**Classroom**

It took an unhealthy amount of vague answers to explain to Asher why Mick wanted to talk without telling him what actually happened, but eventually I’m able to convince him that there’s nothing interesting going on. Or maybe he just gave up.

Classes resume soon after I finish my lunch, but Mick’s words keep me from focusing. Was that really the right decision? If it comes down to it, will I really be able to protect Prim?

Stress, worry, anxiety…

Things that I keep trying to bid goodbye to keep on creeping their way back inside…

**Classroom**

The end of the day comes before I know it and, remembering that I’ve promised to hang out with Mara today, I start packing up my things. She’s probably already waiting for me, and making her wait for too long probably isn’t the best idea.

But before I go to see her, I have to check in with Prim. Or I probably won’t be able to sleep at night.

**Front of School**

Finding her turns out to be quite the task, though, and after checking her classroom and looking around the shoe locker area I start to consider giving up.

However, after going outside I find that Mara isn’t anywhere to be found either, leaving me with a dilemma. Do I start looking for Prim or Mara?

While considering my options, someone lightly tugs the back of my shirt, causing me to jump.

Prim (surprise fearful): …!

Pro: Oh, it’s just you…

Prim (shy disappointed): Sorry…

Prim (shy shy):

Pro: It’s alright, it’s alright. I was actually looking for you.

Prim (shy confused):

She looks at me confusedly, and I notice that her hand is shaking.

Prim: For me?

Pro: Yeah. Um…

Pro: Mick told me. About those notes.

Prim (shy disbelief):

Prim freezes up, and I feel a pang of guilt for bringing up the topic.

Pro: So it’s true?

She nods slowly, her grip tightening ever so slightly.

Prim: Um…

Prim (shy bambi): I was looking for you too. Could you…

Prim: Could you walk me home?

I scan the area again, still not seeing Mara.

Prim (shy sigh):

Pro: Sure. Just let me send a quick text.

Prim (shy down):

I pull out my phone and tell Mara that I’ll be walking Prim home before hanging out with her.

Prim (shy shy):

Pro: And sent. Um…

We stand there awkwardly for a few seconds, attracting the interests of many of the students passing by.

Pro: Um, shall we get going?

Prim nods timidly, and she follows closely behind me as I start walking, still holding onto my shirt.

**Road**

By the time Prim says anything else we’re already halfway to her house, having just passed by mine a few minutes ago.

Prim (shy shy): Um…

Pro: Hm? What’s up?

Prim (shy disappointed): I’m sorry…

Prim: I’m always depending on you.

Prim (shy shy):

Pro: I mean, you might have a stalker, right? It’s safer if you have someone to walk with you.

To my surprise, she shakes her head.

Prim (shy disappointed): Walking home, going to practice, even talking with others…

Prim: If I were stronger, I’d be able to do them all by myself.

Prim: But I can’t.

Prim (shy disappointed\_crying): I just can’t…

Tears start to form in the corners of her eyes, and I desperately start trying to think of something to say.

Pro: I think…

I trail off, unable to come up with anything.

Pro: Um…

Pro: I think it’s okay to be a little weak.

Prim: I’m more than just a little weak, though…

I glance back at Prim, wanting to disagree with her but unable to bring myself to do so. Even though she can be so incredibly hard-working, sometimes she seems so fragile, like a delicate flower that may wilt at the slightest touch.

**Prim’s House**

The rest of the trip passes by in silence, and around ten minutes later we safely arrive at Prim’s place. After we stop for a few seconds, Prim slowly lets go of my uniform.

Prim (shy shy): Thank you so much.

Pro: No problem.

Pro: Um, about tomorrow’s practice…

I stop, feeling guilty about pushing the decision onto her.

Prim (shy down): …

Prim (shy shy): I still want to go.

Prim: My parents don’t know about all this yet, so they’ll allow it.

Pro: I see.

I hold back a sigh, relieved that she still wants to go despite this entire ordeal.

Pro: I guess I’ll see you tomorrow, then.

Prim (waving shy): Yeah. See you.

Prim (exit):

I wait to make sure she gets inside, and then nonchalantly start walking home, having just noticed someone else in the vicinity.

Someone’s been watching us.