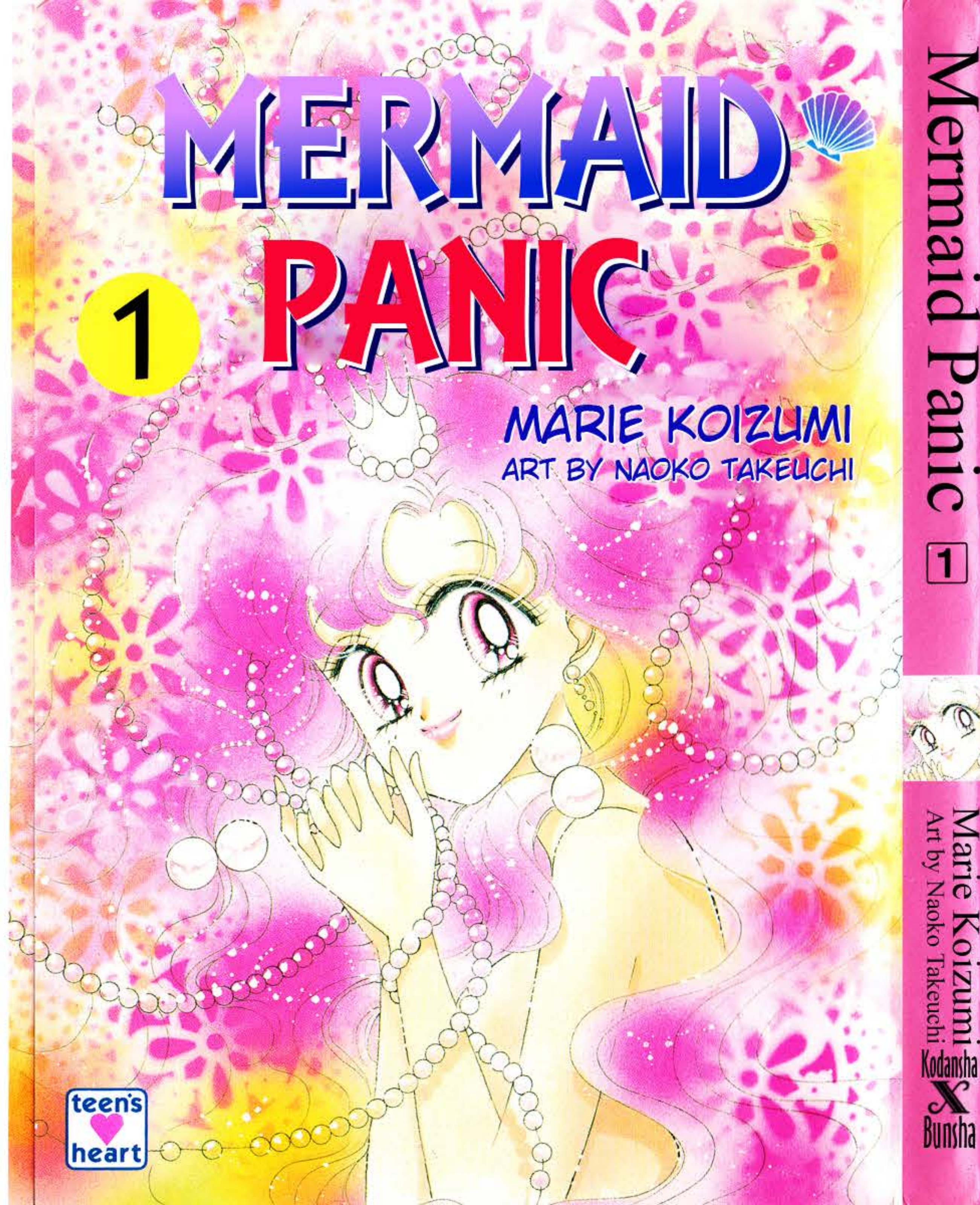


1000 years ago, the Mermaid Princess became a human after finding her beloved - or so says the "Mermaid's Legend".

Now, 1000 years later, I'm being told that I'm the Mermaid Princess! I've got to fulfill the Mermaid's Legend in order to beat the evil Sea Witch Wyndia and prevent her from destroying my beloved world! I'll do my best!



ISBN4-06-199497-2

C0193 P400E (0)

Kodansha X Bunsha

Retail price ¥400 (pre tax ¥388)



Other Kodansha x Bunsha Teen's Heart Stories

By Marie Koizumi

Don't fall in love!
I'm not in love right now!
I'm not in love with anyone!
Don't say "you love me!"
Do you really like me?
I want someone to love!
I fell in love with my best friend!
Fall in love with me!
He's the one I love!
It is okay to fall in love?
Is it bad to be in love with an idol?
Don't fall in love with her!
Do you like me?
But, you can't like me that way!
Don't love me the same way as before!
We like the same guy!
Forget about your girlfriend!
I'm sorry I fell in love...
I'm separated from the one I like!
I did it for the one I love...
A trip I'm keeping secret from my mom
I proposal I'm keeping secret from my mom
A honeymoon I'm keeping secret from my mom
Don't tell him I like him!
How to forget the one you love
Have you always been in love with me?
Let's find our love in the girls comic book library!
Let's beat our rival in the girls comic book library!
Let's be happy in the girls comic book library!
Being in love isn't funny!
On a diet for the one I love!
The person I'm in love with is my best friend...
I heard a rumor from the one I love!
But I should be the one you like!
But, he told me that he likes me!
Don't you love me?
I love being in love...
Think about the one you love!
Please tell me you love me once again!

