**Bedroom**

Stuffed with good food, I sleep soundly throughout the night. However, my tranquil state of mind doesn’t last long, since as soon as I get up I’m immediately reminded about everything I still have to worry about.

Prim’s still giving me the cold shoulder, and we still have a test tomorrow. Lilith’s pretty much made sure that the latter won’t really be a problem, but the former still remains…

…

My eyes drift and land on the small present sitting on my desk, having been neglected since Friday.

I guess that might be a good place to start.

**Kitchen**

After stuffing everything into my bag and then carefully placing the gift on top, I head downstairs, finding my mom already washing the dishes.

Mom (neutral smiling): Good morning.

Pro: Morning.

Mom (neutral worried\_slightly): You were out pretty late last night. Where’d you go?

Pro: Oh, um, I was at a friend’s place.

Mom (neutral curious): A friend?

She presses on, intent on finding out exactly who’s place I was at. Realizing that trying to dodge the question will get me nowhere, I decide to come clean.

Pro: Yeah. Lilith’s. She was helping me study. Also, I met her aunt.

Mom (neutral confused): Her aunt?

Pro: Yeah, her guardian.

Mom (neutral neutral): I see. What did you guys eat for dinner?

Pro: Lilith cooked something.

Mom (neutral smiling): Oh, that’s nice of her.

Mom (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Invite her over one day to repay the favour. I’d like to meet her as well.

Mom (neutral neutral): …

Mom (neutral frown): Don’t look at me like that, I won’t make her feel uncomfortable.

Pro: I kinda doubt that…

No matter what, I have to prevent my mom from meeting Lilith’s Aunt. That would be a disaster.

Mom (neutral disappointed): I wish you’d have a little more faith in me…

Mom (neutral sigh):

She lets out a long sigh as if she’s done nothing to warrant my distrust.

Mom (neutral smiling): Well, eat your breakfast before it gets cold. It’d be a shame if you were late for school after waking up this early.

Mom (neutral sincere): And when you see Lilith at school today, invite her over for dinner.

Pro: …

Mom (neutral hehe) : I’m just kidding. But I’d like to talk to her properly eventually.

Mom (neutral smiling):

Pro: Alright, alright.

Pro: I’ll ask. One day.

**Front of House**

I find Mara waiting outside as per usual, but for some reason she looks oddly restless today.

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): Oh. Morning.

Pro: Morning.

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Something on your mind? You look a little jittery.

Mara (neutral bashful): Um, actually…

Mara: …

Mara (excited earnest): I can’t stop thinking about that raspberry frozen yogurt that we had yesterday. I lost sleep last night because of it.

Pro: Huh…?

Mara (arms\_crossed pensive) : It’s really amazing how they make something so simple taste so good. The freshness of the raspberries combined with the simple, sweet cream bar…

Mara (neutral confused): Why are you looking at me like that? You tried it too, don’t you want more??

I did indeed try it, after relenting to Mara’s continuous pleading to feed me a bite. I guess it was really good, but I didn’t think she’d have sleepless nights because of it.

Mara (neutral curious):

Pro: We’ll go another time, then.

Mara (excited excited): Today?

Mara (excited neutral):

Pro: Another time. Possibly today, but no guarantees.

Mara (arms\_crossed neutral): Hmm…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Well, I guess that’s the best I can ask for.

Mara: Let’s get going.

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

On the way to school we stop so Mara can examine a particularly large bush of flowers, an oddity for this time of year. It stands alone in a barren flowerbed, surrounded by the remains of plants past their lifespan.

Mara (neutral thinking): A particular good looking specimen of aster. In floriography they represent remembrance.

Mara (neutral curious):

Pro: Remembrance of what?

Mara: …

Mara: Of something important, of course. Like a loved one, or a past romance.

Pro: I see. That seems a little sad.

Mara (neutral thinking): Does it? I guess you only really need to remember someone if they’re not around anymore…

Mara (neutral neutral):

The mood suddenly a bit morose, we stand there staring at the asters, neither of us sure what else to say.

Thankfully, Mara breaks the silence.

Mara (neutral curious): Actually, don’t you think their colour kinda matches Prim’s hair?

Pro: Yeah, I guess.

Mara (arms\_crossed pensive): It’s gotta be natural, right? I can’t imagine Prim dyeing her hair.

Mara (arms\_crossed neutral): What a strange colour.

Mara (neutral curious):

Pro: You’re the last person who should be saying that…

Mara (neutral confused): Huh? What do you mean?

Pro: Never mind.

Mara (neutral skeptical): I feel like you’re subtly mocking me…

Mara: Mmm…

Mara (neutral neutral): Ah well.

Mara (neutral curious): Are you gonna try to talk to her today?

Pro: Well…

I unzip my bag and delicately take out the small box sitting on top of everything.

Mara: …

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): That’s actually a pretty good idea. I’m impressed. You could even say that I’m surprised.

Pro: Geez, thanks…

Mara (neutral hehe): You’re welcome.

Mara (neutral curious): Although, talking to her under the pretext of giving her a gift is a little weird.

Stunned by Mara’s comment, my mind goes blank.

Pro: That was my entire plan…

Mara (neutral smiling\_nervous): No, no, no…

Mara (neutral thinking): Talk to her, and then use the gift as the finishing blow. Like an ultimate move.

Mara (arms\_crossed neutral): Approaching her and giving the gift first is cowardly.

Pro: Right…

Pro: Then what should I do?

Mara (arms\_crossed skeptical): Huh? Figure it out yourself.

Pro: Huh…?

Mara (exit):

I start complaining, but underneath I know she’s right. I can’t rely on others for everything, especially for things as personal as this.

But it *would* be nice to get a hint.

**Intersection 1**

Unfortunately I’m not able to glean anything from Mara, and eventually we reach the place we usually part at.

Mara (neutral neutral): Well, we’re here again.

Pro: We’re here again.

Mara (neutral bashful): Um…

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): Try not to worry about talking to Prim too much, alright?

Pro: Yeah. I’ll try.

Mara (neutral smiling): Good for you. Do your best, okay?

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): And your cute childhood friend might give you a reward.

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Something about someone calling themselves cute feels wrong…

Mara: …

Mara (neutral pout): I rescind my offer.

My mouth starts to twist upwards into a smirk, but then I realize that if I don’t take back my words, I won’t be able to find out what Mara’s reward is. Eventually my curiosity wins out, and I somewhat reluctantly apologize.

Pro: Sorry, sorry.

Mara (neutral skeptical): Are you really?

Pro: Yeah, I’m sorry.

Mara: …

Mara (neutral sigh\_blushing): I-I guess that’ll do. You are forgiven.

Mara (neutral neutral): Anyways, do you really have time to be loitering around like this?

Pro: Um…

Pro: I don’t. Sorry, I should probably head to school.

Mara: Go, go. Sorry for keeping you.

Mara (waving neutral): I’ll see you later.

Pro: Yeah. See you.