**Bedroom**

For the first time in a while I’m able to go home right after school ends, but before I can shed my bag and collapse into bed I receive a text from my mom.

Mom: Could you go to the grocery store to pick up a few things?

A sizeable shopping list follows shortly afterwards, and, knowing that I wouldn’t be able to get up if I even touched my sheets, I reluctantly spin around and head back outside.

**Shopping District**

The shopping district is unusually empty today. The atmosphere, which is usually active and alive, is instead dead and dull as if a plague swept across the area and forced everyone to stay home.

Perhaps because of the lack of activity in the area a somewhat familiar lone figure notices me from across the street and beckons me over with a slight tilt of her head.

Kari: Hey, what’s up?

Pro: Um, you’re Kari, right?

Kari: Correct.

Unsure of what else to say, my eyes drift to her silvery hair, a colour I find odd for a teenager to have. Aren’t silver hairs a sign of old age, or something…?

Kari: What are you looking at?

Pro: Huh?!? Uh, it’s nothing…

Kari: My hair? It’s not natural, I dye it pretty consistently.

Pro: Oh, I see. I wasn’t sure, so…

Kari: I’m not that old, you know.

She laughs playfully, her amused grin betraying hints of how much she enjoys seeing me squirm.

Kari: Sorry, sorry. Just having a bit of fun.

Kari: Doesn’t Prim have purple hair, though? So shouldn’t silver hair be a little less shocking?

Pro: I think hers is natural, though. Her sister’s hair is a similar colour.

Kari: Oh, really? That’s really strange…

I chuckle nervously, already well accustomed with unusual genetics manifesting in the form of unusually bright hues.

Kari: Lilith’s is natural too, but that’s a bit more understandable given how common blondes are in other countries.

Kari: I’m kinda jealous though. My hair’s naturally black, and it’s such a pain maintaining its colour…

Pro: Why would you dye it then? Is there something wrong with black hair?

Kari: …

Kari: No, not really. Just felt like it one day, and it’s been silver ever since.

She looks at me oddly, as if I’d just asked something weird. Which I might’ve, I guess.

Kari: Anyways, what are you doing here? Where’s your partner?

Pro: Prim? Our, um, arrangement-

Kari: Arrangement? What the heck?

Pro: Oh, uh…

Pro: It’s a long story.

Kari: Huh…

Kari: You know, I find this all kinda weird…

Kari: You already have a cute girlfriend that’s *way* out of your league, so why are you going after Lilith?

Pro: Huh?!? I don’t have a girlfriend.

Kari: You don’t have a girlfriend.

Pro: Yeah.

Kari: …

I quail a little under her suspicious gaze, uncomfortable with her sudden iciness.

Pro: Um, Prim and I aren’t dating if that’s what you thought…

Kari: …

Kari: Alright. It’s whatever, I guess.

Kari: For some reason Lilith seems to be comfortable around you, and it’s not really any of my business.

Kari: But you better not try to pull anything fishy.

Pro: Wouldn’t dream of it…

Pro: Speaking of Lilith, aren’t you on the baseball team? Don’t you have practice?

Kari: Huh?

Kari: I’m skipping.

Pro: Skipping?

Kari: Yeah. I don’t really have an interest in the sport, so I dip pretty often. I joined mainly for the social element.

Kari: Doing drills and running laps, well…

Kari: Not for me.

Kari’s words resonate deeply with me, a fellow non-athlete.

Kari: Anyways, I have to meet someone in a bit, so I’m gonna go now.

Kari: See you around.

Pro: Oh, see you.

Kari turns around and starts walking away, and I do the same initially but then realize that I still need to buy groceries. I end up awkwardly following her from a distance, doing my best to make it look like I’m not stalking her or anything.

Thankfully, I arrive at the grocery stores before she finds her friend.