**Bedroom**

Morning. Again.

I allow myself two minutes to stay in bed before forcing myself to slip out of my sheets and into my uniform.

It’s actually a little scary how easily I’ve been getting up recently, given my track record and disposition for sleeping in. Ever since I met Lilith I’ve made more friends, I’ve gained a bit of motivation to do well, and I’ve overall been finding school much more tolerable, maybe even enjoyable.

Even my dreams have been becoming more pleasant recently. Gone are all of my falling dreams, replaced by quirky ones filled with flowers, baseball bats, and mini Petras running around.

Which, of course, is pretty terrifying in its own right, but it’s better than the cold-sweat terror that comes from spiraling to your death.

**Front of House**

I head outside after quickly wolfing down my breakfast and brushing my teeth, finding a waiting Mara.

Mara: Morning.

Pro: Morning. Did you wait long?

Mara: Not more than usual.

Pro: Huh? What’s the usual?

Mara: Mmm…

Mara: Ten minutes, maybe?

Pro: Actually? Every day?

Mara: Yeah. On average.

It doesn’t seem that bad at first glance, but ten minutes every school day for years would be a lot of time spent waiting…

Pro: What do you do while you wait?

Mara: Mmm…

Mara: I become one with nature.

Pro: …

Mara: Just kidding. Kind of.

Mara: I kinda just look around, taking in the fresh air. It’s almost like a daily calming ritual, you know?

Pro: I guess that makes sense…

Mara: My day wouldn’t feel right without it.

Pro: Huh…

I stare at her, wondering whether she’s either being honest or trying to alleviate my guilt. Maybe a bit of both.

Mara: Well, anyways, let’s get going.

Mara: You got out pretty early today, so it’d be a shame if we were late.

**Neighbourhood Road 1**

It’s a little chilly outside today, a departure from the nice weather we’ve been having recently. Winter is slowly but surely on its way, and with it will come shorter days, extra layers, and occasional bouts of snow.

Mara: Autumn’s passing by pretty quickly, huh?

Pro: Yeah, I guess.

Mara looks around, an intriguing look on her face.

Mara: They say that time passes by faster as you get older…

Mara: …but if it’s already passing by this quickly, then when we become adults wouldn’t it go by really quickly?

Pro: Maybe. I don’t think it’ll be that noticeable, though.

Mara: Maybe.

Mara: I don’t wanna grow any older, though. Too many responsibilities.

Pro: I can relate, but unfortunately we don’t have much of a choice…

Mara: Yeah…

Mara: Maybe I’ll become a NEET. Maybe that’s my true calling.

Pro: Right…

Mara: I’ll live in an apartment, spending my days cooking, cleaning, and reading manga. And I’ll also have a balcony where I can grow flowers, and herbs, and other stuff.

Pro: And who’s gonna pay for all that?

Mara: You, of course.

Pro: Right. Since I’ll totally have enough money to support both of us.

Mara: Right. I’m counting on you.

I let out a sigh, much to Mara’s amusement.

Mara: In return I could cook and clean for you as well. It’d be an exchange.

Pro: Wouldn’t you basically be a maid then? You wouldn’t be a NEET.

Mara: Oh, right.

Mara: Maids, huh? Being one seems so surreal, but I guess it’s an actual profession.

Mara: Although you probably wouldn’t have to wear the uniform.

Pro: Depends on who you work for, I guess. If I were to hire you as my maid, I’d make you wear one.

Mara: …

Pro: Kidding, kidding.

Mara: Well…

Mara: I don’t think I’d mind. That much.

Mara: But you’d have to pay me double.

Pro: Yeah, that’s not happening…

Adamant about keeping her wages low, I stare her down for a few seconds before we both break out laughing at the absurdity of our conversation.

Mara: Well, if I ever become your maid we can discuss this then.

Mara: Although, I’d do it all for free if…

Mara: …

Pro: If?

Mara: If…

Mara: Never mind.

Mara: Let’s go a bit faster. At this rate we might be late.