**Mara’s School**

Mara refuses to tell me where we’re going the entire way there, leaving me only able to wonder.

Mara (neutral neutral):

A twenty-minute walk later we find ourselves at the last place I’d expected to be.

Pro: This is…

Pro: Why are we at your school?

Mara (neutral smiling\_nervous): Don’t sweat the small details.

I glance at her, at a loss as to what she’s thinking.

Mara (neutral smiling): We’re gonna sneak in.

Pro: …

Mara (neutral panic):

Pro: Huh?

Mara: Shh!

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly):

She lowers her voice to a whisper.

Mara: If I get caught I’ll get in trouble.

Pro: Did you get suspended or something?

Mara (neutral expressionless): Of course not.

Mara (neutral neutral): It’s just that there aren’t usually students here at this time on a weekend, so if they catch a pair of them they’re likely to think we’re up to no good.

Pro: But are we up to no good…?

Mara (neutral thinking): Um…

Mara (neutral neutral): Depends.

Pro: On what…?

Avoiding my question, she continues on.

Mara (neutral smiling): Don’t worry, we’re not gonna do anything bad. It’s just I’d rather not deal with the staff members.

Mara: Anyways, come with me.

Pro: Wait, Mara-

Mara (neutral neutral):

She jumps over the gate before I can stop her, and I reluctantly follow, hoping that getting caught isn’t as bad as Mara made it seem.

Once I get over as well, Mara grabs my arm and pulls me to the side, circling around the school instead of going through the front.

Pro: Uh, why are we going this way.

Mara: It’s a shortcut.

Pro: To where?

Mara: You’ll see.

**Mara’s School Hallway**

We eventually arrive at a door at the back of the school, which surprisingly isn’t locked. Mara peeks inside to make sure nobody’s around, and as she looks around I catch a glimpse of a staircase down the hall.

Mara (neutral smiling): All clear! This way.

Mara (neutral neutral):

We half-run half-walk down the hallway in a silence that feels a bit...strange for once. Lining the walls are pictures of previous graduation classes, many of them from fourty, fifty years ago.

Pro: Your school has pretty small class sizes, huh.

Mara (neutral thinking): Yeah, I guess.

Mara (neutral neutral): It’s pretty hard to get in, though. So it kinda makes sense.

Pro: Yeah.

Apparently not wanting to talk about it any more, she silently leads me to and up the staircase.

**Mara’s School Roof**

Once we reach the uppermost level Mara opens a door, and we’re greeted by a cool breeze. I stop to take it all in.

Mara (neutral neutral):

Pro: The roof?

Mara (neutral smiling):

Mara smiles and walks over to the fence to lean back against it.

Mara (neutral neutral): Come here.

I go over and stand beside her.

Pro: So, why are we here?

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly):

She doesn’t answer immediately, and for the first time today I notice that she’s nervous.

Mara: I come here a lot.

Pro: You do?

Mara: Yup.

Mara (neutral worried): Mostly during lunch, when I want to avoid people.

Mara: But I also try to get outta the building when I can in general.

Mara (neutral smiling\_forced): Without skipping classes, of course.

Pro: School’s not a fun place, huh? And probably even more so for you than for me.

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): Yeah...

Mara (neutral disappointed): There’s endless work, and the people here aren’t the nicest, either.

Mara (neutral worried\_slightly): Sometimes I just wanna get away from it all, you know? Get away from everything, and forget it all, even if just for a moment.

Mara: And this place is the best for that.

Mara (neutral smiling\_forced): People don’t come here, there’s a nice breeze, and…

She turns around and gazes through the fence…

**Cutscene - Night Sky**

Mara: It’s really beautiful, isn’t it?

Sparkling city lights, an indigo sky, a soft moon…

It really is.

Pro: Yeah...

Mara: Moments like these make me feel like it’s not too bad, that everything will be fine…

Unable to find the words to say, all I can do is continue to enjoy the view with her. We look over the city together, silently watching the moon shiny brighter against a darkening sky. It’s peaceful, and I find myself wishing that time would stop.

Moments like these, huh...?

Will everything be fine? Deep down, I don’t know, and I know I shouldn’t say otherwise, but without saying a word I tell her...

Everything will be fine.

I promise.

**Mara’s School Roof**

By the time Mara taps my arm to bring me back to reality, the sky’s turned a deep, dark navy.

Mara (neutral neutral): It’s getting late, I think.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): Sorry about dragging you here. Wanted you to see the view.

Pro: Mara…

Mara (neutral smiling): Thanks for coming with me.

Mara: Let’s get going.

**Intersection**

We head back down the staircase, through the hallway, and off school grounds, carefully and quietly making sure to close everything we opened. Even though we didn’t see anyone else throughout our entire trip, I can’t help but let out a sigh of relief once we can’t see the school anymore.

Mara (neutral smiling): Wasn’t that a fun little adventure?

Pro: Surprisingly, it was.

Mara (neutral skeptical): Huh? What do you mean “surprisingly?”

Pro: Sorry, sorry. It was. Not surprisingly. As expected of Great Adventurer Mara.

Mara (neutral hehe): Hehe, that’s right.

Mara (neutral smiling):

We make small talk on the way home, purposefully avoiding the things Mara shared on the roof. It’s not like we need to talk about them, though. After being together for so long, words like “I’ll be there for you” or “I’ll support you” don’t need to be spoken.

Mara (neutral neutral): Here will be fine.

Pro: Are you sure? I don’t mind walking you home.

Mara: I’ll be fine. And besides…

She pinches and pulls on my cheek.

Mara: You might’ve not realized it, but you look dead tired.

Now that she mentions it…

Mara (neutral smiling): So go on. Go home and sleep.

Pro: Alright.

Mara (neutral smiling\_eyes\_closed): See you later.

Pro: Yeah, see you.

Mara (exit):

And with that, Mara waves and heads home, shooting me one last smile before leaving. It’s not her usual easygoing, teasing one that I’m used to, but it’s not a sad one either. At least to me, it seems a little…

...hopeful.