Art: Naoko Takeuchi
Cover Design: Hiroki Habuki

Kodansha Paperbacks

MERMAID PANIC ①

：

Koizumi Marie





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**Illustrations by:
Naoko Takeuchi**

Mermaid Panic

In an ocean pool,

Sun glimmering on the surface,

A white coral reef as far as the eye can see.

Far

Far

Far below the reef, in the depths of the ocean,

It is far more beautiful than the most beautiful aquamarine

In those depths is where I make my home.

7 MERMAID PANIC ①

Huh?

You say it's strange to live in the ocean?

You think I'm lying?

Nuh-uh,

It isn't strange at all.

It's not a lie either.

I really do live in the sea.

Cause I'm half-fish!

Half-fish.

Y'know, a mermaid.

You know about mermaids, right?

Even I've read books about mermaids,

I found one in one of the shipwrecks people left in my ocean.

Um...

I think it was called "Mermaid Princess" or something like that.

Ah,

Oh,

Could it be,

You think Mermaids only exist in stories?

That's wrong.

They're not just in stories.

We really exist.

My flapping tail should be proof enough right?

My name is Shinju.

Its a cute name, right?

9 MERMAID PANIC ①

I like my name a lot.

Oh yeah, in case you wondered, it's not true mermaids never age.

Today's my 15th birthday!

I have very long, flowing silky hair

Shells covering my chest,

And a pink tail.

I can use my tail to swim freely through the ocean.

I can also talk to fish too.

I am a fish-person.

Oh! ☆

But,

Call me a mermaid! I like that word a lot better.

I think "Mermaid" sounds way cuter.

So,

Make sure to call me a mermaid, not a fish-lady.

I'm a Mermaid! ♡

But on that subject,

In reality, I'm not just any old mermaid!

I'm a SPECIAL mermaid!

hehehe,

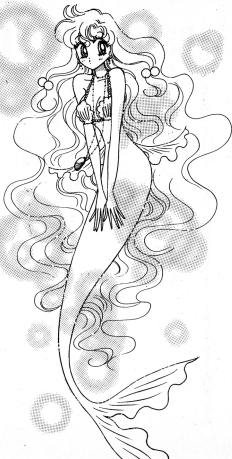
Guess what!

I'm a princess!

A princess,

A royal fish,

A Mermaid Princess.



That is to say, I'm above-average. I'm a remarkable mermaid.

A long time ago.

A super long time ago.

Deep, deep in the ocean was the Remain Shrine.

Ahh.

Remain was really, incredibly beautiful.

You can still see its walls set in amber.

Anyway.

That's where I live, in that shrine.

So I feel a bit like a Princess.

How - ever.

I'm not a Princess at all. I'm totally, totally, totally normal.

I spend my time playing with the other Mermaids and the fishes.

Today, with my Mermaid friends, I'll be throwing my big birthday party, as promised. ♡

"Shinju! Shinju!"

"Shinju!"

That's the sound of my mermaid friends' voices.

In the sea and on the beach.

What should I do?

It's still too early to be my birthday party.

Huh?

It can't be, did I get the time wrong?

What should I do?

I haven't even gotten dressed yet.

And I really wanted to wear my silver-lipped oyster hair ornaments, I haven't gotten to wear them out yet.

Should I give up on wearing them?

Well, I really want to dress up.

"I'm sorry. I got the time wrong. Just wait a minute, while I put in my hair ornaments."

"Shinju, this is no time for hair ornaments."

"Huh?"

"Shinju, your mom is calling you."

"Really, my mom is calling me?"

My mom is the head of our household of mermaids.

Even though she's been around a long time.

Nobody really knows my mom's exact age.

She lives in a cave in the back of our shrine.

And she rarely ever comes out.

Yeaaaaah.

I wonder what my mom is calling out to me about.

Whatever it is, I have a bad feeling about it.

Do you know "The Legend of the Mermaids"?

Did you know that mermaids live in the beautiful blue ocean?

The blue ocean is a gift to us mermaids.

Well,

That's an if.

If mermaids weren't there, what color would the ocean be?

The answer lies inside the world of mermaids, inside their legend.

"The Legend of the Mermaids."

1000 years ago.

A mermaid princess became a human.

Before my 16th birthday starts, I have to find my beloved.

I have to find my love.

I wonder if we'll exchange a kiss.

If

If I don't find my beloved before my 16th birthday...

If I can't find my love before then...

And if we don't exchange a kiss...

The mermaids, all of us, we would lose the bubbles we live in inside of the ocean...

Losing our bubbles wouldn't mean that we die, exactly.

But it would mean the destruction of our mermaid world.

It means, us mermaids would vanish from the oceans altogether.

And that's not all.

It also means that the evil sea witch, Wyndia, would gain control of the oceans, and plunge the world into darkness. We mermaids have been protecting the ocean from her.

So, because of that.

If us mermaids disappear, the ocean would turn black.

If the oceans are no longer blue, the entire world would plunge into darkness.

The fishes would too.

And so would the corals.

And all of the shell-fish.

Everyone.

Everybody.

They would all die.

All of the ocean would fall to the whims of the sea witch Wyndia.

Us mermaids have been guarding the oceans from the evil sea witch Wyndia for the last 1,000 years.

...However.

It's been a thousand years.

And in one thousand years.

Our kind has only spoken with her once.

And so.

I've only heard rumors about the evil sea witch Wyndia.

None of us have run into her in recent years.

I've got my suspicions about her real story.

I've thought about it a lot.

