**Bedroom**

Morning. Again.

I allow myself two minutes to stay in bed before forcing myself to slip out of my sheets and into my uniform.

It’s actually a little scary how easily I’ve been getting up recently, given my track record and disposition for sleeping in. Ever since I met Lilith I’ve made more friends, I’ve gained a bit of motivation to do well, and I’ve overall been finding school much more tolerable, maybe even enjoyable.

Even my dreams have been becoming more pleasant recently. Gone are all of my falling dreams, replaced by quirky ones filled with flowers, baseball bats, and mini Petras running around.

Which, of course, is pretty terrifying in its own right, but it’s better than the cold-sweat terror that comes from spiraling to your death.

**Front of House**

I head outside after quickly wolfing down my breakfast and brushing my teeth, finding a waiting Mara.

Mara (neutral smiling): Morning.

Pro: Morning. Did you wait long?

Mara (neutral curious): Not more than usual.

Pro: Huh? What’s the usual?

Mara (neutral thinking): Mmm…

Mara (neutral neutral): Ten minutes, maybe?

Pro: Actually? Every day?

Mara: Yeah. On average.

It doesn’t seem that bad at first glance, but ten minutes every school day for years would be a lot of time spent waiting…

Mara (neutral curious):

Pro: What do you do while you wait?

Mara (neutral thinking): Mmm…

Mara (arms\_crossed fufu): I become one with nature.

Pro: …

Mara (neutral hehe): Just kidding. Kind of.

Mara (neutral smiling):

Mara: I kinda just look around, taking in the fresh air. It’s almost like a daily calming ritual, you know?

Pro: I guess that makes sense…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): My day wouldn’t feel right without it.

Pro: Huh…

I stare at her, wondering whether she’s either being honest or trying to alleviate my guilt. Maybe a bit of both.

Mara (neutral smiling): Well, anyways, let’s get going.

Mara (neutral hehe): You got out pretty early today, so it’d be a shame if we were late.

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

It’s a little chilly outside today, a departure from the nice weather we’ve been having recently. Winter is slowly but surely on its way, and with it will come shorter days, extra layers, and occasional bouts of snow.

Mara (neutral thinking): Autumn’s passing by pretty quickly, huh?

Pro: Yeah, I guess.

Mara (neutral wishful):

Mara looks around, an intriguing look on her face.

Mara (neutral thinking): They say that time passes by faster as you get older…

Mara (neutral curious): …but if it’s already passing by this quickly, then when we become adults wouldn’t it go by really quickly?

Pro: Maybe. I don’t think it’ll be that noticeable, though.

Mara (neutral neutral): Maybe.

Mara (neutral expressionless): I don’t wanna grow any older, though. Too many responsibilities.

Pro: I can relate, but unfortunately we don’t have much of a choice…

Mara: Yeah…

Mara (neutral happy): Maybe I’ll become a NEET. Maybe that’s my true calling.

Pro: Right…

Mara (neutral thinking): I’ll live in an apartment, spending my days cooking, cleaning, and reading manga. And I’ll also have a balcony where I can grow flowers, and herbs, and other stuff.

Mara (neutral curious):

Pro: And who’s gonna pay for all that?

Mara (neutral smiling): You, of course.

Pro: Right. Since I’ll totally have enough money to support both of us.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Right. I’m counting on you.

Mara (neutral hehe):

I let out a sigh, much to Mara’s amusement.

Mara (neutral curious): In return I could cook and clean for you as well. It’d be an exchange.

Pro: Wouldn’t you basically be a maid then? You wouldn’t be a NEET.

Mara (neutral thinking): Oh, right.

Mara (neutral curious): Maids, huh? Being one seems so surreal, but I guess it’s an actual profession.

Mara (neutral smiling): Although you probably wouldn’t have to wear the uniform.

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Depends on who you work for, I guess. If I were to hire you as my maid, I’d make you wear one.

Mara (neutral skeptical): …

Pro: Kidding, kidding.

Mara (neutral thinking): Well…

Mara (neutral curious): I don’t think I’d mind. That much.

Mara (excited earnest): But you’d have to pay me double.

Pro: Yeah, that’s not happening…

Mara (laughing laughing):

Adamant about keeping her wages low, I stare her down for a few seconds before we both break out laughing at the absurdity of our conversation.

Mara (laughing recovering): Well, if I ever become your maid we can discuss this then.

Mara (neutral curious): Although, I’d do it all for free if…

Mara: …

Pro: If?

Mara (neutral thinking): If…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Never mind.

Mara (neutral smiling): Let’s go a bit faster. At this rate we might be late.