**Playground**

Inevitably, I eventually give up on hitting the books and instead decide to take a walk to clear my mind. Which is not something that I’d normally do, but it’s better than staring at a dry, blank wall for hours. If the wall were freshly painted maybe not, but unfortunately it wasn’t.

I find myself at a playground Mara and I used to frequent as kids. Hit by a sudden feeling of nostalgia, I decide to go sit on a swing for old time’s sake, not noticing the small figure already occupying one until she notices me…

Prim: …

Prim: Pro…?

Pro: Huh? Prim?

Prim: What are you doing here…?

Pro: I was taking a walk. Aren’t you supposed to be sick, though…?

Prim: Um…

Realizing that I want an explanation, she slowly gestures to the other swing, wanting me to sit down.

Prim: I’ll answer any one question you have, but in return you have to answer mine.

I nod slowly, feeling pressured by the one question limitation. What should I ask? What is the one question I want answered the most?

Pro: Then…

Ask why she’s down. **OR** Ask about her sister’s injury.

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Pro: Why do you seem so down?

Pro: Recently it’s felt like you’ve been hiding something, something that pains you.

Prim looks at me oddly, as if she doesn’t understand what I’m asking.

Prim: Um…

Prim: Before I answer, could you answer my question?

Pro: Alright.

She nervously fidgets with her hands before continuing on.

Prim: This may be a bit rude, but…

Prim: …

Prim: But why do you care?

Prim: We’ve only known each other for a little while, and I don’t think I’ve really done anything to earn your friendship or trust. Even though we’ve been spending more time together, I still barely know anything about you, and you probably don’t know much about me…

Prim: So why?

Prim’s question stuns me, leaving me speechless.

Why do I care? She’s right, we haven’t known each other for that long, and apart from a few facts here and there I don’t really know anything about her. I can’t honestly say that I’m close to her, or that we’ve really had a meaningful conversation…

Then why? Do I have some sort of hero complex, where I feel the need to “help” others for my own personal gratification? Is my “care” for Prim all just a means for me to hide my selfish desire to be a knight in shining armor..?

Because if that’s the case then I can’t really say that I care about her at all.

Pro: I…

Pro: I don’t know.

Prim: …

Prim: I see.

Prim: Um, to answer your question…

Prim: …

Prim: I’m a burden to everyone around me. To my family, to my classmates, and even to those I’d like to call friends…

Prim: I always rely on others, and give nothing in return. I’m selfish, and even when I try not to be I always end up doing more harm than good.

Prim: When the person I admire the most needed as much support as possible, all I did was hurt her…

Does she mean Iris…?

Prim: Even with you…

Prim: You’ve been visiting clubs with me, even though I can tell you don’t really want to join one. The time you’re spending indulging me you could be spending with people you care the most about, like Lilith.

Prim: Petra told me what happened, you know. It’s clear that she means so much to you, but even though she just came back you’re here, sitting on a swing.

I want to stop her, to tell her that she’s wrong, but nothing comes out. She definitely isn’t right, but for some reason I can’t bring myself to argue with her.

Prim: Um…

Prim: I’m really sorry. But please don’t worry about me.

She gets up to leave, but, not wanting to do nothing but watch, I finally find my voice and stop her.

Pro: Wait, Prim.

Thankfully, she waits.

Pro: I have one more question. Is that okay?

After thinking about it for a moment, she nods, much to my relief.

Pro: Did you quit piano because your sister can’t play anymore?

She flinches, causing my chest to tighten. I feel bad for bringing it up, but…

Prim: …

Prim: Yeah, I guess.

Prim: The only reason I played piano was I’ve been trailing after her. Without her I never would have picked it up, and if she can’t play…

Prim: …

Prim: …then I don’t have any right to play either.

She doesn’t ask me a question in return, instead turning to leave without saving another word. Feeling like I’ve pushed too far already, I don’t try to stop her again – even if I did, what would I even say?

Her last words seemed so weary and bitter, nothing like the shy, childlike, and earnest girl that I’ve come to know.

It’s painful to see.

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\*To be filled later.\*

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