That being said.

"I'm one of the mermaids of the 1000th year of the legend!?"

Without thinking, I shouted at the top of my lungs.

All through the blue ocean depths, my voice spread out.

It surprised the fish, and in an instant, they swam over to check on me.

However,

The person most surprised was me.

Today is my 15th birthday.

Ever since I heard my mom was calling out to me, I've had a bad feeling.

It can't be.

That I'm really the Mermaid Princess that legend says will show up in
1,000 years.

But I wonder.

If the "Legend of the Mermaid" is really true.

I would be super surprised.

But.

Deep inside.

I've got this sneaking suspicion, and a feeling that it is true.

And so.

My mom said it's been maaaaany years.

Maybe it's really true, but this whole thing just seems stupid to me.

Hmph.

And then my mom stared up at me with her wrinkly old face.

Bonk.

She hit me with her stick.

"Owww~"

I began thrashing my tail around before I could even think anything else.

"So you think what I'm telling you is some stupid tale humans talk about."

"Whaaaat? How did you know what I was thinking?"

"I just figured out what you were thinking, Shinju, based on a simple guess."

"But that really was exactly what I was thinking!"

Bonk.

I guess it was just as my mom said, she could read my face.

"Shinju, the "Legend of the Mermaid" is really true. And you are the genuine Mermaid Princess the legend says would come in 1000 years."

My mother's eyes

Like piercing swords.

Even though it was just a joke.

I was trying to be funny.

I guess it really, really, really is true.

My mom's eyes told it all.

"It's not just that. The evil Sea Witch Wyndia plans to conquer and rule over the ocean with her Black Pearl."

I wonder what a Black Pearl is.

Somehow, it doesn't seem like it'd be nice.

It gives me a bad feeling.

"Wyndia has been guarding over this item to prevent us mermaids from getting it for the last 1000 years."

"So this story isn't just a myth? It's really true."

"If Wyndia got the chance, she'd rule over the entire ocean after defeating us mermaids."

So it wasn't just a legend.

The way she said it, it sounded as though if Wyndia were to take over the ocean, it would die.

And only the Mermaid Princess can protect the ocean...

"And I'm the millennium's Mermaid Princess"

My mom let out a huge sigh.

"It's not just for the mermaids. Shinju, you have to protect all of the ocean's living creatures. Their fate is in your hands."

Pang.

A jolt ran through my chest.

And in my head

The "Mermaid's Legend" began turning and turning in my mind.

Once every 1000 years.

A mermaid princess turns into a human.

But first I have to find my love before my 16th birthday.

My promised love.

And then.

I have to kiss him.

But.

If I don't find my true love before my 16th birthday.

And I don't meet with my promised love.

And I don't give him a kiss.

The mermaids, and everyone else living in the ocean will
vanish.

Our mermaid world will be destroyed.

And mermaids won't exist in the oceans anymore.

How did I end up responsible for everything.

It's all really sudden.

Anyway.

I've never even had a kiss before.

It'll be my first kiss.

And there aren't even any males in our mermaid world, so, it'll be my first love too.

Besides that, being in the human world, how am I going to get a kiss.

This all just really pisses me off.

I don't like it.

Having such a big role.

I'm the kind of mermaid who just wants to have fun with humans.

And I'm not the kind of person who does new things easily.

"Can't someone change places with me and be the Mermaid Princess instead? I don't think I'm up for the challenge of rescuing all of mermaid-kind."

I said, cheerfully trying to get out of the chore.

"Shinju -"

Bonk.

"Owwww"

I got hit on the head again.

My mom stared intensely at me.

"Being the Mermaid Princess isn't just about turning human. Here, hold out your hand."

"Is this for me...?"

"Here."

And my mom put the smallest little ball in my end.

Was this supposed to be part of a necklace?

At its core shined a small little pink pearl.

"It's so cute! ♡"

Without thinking, without remembering myself, I shrieked outloud in awe.

This sure was a lot nicer than the Black Pearl of Wyndia's I'd heard about.

"With the pearl on that necklace, a mermaid is able to transform into a human for a short while using the pearl's magic."

"So if I just concentrate, I can use the magic..."

"Only the Mermaid Princess is able to use the necklace's magic."

So I haven't been the only one to use it.

As it turns out,

I haven't been the only one charged with protecting the world of us mermaids.

I haven't been the only...

I haven't been the only one...

I haven't...

I see.

I get it.

Grip.

I held on tightly to the pearl necklace.

And although I didn't want it to be true,

I could feel my Princess blood surge.

And I was filled with courage and power.

Me.

In an instant, I leapt from the seas and stepped out into the human world for the first time.

The human world.

Everyone would be so surprised to see me walking along on two legs.

Walking along like a regular girl with a regular boy, as though I weren't really a mermaid.

It felt really amusing.

But I couldn't really believe this world was real.

It made me uneasy.

But it'll be okay.

Yeah.

Although I had fun in the mermaid world, the human world doesn't seem as fun.

But,

This is a rare chance I have.

Right?

Right, of course right.

"I'm going to do my best for everyone's sake!"

I yelled out, summoning up all my power.

My pink tail.

Standing on end.

My chest all puffed out with courage.

But,

I wonder even if I am the Princess now, if I can really do it.

I didn't really know what to do next.

I've got to find someone I like.

Should I be the one to confess to them?

I mean, what if I tell them I like them, but the other person doesn't love me back.

Should I kiss them anyway?

It's so complicated.

Maybe I shouldn't hurry, it's not my 16th birthday yet.

