**Music Store**

After brainstorming for a couple minutes but still coming up with nothing, I find myself back in the same music store I visited yesterday. I didn’t really have a chance to look around last time, but thankfully today the store is completely empty and free of any potential disturbances.

Knowing that I’d never be able to afford an actual instrument, I mainly stick to the front of the store where the less expensive things are. Most of them are accessories for specific instruments, though…

Ah, why does picking a gift have to be so difficult…?

Feeling defeated already, I stare at the rows of guitar picks aimlessly, my internal mini-crisis preventing me from realizing that I’m being watched…

?Iris: What are you doing?

Pro: Huh?!?!? Nothing, nothing…

I turn around slowly, coming face to face with Prim’s sister. She stands by the front door, as if she just came inside.

Pro: You’re Iris, right…?

Iris: That’s right. And you’re that boy who was with Prim the other day.

Pro: Yeah…

Iris: So what brings a high school boy here in the middle of the school day?

Pro: Uh…

I fidget nervously, wondering whether or not I should tell her. She doesn’t seem overly fond of Prim, and I have a feeling that she might not approve of me ditching school to buy her sister a gift…

Pro: Nothing in particular…

Pro: How about you?

Iris: …

Iris: Nothing in particular, I guess.

Pro: What a coincidence…

She looks at me strangely, her thoughts hidden behind a mask of indifference. Her hand, however, ever so slightly moves towards her cast, perhaps betraying a hint of discomfort…?

Iris: I’m not sure if you knew already, but today’s Prim’s birthday.

Pro: Yeah, I heard.

Iris: Alright. You’re her friend, so I just wanted to make sure you were aware.

Pro: Thanks…

Pro: Um…

Pro: This might not be any of my business, but do you dislike Prim, or something…?

Iris: …

Iris: No. I don’t dislike her. Why do you ask?

Pro: Uh, it’s just that…

I fumble around for words, cursing my lack of tact.

Pro: …it just feels like there’s a bit of coldness between you two. Or something like that.

Iris: …

Iris: I can appreciate that you’re concerned for Prim, but…

Iris: …outsiders should stay out of family affairs. Especially kids like you, who don’t understand anything.

Pro: Right…

Pro: I’m sorry.

Iris: It’s fine.

Iris looks around, emanating a strange feeling of sadness…

Iris: Well, I have a few things I need to do.

Iris: I’ll see you around, maybe.

Pro: Oh, alright. See you.

She turns around and leaves, and I return to my search, a heavy weight in my stomach. I guess I really shouldn’t meddle – even though it happened to turn out alright with Lilith doesn’t mean it’s the right thing to do.

But then again, was it wrong…?

My phone rings abruptly, pulling me away from my thoughts. It’s Mara.

Pro: Hello?

Mara: I found a store that might be good, could you come?

Pro: Sure. Where is it?

Mara: Um, it’s near the grocery store. Wait in front of it and I’ll come out to get you.

Pro: Alright, sounds good. I’ll see you there.