**Shopping District**

We end up shopping for a lot longer than I originally expected, but despite the couple of hours we spent looking through stores my hands are still empty and devoid of gifts.

Lilith, on the other hand, found her gift midway through the trip, which she carefully placed in her bag for safekeeping.

Lilith: Um…

Lilith: Do you wanna keep going, or…?

I sigh, wishing I had a better eye.

Pro: Let’s call it quits for today.

Lilith: Are you sure? I don’t have anything else to do today, so we can keep looking.

Pro: Ah, I’m pretty tired. And hungry.

Lilith: Hungry, huh? Then…

She trails off yet again, but before the silence becomes awkward she continues on.

Lilith: …do you wanna get something to eat?

**Udon Shop**

Lilith leads me to a small but busy restaurant around ten minutes away. The smell is amazing, and by the time we take our seats I can already feel my stomach rumbling.

Lilith: This place specializes in udon, but they also have other offerings like-

Pro: Udon sounds great. Which one do you recommend?

Lilith: Hm? Well…

She points out a few menu items for me, commenting on how they taste, how satisfying they are, how light or heavy they feel, how healthy they are and so on. It’s actually quite interesting – Lilith’s preferences are pretty different from those of a certain childhood friend of mine.

Mara will pretty much eat anything and everything as long as it tastes good, after all.

Lilith: Um…

After a few moments I realize that I’ve been staring at her. Again.

Pro: Oh, sorry.

Pro: You’ve really got this down to a science though, huh. Do you come here often?

Lilith: Pretty often. Maybe once a week? Sometimes twice.

Pro: Oh wow.

Pro: So, is this the only restaurant you go to, or…

Lilith: Hm? Of course not.

Lilith: I go out to eat with my friends pretty frequently, and there are other places I like to go to as well.

Pro: Wait, then how much do you eat out every week…?

Lilith: Probably…

Lilith: …7 or 8 meals? Sometimes more.

I blink twice, trying to process what she just said. 7 or 8 meals? That’s at least one a day…

Pro: How do you pay for it all? I don’t think my allowance is close to large enough for that…

Lilith: My, uh…

Lilith: …

Lilith: My parents pay for it.

Pro: They’re okay with it?

Lilith: Yeah.

I wait for an explanation, but none comes so I awkwardly look around the shop, soaking in the sights and sounds. I can see why Lilith likes it here – the atmosphere is warm and inviting, but at the same time it’s busy enough to feel comfortably alone despite being surrounded by people.

It isn’t too loud, but there’s also enough noise to make sure that things don’t seem dead. And the food’s probably good too, considering how it smells…

Maybe I’ll come here regularly too.

Ha. As if. But I should bring Mara here at least once, I feel like she’d enjoy it.

Lilith: Um…

Lilith: How’s your mom doing?

Pro: Huh?!? My mom?

Lilith: Yeah.

Lilith: Petra told me the other day that she collapsed recently.

Pro: Oh, uh...

Pro: She’s doing alright, I think. Started work again this week.

Lilith: Does she cook for you guys too? And clean?

Pro: Um…

Pro: Yeah.

Lilith stares at me as if I were an utterly worthless son (which, to be fair, I kinda am), so I look away embarrassedly.

However, instead of commenting on my uselessness she smiles, her expression unexpectedly warm.

Lilith: That’s a lot to handle, huh?

Lilith: She must really love you.

Pro: Yeah…

Pro: How about you? You haven’t told me what your parents are like.

Lilith: Mine…?

Lilith: …

Lilith: They’re normal. Nothing too special about them.

Pro: Really?

Lilith: Really.

I open my mouth to ask another question, but before I can pry any further a rather chipper waiter arrives with two steaming bowls of udon and places them in front of us before rushing away to grab another order.

Pro: Wow, it looks so good…

Lilith nods in appreciation.

Lilith: Let’s eat while it’s still hot.