I mean, I only turned 15 years old today.

There's still lots of time.

First, I should develop some interest in the human world.

And find out what this "Mermaid's Legend" is all really about.

I mean, if I really am the legendary Mermaid Princess who comes around only every one thousand years, I should do things properly.

Holding out the necklace my mom gave me.

Staring at it swing before me.

The pink pearl.

Shining.

Sparkling in my chest.

"Hey, when a mermaid turns into a human, what kind of things happen after that?"

"Hmm. Well, Shinju, I don't think I've ever heard of a mermaid who turned human turning back into a mermaid."

"What? Seriously?"

"Then again, I've never seen a mermaid transform into a human either."

"What if the transformation doesn't work?"

"I guess try again after ten minutes?"

"I see. What if the person I turn into is bad?"

I've got to stop freaking myself out.

But,

I've gotta stay brave, just focus on this cute pink pearl.

Yeah! ♡

I've just gotta follow mom's advice, do my best to fulfill the "Mermaids Legend" and

give it my all.

If I do all that, this necklace will help me out, and; it's a pretty cute one if I say so myself.

Yeeaaaah.

Somehow, I'm actually really excited about all this.

"Shinju, you've got to like the heart of the person you fall in love with."

"Yeah, yeah."

"Because he's your beloved, you have to make sure you really, really care about him too."

"Yeah, yeah, I get it."

"Shinju, your beloved's lips aren't like anybody else's, you've got to be sure he's the right one."

"I get it, I get it."

Jeaz.

I don't want to hear this talk again when I have another birthday.

"And, you have to understand that after you fulfill the 'Mermaid's Legend', you won't be able to come back to the ocean again."

The blue sea.

My beloved ocean.

That I have sworn to protect.

That somehow, I'll do my best to defend, that I'll become a guardian of justice for it.

I'll protect the ocean!

"Shinju, do your best..."

"Of course I will!"

I replied, energetically.

"Shinju..."

I won't see this marina or the beach again.

Hearing the voice of all the mermaids got me all teary-eyed.

"I can't believe it. We'll really always be separated from now on."

"But...But you know, I would like to know what it's like to fall in love."

"I guess so. We Mermaid girls have never experienced it before."

But.

It'll be okay.

My story of love in the human world.

It's a difficult situation, being the "Mermaid Princess", and when I read that I feel like I should be researching something.

I'm sure it'll figure it out.

"I won't give up."

I.

I feel like my chest is burning up.

I'll do my best.

Definitely, definitely, I'll work hard.

The pink pearl necklace over my chest shining as it sways.

I'll show this ocean a side of me its never seen before I depart for good.

Into the human world...

My face broke above the ocean waves.

"It's so bright..."

Glittering.

The sun,

The waves are so beautiful,

And so,

So is the white foam against the shore.

My tail still completely submerged.

I've got to do something about that before my first appearance on land.

I peek around.

Do a proper check.

Humans can't be allowed to see me transform.

"Just as I thought, it's too early in the morning for anyone to be out here."

Now's my chance.

But.

Somehow I'm panicked.

What should I do.

I know.

Only the Mermaid Princess can protect the world of the Mermaids.

My pink tail parting the water.

Splash.

I jump above the waves.

Glittering in the sun like a diamond.

The gem in my necklace shining bright.

And then.

A strong thought.

Please.

Turn me into a human girl.



A warm light.
The sky flashes, and I've changed.

And. ☆

Ah

Ahhh

Aaaaaaack!!!!

Pant pant.

Heave heave.

I.

I suddenly shriek, feeling all the sudden changes to my body.

But.

But.

I've gotta reach the shore.

Once I'm on shore, I'll have to try out walking.

But first, I've got to get out of the ocean, I've got to swim.

How.e.ver.

Where my tail was, two legs and a pink skirt have appeared.

I really have human legs now.

No more pink tail...

I can't believe it but.

I really, really have turned into a human.

Aaaaaack. Just thinking about it freaks me out.

I've really become human...

L

I know I've turned into a human, but now I'm even more worried about what I have to do.

Because I was a mermaid, I've never worn clothes before.

And because I never had legs, I've never worn shoes.

I'm gonna have to get some clothes.

After I turned human, I thought about that - a bit too late.

But.

I'll figure out how to wear clothes properly.

And how to wear shoes.

I'll

Slowly

Figure out how to stand.

I've got no balance, so I'll probably be wobbly at first.

Oh hey, I stood!

I feel like I've been reborn, standing here.

It's amazing.

But I can feel a gust of wind.

Here goes.

I'll try to walk now.

I keep twisting my legs over themselves.

I won't be able to walk like this.

My walking is so wobbly.

I've got to walk properly.

Properly this time, without almost falling over.

I keep wavering.

But.

This is it.

This is how it feels to be a human girl.

I really have turned into a human.

The ocean.

The way humans see it.

Does the water always seem this serene?

Gentle curves.

Very beautiful.

More than anything I had seen in all my time swimming in this sea,
unbelievable.

The fate of the entire ocean rests with me, unbelievable.

Ah... something's brushing my cheek.

Is that the wind?

It's making my hair move like I'm swimming.

It feels nice.

I'm getting really excited for some reason.

"Okay, I'm going to do my best!"

I said facing the sea and taking a victory pose.

First I have to find the person I love.

But...

How do I find him?

Oh no.

I'm stuck already, all alone on this sandy beach.

I am relieved I was able to change from a mermaid into a human, but not knowing where the person I love is puts a wrench in things.

The person I love...

Well, to start with, I should try finding some men.

