**Front of House**

Once I finish getting ready for school, I head outside and, as expected, find Mara already there.

Mara: Morning.

Pro: Morning. How’s your stomach?

Mara: Completely pain-free.

Pro: That’s good to hear. Maybe slow down next time we eat out, though.

Mara: Huh…?

Mara: There’s no limit to how much I can eat. I can always make myself thr-

Pro: Alright, that’s enough. Please don’t ever do that.

Mara: …

Mara: I wanted to do buffet, though.

Pro: I have a feeling you’d run them out of business…

Mara: Hehe. Maybe.

I smile in spite of myself, her unlimited voracity having grown on me over the years.

Pro: Ah well. If they run out of food that’s their problem.

Pro: We can go one day, but you’ll have to promise not to overdo it.

Mara: It’ll be fine, it’ll be fine. Besides, I never gain weight anyways. I’ve been borderline underweight for years.

Pro: Yeah, it’s a mystery how you do it…

Pro: Maybe you have good genetics, or something.

Mara: Maybe. Or maybe I’m simply a healthy, active high school student with a high metabolism.

Pro: Yeah, no.

Mara: Huh?!? What would you know?

Mara: Just because I loaf around all day doesn’t mean I’m out of shape. Don’t push expectations on others because of your own experiences.

It takes me a few seconds to figure out that Mara just threw quite the jab at me, and by the time I realize she’s already at the sidewalk, running off with a gleeful smile on her face. She waves at me tauntingly and, accepting her challenge, I chase after her…

…but of course, I’m not able to catch up.

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

Mara stops fleeing after making sure I’m thoroughly exhausted, tentatively trotting back to make sure I’m alright. Once she’s confirmed that I’m too tired to do anything, she drops all pretenses of caution and cheerfully greets me as if nothing happened.

Mara: Fancy *running* into you here.

Mara: Actually did we meet earlier today? I can’t remember, so help me *jog* my memory…

Pro: Haha…

Mara: Hehe.

Mara: Now, seeing how much of a mess you are after a short run, don’t you think you owe me an apology?

Yeah, she definitely doesn’t seem like someone who’s out of shape. She just sprinted for a solid few minutes, and yet she isn’t even breathing heavily…

Pro: Alright, alright. My bad.

Mara: You are forgiven.

Mara: Are you alright, though? Do you need a drink or something?

Pro: I’ll be fine…

Pro: Probably…

I cough once, but Mara somehow sees this as a death flag and starts to panic.

Mara: Um, um…

Mara: Come over here and sit down. Quickly, quickly!!

**Intersection 1**

Mara makes sure I rest a bit before going to school, buying me a sports drink from a vending machine.

Mara: You need to stay hydrated, okay? I bet you barely drink water.

Pro: I mean, you’re right, but that’s a pretty odd assumption to make…

Mara: From now on drink two liters of water a day.

Pro: Huh? Isn’t that a bit much…?

Mara: Apparently it’s how much you’re supposed to drink. I read an article on it the other day.

Pro: I see.

Still a little concerned, she studies my face for any abnormalities.

Mara: Um…

Mara: I’m really sorry.

Pro: Hm? For what?

Mara: For making you overexert yourself.

Pro: It’s fine, don’t worry. It was mainly my fault anyways.

I reach out and gently pat her on the head…

…tightening my grip once I get a good hold.

Pro: I still haven’t forgotten about your little comment, though.

Mara: Have mercy…