**Bedroom**

I end up not doing much of anything for the rest of the evening, spending around an hour blankly staring at an English reading that we were assigned to do.

Right before I decide to give up, though, my phone buzzes, and once I check who the notification is from, my jaw drops.

Lilith: Could you meet me in the coffee shop by the station?

Stunned, I stare at the message, unable to fully believe what I’m reading.

Is she…

…

I pull myself to my feet and scramble to the door, quickly telling my mom where I’m going before I leave. Now is no time to be sitting around.

**Coffee Shop**

I run as fast as I can towards the station, stopping only to try to recall where exactly the coffee shop is. Thankfully, I eventually find it and burst inside, scanning the area for a hint of blonde…

And in the corner I find it.

Pro: Lilith…

I make my way over, my knees starting to shake from the relief.

Lilith: …

Lilith: It’s you, huh.

Lilith: Long time no see.

Pro: Yeah.

Lilith: Um, is everything gonna be alright? Are you coming back to-

She stops me before I release a torrent of questions.

Lilith: I’ll tell you everything you wanna know, but first, um…

Lilith: …

Lilith: Did you miss me?

Pro: Huh? Uh…

I freeze, too flustered to think straight.

Pro: Yeah, I did.

Lilith: …

Lilith: I’ve missed you quite a bit, too.

Lilith: Alright, that’s all I wanted to know. Go ahead.

Pro: That’s it?

Lilith: Yeah. Um…

Lilith: Were you expecting something else?

Pro: Um, no, not really.

I stare at Lilith, who seems uncharacteristically Prim-like today.

But that doesn’t really matter right now.

Pro: So, um…

Pro: What happened?

Lilith: So…

Lilith: The day after you left my mom’s younger sister, my aunt, came over. She received a call from my dad, asking her to take care of me in his place. I was a little surprised, since I’ve only met her once when I was really little, and I think she was a teenager then.

Lilith: So she flew in, and after we talked it over she decided to move in and become my official guardian. This past week we’ve been going through paperwork and getting her settled in. It’s not all finished yet, but the rest of the process will be a lot of waiting, apparently.

Pro: What about her work? Did she have to find a new job here?

Lilith: She’s a manga author, so she usually works from home anyways. And her publisher has an office here too, so it all works out, I guess.

Pro: Oh, I see.

Pro: What’s living with her like?

To my surprise, Lilith let’s out a drained sigh.

Lilith: She’s a little, um…

Lilith: …strange. She’s not married, and she’s really, really clingy…

Oh, yeah. I can see how Lilith would find that tiring.

Lilith: Sometimes she grabs me and won’t let go, saying that she needs to recharge, or something like that.

Lilith: But…

Lilith: I guess she’s also very kind. And warm.

That’s right. Lilith didn’t really have a family for so long…

Lilith: Although I wish she’d be less clingy. Then she’d be perfect.

Pro: Right…

Lilith: She seems to be really interested in you, though.

Pro: …

Pro: Huh? In me?

Lilith: She says that she wants to meet you in person, and that I should bring you over one day.

Pro: Oh, okay. That’d be fine.

Lilith: Although if I were you I’d be cautious. She gets this really weird expression whenever you come up in a conversation, one that sends shivers down my spine…

Pro: Ah…

Pro: I’ll keep that in mind.

Yikes. Will Lilith really be alright…?

Pro: Oh yeah, are you coming back to school? Now that everything’s more or less settled down.

Lilith: I talked it over with my aunt, and we decided that I’ll go back next week. Starting Monday.

Pro: Really?

Lilith: Really.

I turn away, trying to hide the smile that’s creeped its way onto my face. Finally, after what felt like eternity, everything will go back to normal…

Lilith: I guess I’ll have to apologize to Petra and the others, huh. For worrying them.

Pro: That might be a good idea. Although I think they’d be happy enough just to see you again.

Lilith: That’s good to hear. It’ll be nice to see them all again, too. And to go to class again, and to swing a baseball bat…

Pro: Yeah. It’ll be good to have you back.

Lilith smiles appreciatively and takes a sip of coffee before continuing on.

Lilith: So? Anything else to ask?

Pro: Um…

Pro: How’ve you been recently? You know, with everything happening…

Lilith: …

Lilith: I’ve been doing alright. It still hurts sometimes, but…

Lilith: …

Lilith: I think it’ll get better. Over time.

Lilith: How about you? What’ve you been up to?

Pro: Oh, uh, not much.

Pro: Actually, I’ve been looking around at clubs.

Lilith: Really? Which ones?

Pro: Uh, so far we’ve been to the girls baseball team, the tennis club, and the literature club…

Lilith: We? And why would you go to the *girls* baseball team?

Pro: Huh? Uh…

I stop, realizing that I may have accidentally put myself in a precarious situation. My first instinct is to try to cover up my slip of the tongue, but after thinking it through I instead decide to come clean.

Pro: Do you know Prim?

Lilith: Prim? Isn’t that the girl Petra always talks about?

Pro: Yeah. Well…

I give her a brief overview of everything that happened, starting with how we went to the batting cage all the way to our literature club visit.

Lilith: I see.

Pro: So going to the girls baseball team wasn’t really for me…

Lilith: You know, you *could* join if you wanted to.

Huh?

Pro: Um, I know I’m not athletic at all, but…

Lilith: No, not as a player. As a manager.

Pro: A manager?

Lilith: Yeah. You’d help out the coaches and take on administrative tasks, like organizing transportation for games or helping to move equipment.

Pro: Would I be allowed to do that?

Lilith: Why not? The boys team have a girl as their manager, so I don’t see why you couldn’t be ours.

Pro: That’s fair…

Pro: I guess I’ll give it some thought.

Lilith: Alright. Let me know when you decide.

Lilith: Actually…

Lilith: Now that I think about it, you might not be allowed to.

Pro: Huh? Why not?

Lilith: Well…

Lilith: Aren’t you on the verge of failing?

Oof… I was hoping to avoid this topic today, but life often isn’t kind, as per usual…

Pro: Um, yeah, I guess.

Lilith: Do you still sleep in class?

Pro: Sometimes…

Lilith sighs, her disappointment almost palpable.

Pro: I’m sorry, I’ll do better…

Lilith: Well, I guess it’s fine once and a while. As long as you pass.

Lilith: You wouldn’t wanna be in the same year as Petra, right?

Pro: Actually, the fear of that happening has been my primary motivation…

We both look at each other before breaking out in laughter, temporarily ignoring all the cares and worries we have.

Being able to see Lilith laugh and smile and enjoy herself this genuinely, especially given all that she’s been through…

It really is a small miracle.