I can't just stand around doing nothing.

I've got to keep walking.

Okay. Time to go find the man I love!

"Ack!"

My feet got stuck in the sand, and I tumbled over.

Walking is still hard for me, after all.

Swimming is so much easier.

Oh my.

I got back up, but I'm still stumbling.

But...

??

My arm,

In an instant, gripped and held fast, so I didn't fall.

"Are you alright?"

Huh?

Huh?

When I turned in the direction of the voice, there was a man standing there.

This was the first time I'd ever seen a man up close like this.

His eyes were pitch black. They fell immediately under his bangs.

He was way taller than me. But he seemed to be about the same age as me.

He held me with his large hands.

"That's what happens if you walk without paying attention."

"Y-yeah."

He was right, I was thinking about a ton of things and trying to walk at the same time.

But that wasn't the only reason I fell.



Because I'm a mermaid, I'm not used to walking, but I can't tell him that.

"Well, take care."

He said.

He let go of me with those hands, and turned his back to me, and begun walking along the shore.

He had a big puppy with him. He was walking his dog.

"The legend of the Mermaid"

Once every 1000 years, the mermaid princess becomes human, and has until her 16th birthday to find someone she loves, and the two must swear their love. then,

They confirm their love with a kiss.

I decided! ♡

I'll fall in love with him.

He'll be the one I love.

Yeah.

That's a nice idea.

I'm so relieved I found him so quickly.

I'm super lucky.

I just have to swear my love to him, and give him a kiss.

Aahh! ♡

Now the sea will be safe.

I might be the greatest Princess ever.

But,

Even after deciding i would love him,

He kept walking further and further away.

Together with his dog, they went further and further.

What should I do?

Oh yes,

I've got to follow him quickly.

But, I can't.

I still can't walk well, so I can't follow him.

My legs won't keep up.

"W-Wait!"

I cried out without thinking.

Oh...

Oh good.

My voice reached him and he turned back my way.

I've got to use this chance to catch up to him.

This time I was able to go without stopping, so well, that I was going to pass him at this rate.

I tried to stop, but...

"Aaagh!"

Along with that loud yelp, slam!

I knocked him over.

This is terrible. ☆

But it looks like it's going to get worse, since I had knocked him over with such force, no one was there to stop me this time.

"Waaah!"

We both collapsed together.

On the shore, a hair's breadth away from each other.

"I-i-i'm so sorry..."

I stammered an apology.

He showed irritation on his face.

What do I do?

He looks one hundred percent done with me.

Colliding with him like this he must think I'm an oddball. That would be super troublesome.

But, I can't tell him the real reason it happened... All I can do is apologise profusely.

"It's fine it's not that bad."

I'm not the type to apologize for much.

That's really what he said to me.

Well, I'm glad.

"Anyway, do you have any need for me?"

"I...um..."

I was talking about falling in love when that guy -
I was talking to him about falling in love and then -
It's just as I thought.

As he walked away, I stood up straight and tall.

Sand falling from my clothes.

And off of me...

I knew it would be like this.

I've got to stand up straight and tall.

Go slowly.

Falling in love.

I can't let it defeat me.

It's no good like this.

"Ah, hey!"

I shouted out in his direction.

"Big brooooooother!"

A girl's voice.

Seemed like she was talking about him.

"Hey."

He turned to face the direction of the voice, and held out his hand.

And he began running in its direction...

But I was about to talk to him –

"Ah-Hey. Wait just a sec..."

Yay!

I finally stood up. ♡

Again.

I can't do it. I can't do it.

Ohh, not these stubborn emotions again.

I've gotta restrain myself when it comes to him.

I've got to remember that, next time this happens.

Plop.

I was standing just fine until I thought about him again.

I've just gotta take it nice and slow, build up strength in my legs.

That's all I should focus on.

But I can't.

Haunnnnnuh??

No way.

No, no, no, no!

I'm all wet.

And it got my legs,

So my mermaid tail returned,

But why?

Why did my legs turn back into a tail?

Whyyyy?

I see.

I guess I didn't think about that until now.

When I saw him, I was standing on dry land.

And when I transformed, I flew up out of the water.

Big splash.

When the water touches me, I turn back.

So I can still swim in the sea.

I really did turn back into a mermaid.

Just because my legs got wet.

I can still turn back into a mermaid.

Hey.

Maybe.

When this is all done, I can just touch water and go back to being a mermaid?

Jeez mom, why didn't you tell me about this?

Yeah.

It's like her to not tell me something like this.

But.

But.

I really did turn back into a mermaid.

Maybe my mom just forgot.

Because she's so old.

Even if she's spacey, she's not normally that weird.

But.

I don't know that she'd forget to tell me something so important.

Jenz.

I'm glad that the pearl's magic can transform me back into a human for the time being.

If I only had one shot at this human business, I'd be out of luck already.

But this is good timing with him, turned away, so he didn't notice all this.

Shake shake.

While still in mermaid form, I peeked over at his face - and stole a glance at what he was up to.

I started to peer around for what I was searching for.

Could he have disappeared in an instant like that?

Maybe he timing was bad and he saw me as a mermaid.

But then I saw him turn around to face me - standing before him as a human girl.

She called him big brother, so I'm sure that girl must be his younger sister.

I get the feeling she came to help him.

"Big brother, I saw you searching around, what are you looking for?"

"Oh, nothing, just now, there was a girl..."

"There's nobody here."

"Yeah, seems like it..."

I had dived underwater.

I wasn't where I was standing before.

Ahhh.

