**Home Station**

Petra (neutral smiling): It’s a lot nicer today than it was yesterday, huh?

Pro: Yeah.

Petra (neutral thinking): Might be one of the last warm days we have for a while though.

Petra (neutral neutral): Alright, I think I’m going home.

Pro: Do you want me to walk you?

Petra (neutral curious): Hm? I’ll be fine.

Petra (neutral pout): And besides, I’m not a little kid anymore.

Pro: Oh…

Pro: Sorry, force of habit…

Petra (neutral raised\_eyebrow): Habit? Who have you been walking home enough for it to be a habit?

I laugh nervously, and thankfully Petra doesn’t investigate any further.

Petra (neutral smiling): Well, I guess we partially live in the same direction, so you can walk me part of the way.

Pro: Wait, how do you know where I live?

Petra (neutral neutral): Yesterday I saw the general direction you were walking in from the car.

Pro: Oh, that makes sense.

Pro: Let’s go then.

However, right before we leave I see something out of the corner of my eye…

A flash of pink.

Pro: Um, actually…

Petra (neutral confused): Hm? What’s up?

Pro: I forgot I had something to do. I should probably go do it now…

Petra (neutral skeptical): So much for walking me home, huh? You really are something else.

Pro: Sorry…

Petra (neutral laughing): I’m just joking. Sorry to take up your time.

Petra (neutral smiling): I’ll see you tomorrow.

Pro: Yeah, see you.

**Neighbourhood Road 2**

I head off in the other direction, waiting for an opportunity to disappear down a side street. I eventually find one, and after a brief glance backwards I dodge to the left and hide against the wall.

Mara (neutral earnest):

Sure enough, a certain someone soon comes dashing around the corner…

Pro: Mara…

Mara (surprise ouch):

Mara yelps and jumps backwards, causing me to burst out in laughter yet again.

Mara (neutral sigh): You scared me…

Pro: I know.

Mara (neutral pout):

Pro: So? Why were you following me?

Mara (neutral skeptical): Well…

Mara (arms\_crossed put\_out): I wanted to surprise you after school, but you were already with someone I didn’t know, so I got curious and followed you.

Pro: That was Petra. I told you about her, remember?

Mara (arms\_crossed neutral): Oh, that’s right. You did.

Pro: Really, though…

Pro: Don’t you have anything better to do?

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Nope.

Pro: Was there something you wanted to do? Why’d you wanna surprise me?

Mara (neutral bashful): I, um…

Mara: I thought maybe we could talk for a bit. About earlier…

Mara (neutral bashful\_blushing):

After a moment, Mara realizes what she just said, and after seeing her so embarrassed I start to blush as well.

Mara (neutral embarrassed\_blushing): Not that! I still think it’s too early to be thinking about that kind of stuff…

Mara: I meant about Lilith.

Pro: Oh, I see.

Mara (neutral embarrassed): Yeah.

Mara: You have time now?

Pro: I do.

Mara (neural neutral): Alright. I guess we can find a place to sit on our way back, right?

Pro: Sounds good to me.

And with that, we head back towards home, the silence between us a little less comfortable than it usually is.

**Practice Diamond**

On our way we pass by the baseball diamond, and once we notice that it’s empty we decide to sit down in the stands. This doesn’t prove to be the best idea, as we realize halfway across the field that the ground is muddy from this morning’s rain.

We forge on regardless, though, and eventually we make it to the safety of the bleachers.

Mara (neutral expressionless): I’ll have to clean my shoes later…

Pro: Same.

Mara (neutral wishful): This takes me back, though. I used to love playing in the mud, but you never really liked it. I’d drag you in with me every time though.

Pro: Yeah, I remember that…

**Nostalgia - Pro and Mara Exploring**

Mara was always the more outdoorsy one, while I preferred to stay inside. When we were really young I’d follow her as she walked around looking for different types of plants and animals, complaining the entire way but following nonetheless.

I guess that’s where she gets her love of flowers from.

**Practice Diamond**

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: You were horrible, making me go everywhere with you in all sorts of conditions. Remember that time I got heatstroke?

Mara (neutral smiling\_nervous): Hehe…

Mara (neutral neutral): Well, to be fair whenever we got tired we’d go to your house and play games or read manga for the rest of the day. And you know, that’s become a habit for me. I spend almost all my time inside nowadays.

Pro: Ah…

Pro: I still spend most of my time inside too. It’s okay, we can be shut-ins together.

Mara (neutral expressionless): I don’t wanna be a shut-in though…

Mara (neutral happy):

We share a laugh, and I feel my throat getting a little sore. Too many comedic events today.

Mara (neutral neutral): Well anyways…

Mara (arms\_crossed lecturing): Pro!

Pro: Yes!

I snap to attention, a little alarmed by Mara’s sudden change in tone.

Mara (arms\_crossed neutral): Um, about Lilith…

Mara (neutral bashful): I’ve been thinking about it, and I think you should ignore what everyone else is telling you about Lilith.

Mara (neutral smiling\_nervous): Actually, maybe ignore is too strong.

Mara (neutral thinking): Disregard? No, that means the same thing…

Mara: …

Mara (neutral sigh): What I mean is…

Mara (neutral neutral): While it’s important to see how someone treats others to gauge their character, I think that in the end you should choose to be friends with Lilith based on your own perception of her and not worry about other people.

Mara (neutral bashful): If you like who she is as a person, then that’s reason enough to want to be with them. I’m sure she has a good perception of you as well, and that’s why she’s willing to hang out with you and stuff.

Mara: Make sense?

Pro: Yeah. Although, that wasn’t my primary concern.

Mara (neutral surprise): Huh?

Mara (neutral expressionless): Ah, I thought for so long though…

Mara (neutral bashful):

I chuckle and pat Mara’s head.

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: Thank you, though.

Mara’s right, though. I got pretty caught up on things that shouldn’t have really mattered, and ended up doubting a lot of things because of it.

Mara (neutral bashful): That was kinda embarrassing…

Pro: I mean, it’s just me.

Mara: I guess so.

Mara (neutral neutral): Well, that’s all I wanted to say.

Pro: Wait that’s it?

Mara: Yeah.

Pro: You said you wanted to find a place to sit down and talk, so I assumed it’d be longer. I guess we gotta make the trek back across, huh…?

Mara (neutral bashful): I mean, if you don’t have anything to do…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_blushing): I wouldn’t mind talking for a little longer.

Mara (exit):

We end up talking for quite a bit more than a little longer, about everything and anything we can think of. We talk about how Mara’s favourite manga is about to end, how Petra tried to bribe me to go to a mixer, how we’d clean our shoes, and many, many other things.

It’s been a while since we’ve talked this much, and instead of tiring out, I find myself becoming more and more engaged as we continue on. Even though we’re comfortable with silence between us, sometimes chatting away can be nice too.

However, we decide to call it quits when the sun starts to set, and after a good stretch we walk back through the now-dry field.

Mara (neutral neutral): Hey.

Pro: What’s up?

Mara: After your mixer tomorrow…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Wanna get dinner?

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: Sure, I guess. Wanna go to that pizza place? The one I said I’d treat you to?

To my surprise, Mara shakes her head.

Mara: I’ll pay. As thanks for buying groceries last time.

Pro: Oh, I see.

Pro: Alright, I’ll take you up on that offer then.

Mara: It’s a plan, then. I’ll tell you the time and place tomorrow?

Pro: Sounds good.

**Intersection 2**

We continue talking up until we part ways, promising to resume tomorrow. I watch as Mara waves one last time to me before darting away, and after a moment I head home as well, feeling happy and content.

On a rainy Monday, too.