh? Oh, yeah.

Pro: …

Pro: Happy Birthday, Prim.

And just like that, with shaking limbs and a burning face that I desperately hope isn’t red, I manage to give my present to Prim.

Prim: C-Can I open it?

Pro: Go ahead.

Being ever so careful not to damage anything, Prim slowly unties the ribbon, opens the lid, and gingerly lifts the gift out of its box.

Prim: A hairpin?

Pro: Yeah.

Prim: It’s…

She stops to think, but once she realizes what it is her eyes widen.

Prim: …a primrose.

Pro: Yeah.

Prim: …

Prim: Can I try it on?

Pro: Oh, um, go ahead.

But before she can, out of the corner of our eyes we spot Lilith restraining an over-eager Petra, causing both of us to laugh.

Pro: Maybe another time.

Prim: Yeah.

**Downtown**

Prim and I head back over to where the others are waiting,

Petra: So what did he get you?!?

Prim: I wonder…

Petra: …

Petra: Tell me when we get to your place, okay?

Pro: Prim’s place?

Petra: Yeah. I’m sleeping over tonight.

Iris: You are? First time I’m hearing of this.

Petra: Huh?!? For real?!?

Iris: No, I’m joking.

Iris: Are you guys ready to go?

Petra: I am, but…

It takes a second for Prim to realize that Petra’s deferring the decision to her.

Prim: Oh, I’m ready to go too.

Iris: Hmm…

Iris: Alright then.

Iris: I’d offer to drive the rest of you guys too, but unfortunately we only have space for our family and Metro over here.

Petra: It’s Petra.

Lilith: It’s fine, we’ll take the train back.

Asher: Actually I’m going to a friend’s place too, so I’ll be taking the bus from here.

Iris: So let me get things straight…

Iris: I’m taking Prim and Metro, you’re going on the bus, and Pro and…

Iris: …

Iris: Metro, why don’t you take the train back with your friend?

Petra: Huh? Why?

Iris: …

Iris: Never mind.

Iris: Alright then, let’s get going. Bye, now.

Petra: See you!!

Asher: I should probably leave too. See you guys.

Pro: Oh, see you.

Petra follows Iris away, taking all of Prim’s plunder with her to the car. Asher goes the other way, but Prim lingers for a few extra moments, her eyes meeting mine one more time.

Prim: Um…

Prim: Thanks for the gift.

Prim: Bye.

And with that she spins around and goes after Petra and Iris, her trot as adorable as her smile.

Lilith: A success?

Pro: Huh? Oh, I dunno…

But inside I know that’s not entirely true, given that I’m desperately trying to fight down a giddy smile to avoid looking like a fool.

Lilith: I see.

Prim’s family drives past, as we watch as Petra opens the window to shout goodbye to us and everyone else in a fifty-meter radius. Lilith doesn’t react at all though - all she does is watch as the car slowly makes its way through traffic and eventually disappears.

Pro: Um…

Pro: Lilith?

Lilith: …

Lilith: Oh, sorry. Let’s go.