I almost want to jump out of my hiding spot now and tell them where I am.

But,

If a Mermaid reveals her human transformation to humans, then she won't be able to return to the human world again.

That's why if you're going to transform into a human, it's really important not to be seen.

Doing otherwise is a taboo.

"Come on big brother, let's go."

"I guess you're right".

And with that, the two of them disappeared across a bridge leading from the bay.

After a while I saw them enter into a house off in the distance.
That must be where they live.

But...

Now that he's gone,

I,

I'm alone, what should I do?

Now that I finally found a person that I could fall in love with.

I've Got It. ♡

I just had a good idea.

Maybe I've got a good head on my shoulders after all.

But,

I wonder if this will turn out OK.

I'm a little worried.

But...

But...

What should I do...

I wonder if I'll be good at this.

I'm nervous.

Yeah.

I'm worried, but it can't be helped.

I'm gonna push forward.

The fate of the ocean world is relying on me.

So I've gotta do *my* best.

"The Mermaid's Legend"

Anyway.

I found the person I love.

It turns out he and my love weren't far apart all this time.

We'll kiss.

And then.

It'll be OK to return to the ocean.

I held this thought tight, clutching my pink pearl necklace.

Go for it, Shinju!

On the other side of the road along the coast, a house with a blue roof.

The dog with him earlier was tied up outside.

This is the place!

I stopped in front of the gate. I stopped to check the name on the address, but come to think of it, I didn't know what his name was anyway.

Yeeeah...

I cracked open the door and peered inside

It felt like I was doing something bad, but there was really no choice.

I had to confirm the magic of the pearl for myself.

I didn't fully believe in it's power.

Would I really turn back into a mermaid if I got wet?

"Hey, Shinju, what are you doing there?"

When I turned around to see who had called my name, my eyes went wide.

It was him!

Hey, just now, he called me Shinju.

How did he know my name?

When I met him earlier I didn't introduce myself.

How did he know who I was?

Even so he knows who I am.

Does that mean the magic of the pearl worked?

While in reality, I had no intention of entering his home as a freeloading relative, for him to have known me, must mean the pearl's magic worked.

But, I had to check one more time to be sure.

"Well I thought as a freeloading relative, I shouldn't just barge in to your house... or something..."

Ah, That was terrible. Please understand Chiro.

I looked up to see his reaction.

"Idiot, what's all this 'freeloading relative' crap, you've never been one to show restraint."

Oh good, it looks like it did work.

But...

"I am a freeloader though."

I confirmed again.

"You idiot, Shinju. Why do you keep repeating that?"
he said with a look of annoyance.

Good.

I'm a female relative staying over, a family member.

Oh.

Why did I have to be a family member? No brother's gonna fall in love with his little sister.

That's why while we were apart, I came up with a good idea.

His name is Ryouichi Kaidou.

I figured that out from his home's nameplate.

He has a sister named Seiko.

There was no other name.

I wonder if he has a mother or father?

"Hey, how long are you going to stay in the doorway?"

"Oh, right"

At his invitation, I kicked off my shoes and went inside.

Bang.

"Ow..."

I thought I had noticed and avoided it, but I hit my foot on the first step and tumbled over again.

“Waaah!”

I scraped my hip, it stung.

“What are you doing?”

“I just...”

“Come on.”

Ryuichi stood before me offering his hand.

Hehee.♡

He’s already calling me by name and taking my hand.

But confessing his love, swearing his affection, kissing me... that’s a ways away.

Well, it would be my first kiss.

There are a lot of things on my mind.

I took Ryuichi's hand.

Gulp.

Ryuichi locked his big hand with mine.

When I fell down before, it took a long time for me to get up on my own, but with the help of Ryuichi's big hand I was on my feet in moments.

He's a huge help.

"Thank you."

I said my thanks, but wat was bothering Ryuichi?

All of a sudden he looked locked in thought.

"What's wrong?"

"Just thinking each time I see you you're falling down today."

Oh no...

I should be the only one who remembers our meeting on the beach.

Did the magic not work properly?

If the magic didn't work, that would be bad, really bad.

W-What to do...?

Oh yes, before it gets any worse, keep moving along

Yeah, that's the best thing,

I found the person to fall in love with, got to hit the next hurdle..

To get to pledging our love to each other, first comes the confession.

"Um, you know,"

"What is it?"

I planted my feet, facing Rysuichi, serious expression on my face. So,

The fate of the ocean world rests on this.

Of course I would wear a serious face, but that made Ryunichi's expression turn confused.

But I can't let that affect me.

"I love you, Ryunichi."

Ryunichi's eyes went wide.

Suprise was written all over his face, but then his face changed back into its usual smiling one.

"Thanks, I love you too Shinja."

Is what he'll say. ♡

That means we've exchanged our vows of love!

Now all that's left...

