**Front of School**

Mara (neutral smiling\_forced):

Once classes end I silently pack up my things and leave, finding Mara waiting for me outside. Her smile ever so slightly tinged with worry, another small reminder of a certain person.

Pro: Hey.

Mara: Hey. How was school?

Pro: It was alright.

Mara (neutral expressionless): Well, at least it wasn’t horrible.

Mara (neutral curious): Where do you wanna go? We could go to your place, a café, or…

Mara (neutral thinking): …

Mara (neutral neutral): How about the library?

Pro: Sure, that sounds good.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Alright, let’s go then!

Mara (neutral neutral):

We start walking, but after a few steps my stomach growls noticeably, causing Mara to stop.

Mara: By any chance…

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): Did you not each lunch either?

Pro: Um…

She grabs my bag and rummages through its contents, eventually finding my untouched lunch box.

Mara (neutral expressionless): I even went through all the trouble of finding it and putting it your bag…

Mara (neutral worried): Would it kill you to take better care of yourself?

Pro: Sorry…

Mara (neutral sigh):

She sighs and gives back my bag.

Mara (neutral worried): Don’t apologize to me, apologize to yourself.

Mara (neutral neutral): Well, hurry and get going then. The faster we get there the faster you can eat.

**Diner**

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: Um, Mara…

Mara (neutral curious): Hm?

Pro: I thought you said we were gonna study at the library.

Mara: We are.

Pro: Then…

I look around, taking in our surroundings. No matter how I look at it, this is not a library.

Mara: You need to eat, right? And I’m also a little hungry.

Pro: I have my lunch, though.

Mara (neutral expressionless): You can save your lunch for later. I’m willing to pay just for today, so take advantage of the opportunity.

Mara (neutral neutral): Oh, that reminds me. Here.

She hands over a tiny stack of bills, neatly arranged and held together with an elastic.

Pro: What’s this for?

Mara: Sushi.

Pro: Oh, right. Are you sure, though?

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): I already told you it’s fine. Let me spoil you sometimes too, right?

Pro: Right.

Mara (neutral smiling): Now, anyways…

She grabs a menu and cheerfully starts browsing through it. I also grab a menu, but honestly I probably won’t end up getting something.

Mara: Alright, so we’ll get two of these. One for me and one for you.

Pro: I think I’ll be fi-

Mara (neutral skeptical): I repeat, we’ll get two of these. One for me and one for you.

Pro: …

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: Alright.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Could you order?

Pro: Sure.

Mara (neutral neutral):

I flag down the waiter, and after a while he comes and takes our order.

I can’t think of anything to say, so I mostly listen as Mara tells me about a dog she found and played with during lunch, causing her to lose track of the time and be late for a quiz. I soak in every detail, trying to distract myself.

I’m pretty sure Mara’s trying to distract me too, to make me feel even a little better. It’s helping a bit, but at the end of the day something’s still missing…

Her anecdote is interrupted by the waiter, who places two jumbo parfaits on the table.

Mara (neutral curious): Oh, they’re here.

Pro: I don’t think I’ll be able to finish mine…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Ah, don’t be like that. Here.

Mara (neutral smiling):

She takes her spoon, takes a scoop of ice cream from mine, and holds it up for me to eat.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_blushing): Say “ahhh.”

Pro: Um…

Mara: Say “ahhh.”

Mara (neutral happy\_blushing):

A little regretfully, I open my mouth and, delighted, she feeds me.

Mara (neutral smiling\_blushing): I’ve always wanted to do that.

Mara (neutral happy\_blushing): You’re pretty cute when you’re embarrassed.

Pro: Bite me…

Mara: Hehe.

Mara (neutral skeptical): Now, do I need to feed you the entire thing, or are you gonna at least try to finish?

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: I’ll try to finish it.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): There’s a good boy.