**Shopping District**

After dropping by my place to quickly change into something a little more acceptable for an afternoon out shopping, I shoot Mara a text and head out to the shopping district. For the first time in living memory I arrive before her, and after a few minutes of waiting I spot her crossing the street.

Mara (waving smiling):

She waves and I wave back, and after the light changes she trots in between other pedestrians and arrives safely on my side of the road.

Mara (waving smiling\_eyes\_closed): Heya.

Mara (neutral smiling):

Pro: Hey, Mara.

Mara (neutral curious): How was the batting cage?

Pro: I mean, I sucked as per usual, but it was pretty good overall.

Mara (neutral smiling): That’s good to hear. We should go again one day.

Pro: Yeah, that’d be fun. I don’t think you’d be able to beat me next, though.

Mara (neutral fufu): Is that a challenge? How foolish, provoking me when I haven’t even shown you my true strength.

Pro: Your true strength, huh…

Mara (neutral giggling): That’s right.

Mara (neutral fufu): Fufu.

Mara (laughing laughing):

We break out laughing, attracting the stares of many curious onlookers. It takes a while for us to recover, and once we do we head into the shopping district, partly looking for an electronics store but mostly just enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells around us.

**Electronics Store**

We eventually find a place that sells phones, and we decide to take a look. While I dawdle around, Mara looks around earnestly, apparently worked up about something.

Mara (arms\_crossed thinking):

Pro: Hey Mara, what about this one?

Mara (arms\_crossed neutral): Hm? Nope, won’t do.

Pro: Huh?

Mara: It won’t do.

Pro: What do you mean? It’s not bad spec-wise, and it’s pretty cheap…

Mara: Nope.

I stare at her incredulously, wondering what exactly is going on in that mind of hers.

Mara: You should get something like…

Mara (arms\_crossed thinking): Something like…

Mara: …

Mara (excited excited): AH!!! FOUND IT!!!

She jogs over to a different stand, pointing out a particular phone with almost unhealthy enthusiasm.

Pro: This one?

Mara (excited geh):

Pro: Wasn’t this model in the news recently? For having an exploit that makes it really easy to download spyware on or something…

Mara (neutral smiling\_guilty): I-Is that so…?

She fidgets with her arms, suspiciously avoiding my gaze.

Pro: Why exactly did you want me to buy this one…?

Mara (neutral thinking): Well…

Mara (neutral smiling\_guilty): No comment.

Mara (neutral surprise):

Pro: Yeah, I’m going with the one I found earlier-

Mara (neutral panic): Wait, wait, wait!

Mara (neutral earnest): All jokes aside, don’t you think you should get yourself something nicer? You’re a high school student, after all.

Pro: And…?

Mara (neutral embarrassed): Well, if you wouldn’t mind waiting for a bit then I suppose I could help you and find one…

Mara (neutral surprise):

Pro: So you can tap it.

Mara (neutral ouch): That was a joke! Kind of.

Mara (excited earnest): Just gimme a few more minutes, okay?

After a brief inner debate, I decide to go along with her whims, at least for a bit longer.

Pro: Alright, alright. Just a few minutes, though.

**Electronics Store**

A considerable number of minutes over “a few” later, Mara finally finds what she’s been looking for.

Mara (neutral curious): Here you go.

Pro: Isn’t this the same model you have?

Mara (neutral smiling): Yup.

Pro: Huh…

I mean, it’s not *too* pricey, and I can’t detect any malicious intent…

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed):

Pro: Alright, I guess I’ll go with this. I’ll go buy it, so hold on for a second.

Mara (neutral curious):

Pro: Actually, I should get a case for it while I’m here, huh.

Mara: Ah-

Mara (neutral smiling\_nervous): You don’t need a case. It’s pretty sturdy, this phone…

Pro: Huh…

Mara (neutral embarrassed): So go on. Go buy it. Without a case.

Pro: Right…

She pushes me towards the cashier, and with a sigh I comply and grab my wallet.

What’s with her today…?