Is the kiss.

~~~~~♡

I'm so embarrassed!

"Are you stupid?"

Huh?

Ryunichi called me stupid?

That's his response?

Love.

Stupid.

That's no vow of love.

I've never been in love but even I know that.

“Come on then, let’s get some medicine on that knee scrape. There’s a first aid kit in the living room.”

“Okay.”

And Ryuuichi, once he said that, began dashing through his house at a swift pace.

Come on! Jeez.

It’s not about to fall off or anything.

Well, it’s alright.

Until I can get to the point of love’s vow, I have to figure out how to get a confession of love from him.

I won’t lose!

I’ll give it my all!

Oh yeah, I have to put some medicine on my knee.

These legs of mine weren’t easy to get. Gotta take care of them.

He said the first aid kit was in the living room?

Where am I now?

Click.

I opened one of the doors and looked inside.

Oh, this is the bathroom.. Wrong, wrong.

What about this room? Well it's not the one I was looking for, but...

Wow! ♥

Wow, there are pictures of fish hanging everywhere.

It's like being back under the sea.

I'm just zoning out... huh?

There's a fish tank!

Without thinking I ran up to it and put my face up to the glass.

"Hi there!" ♥

I've only been in the human world one day, but still, I felt homesick, so I thought I'd chat with the fish.

"Huh? How is it you can speak with us?" the fish said with a confused expression.

Yes, fish have facial expressions.

"Because I'm the mermaid princess!" ♥

"What really?"

"Yes, how else would I be able to talk with you?" I said, holding up a peace sign.

***Clack!***

Huh?

That was the sound of the door closing.

No way, did someone hear me talking to the fish just now?

“Hey, what are you doing in here?”

This is Dad’s room.

The living room’s over there, remember?”

“Um...”

I turned around and Ryuichi and Seiko were standing there with exasperated faces.

“Ryuichi...”

“Why do you look so surprised?”

“I made a mistake, hahaha!”

All I could try to do was laugh it off.

“You’re acting like this is the first time you’ve been in this house.”

“Huh? Oh well... That’s not true... hahaha...”

In the end, laughing it off was all I could do.

At least they don't seem to have noticed me talking to the fish.

In any case, (*sigh*)

I've got to be more careful.

But...

"Hey, how come there are all these pictures of fish?" I asked without thinking. That was a big mistake.

"Because of dad's job. There's no helping you is there?"

"His job?"

"He's a college professor. He teaches marine biology. All he ever does is research fish." Ryuichi explained clearly.

"Studying fish..."

Wow

I didn't know there were people who did that in the human world.

“Where is he now?”

“He’s of at some conference or something in America.”

“America...”

I see, so he’s not at home in other words.

“Hey Shinju, how come you don’t know anything about Papa’s work?”

Huh?!

It came from the doorway.

There standing in an imposing pose with her hands on her hips was Seiko.

She was looking at me, her eyes colored with doubt.

It looks like the magic wasn’t fully working on Seiko.

Which means the magic of the pearl wasn’t 100% effective.

Man, why did I have to open my mouth about their dad?



No use crying over spilled ink, as they say.

“Shinju, are you really related to us?” Seiko said bluntly.

“Yeah, of course I am,” I said swiftly hiding my uneasiness, “what are you talking about, Seiko?”

“It’s just that...”

“While her dad’s away we’ll all be staying together and taking care of her, remember?” Ryuichi covered for me.

Looks like that’s how it’ll have to be.

“Shinju, what’s your last name?” Seiko asked me out of the blue.

Last name...

What do I do?

I hadn’t thought of one before.

Um... I'm a princess so... the word for princess in this language is "Hime," so...

"I-It's Hime-

Himeno."

Himeno works for me. My last name will be himeno and first, Shinju.

Himeno Shinju

Yeah, I like it. It's very cute sounding. I thought of it on the fly, but I like it.

But it wasn't time to celebrate just yet.

"Himeno? Odd, I can't seem to remember anyone named Himeno or Shinju in our family."

"What? Um..."

Seiko got me. My celebratory feelings vanished in a flash.

She wasn't affected by the magic for sure.

I had to be careful with her.

"I'm a very distant relative."

"Oh, are you now?"

There was no satisfying Seiko.

But, it's not like she saw me as a mermaid.

She just thinks I'm odd. I'm sure it'll be okay.

The "Mermaid Legend" says I have until my 16th birthday.

I've got a year left.

But I don't think it will take that long.

I did fail at my confession today, but it's just the first day.

If it were that easy to do, the "Mermaid Legend" wouldn't carry as much weight as it does.

But I'm sure it will go well!

I've already found the one I love.

Now we just have to declare our love, share love's kiss, then I can haul fin back to the ocean.

Even though today wasn't good.  
Tomorrow will be better.  
I'll take it as a challenge.  
I, Shinju, am going to fight!

Temptation in the Bath Tub ☆

"Shinju, go ahead and get in the bath tub."

I could hear Seiko calling to me.

"Huh? Bath tub?"

A bathtub is like, um, something with a lot of hot water in it, right?

And if I go inside one, it'll make me transform.

What am I gonna do if I turn back into a mermaid?

What should I do?

"What's wrong? Aren't you going to go in?"

Seiko, I don't want you to see me like that...

I agreed, happily, figuring a way out of my dilemma.

**SPLASH!**

I jumped in, sloshing water everywhere.

I thrashed in the water.

Making big waves to keep it away from me

It was almost like a dance.

I made tons of bubbles in the water to hide my tail.

Soon there was so many that no one could see inside of the water that I had transformed.

No one could tell that underneath, I was still a mermaid.

I felt a big wave of relief that my secret identity as a mermaid was still hidden.

I succesfully got inside of the bathtub.

Whoaaaaa!

I let out a huge sigh of relief.

After I transformed out of my mermaid form, I felt even better.

I didn't feel like I was going to have a panic attack.

Maybe there was a way I could use the magic of the Pearl to stay in human form all of the time.

I'm just glad this is such a huge bathtub.

Still, it was nice to feel like myself, like a mermaid again.

"Ack!"

Oh no.

I slipped.

On my out of the bath tub.

I wobbled, trying to regain my balance.

I forced myself back upright.

I clung to the wall next to me for support.



SLAM.

A big thud.

It was too slippery, I couldn't stay upright.

"Owwww, that hurt!"

Man, I never knew how much things could hurt out here in the human world!

Owwwww.

Throb.

My tail was hanging out of the side of the bath tub.

And the doorway was propped open.

Anybody walking by might see me.

Crap!

Huh?

I could hear someone enter the dressing room.

Who could it be?

The glass in the bathroom was too cloudy for me to see who was there.

I could hear someone creeping closer.

"Who's there?"

It was Ryuuichi's voice.

And my tail was still hanging out of the bath tub.

This is no good.

What am I gonna do?

I've gotta transform back into human quickly.

My pearl necklace...

No way, no way!

Thunk!!

“.....”

“.....”

Ryuichi was about to come inside.

I stayed silent.

"S-shinju, I didn't realize you were in here. Seiko said she was going to get you to come in but I never heard back so I just - I just thought - Shinju I'm sorr-"

He blushed, obviously embarrassed.

And then he left.

I couldn't get that lucky again even in 180 million years. He left the bathroom.

And just in the nick of time, too, because I wasn't able to transform back into a human yet.

My tail was at least underwater in the bathtub again.

Ryuuichi was only able to catch a glimpse of my face and chest.

That's all.

But Ryuuichi.

Seemed a bit weird.

When he looked at me, his face turned all red.

Hmm.

Anyway.

With the pearl back in my hand, I could transform back into a human.

"Shinju!"

Someone was coming back into the bathroom.

This time, it was Seiko standing before me.

"Seiko?"

Her eyebrows were scrunched together.

She looked mad.

"Shinju, how could you!"

She shrieked angrily.

Yep, she was definitely pissed off.

"What's wrong, Seiko?"

"I knew that you had a crush on my brother all along, Shinju!"

"Huh..."

"And you knew he was outside of the entrance to the bathroom, you intentionally lured him inside."

Oh no.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing from Seiko.

"Why were you trying to lure him in like that? Why would you do that?"

W-wait a minute.

"I wasn't trying to lure him in here."

"Liar."

"I couldn't even see that it was Ryuuichi trying to enter."

"When he heard that loud thud, you had to know that my brother would come to investigate what was going on."

"How is that my doing?"

The thud she was talking about was the sound of my tail, of course.

Mermaids don't really have the concept of temptation, but I guess luring or tempting someone is something humans get worried about.

Still.

I couldn't figure out what Seiko was talking about.

Her words weren't making any sense.

"Listen. I know what you're up to. I won't let someone like you trick my brother."

What was she saying?

What a challenging attitude.

I bet that even if Seiko understood what was going on, and knew about the magic involved, she still would be the way she is.

But I get the feeling that's not all she's thinking.

"Hey, Seiko, do you love your big brother?

"Yeah, of course I love my brother. I've loved him ever since I was born."

Ahh.

So that's why she's giving me such a hard time.

"But you two are siblings, right?"

"Yeah. And there's nobody in the world that's good enough for him, if you ask me."

And then she stuck her tongue out at me.

Jeaz.

Well, I won't give up.

So I stuck my tongue out right back at her.

And with that, Seiko huffed off.

She's so annoying.

But I'll get her to come around.

I'm not going to give up because of Seiko.

"Pbbbbbbt!"

She stuck her tongue out and raspberried me as she went on her way.

"Seiko, what the heck are you doing?"

Ryuuichi.

"Oh, big brother! ♥"

Seiko immediately rushed over to Ryuuichi.

And ran to hide behind his back.

She made it seem like I was the one teasing her.

"Shinju was teasing me!"

"What! That's no true. She's the one who was teasing me!"



Ryuuichi was trying to figure out what to do.

Ryuuichi...

Hmph.

He kept looking me over.

Huh?

But why?

I've never noticed him doing that before.

Oh yeah.

It must be because Seiko was still hiding behind him.

"Let's go, Seiko"

"Okay! ♥"

And the two of them walked away.

"Hey, wait a minute!"

I yelled out.

Ryuuichi turned back to look at me.

Seiko turned back, and immediately stuck her tongue out at me again.

Even though I said something, I could already tell that it was in vein.

Was he going to just avoid me from now on?

Could it be... does Ryuuichi hate me now?

But why?

I don't understand.

I don't understand at all.

And it's not like I can confess what's going on to him.

But.

I do plan to tell him what's going on one day.

But.

Right now, he won't even meet my gaze.

What am I gonna do?

Ugh.

This is no good, but Shinju, you've gotta do something.

Otherwise the world of mermaids is going to disappear.

And that's not all.

The sea witch Wyndia will plunge the entire world into darkness.

And who knows what would happen to the ocean with the sea witch Wyndia in charge...

On my chest.

A pearl necklace.

Weighing heavily.

I can feel its heaviness.

Father's room.

Creaaaaak.

Without a sound, the door opens wide.

And on the wall, a large painting of the ocean comes into view before me.

And there was a fishtank full of fish.

Seeing them, I felt a bit releived.

"What's wrong, Shinju?"

I could hear the fish say to me.

"Oh, fishies...oh, you're butterfly fishes, aren't you?"

"That's right, we're butterfly fish."

They were beautifully striped, black and yellow. They were tropical fish.

Hey, what do you think I should do, should I tell him what's going on?"

Without even thinking about it, I started to cry.

"Well, Shinju, when you're in love with someone, you've got to do more than just tell them."

"Really?"

Is that so?

I didn't know.

"You have to consider his feelings, too."

His feelings?

Ryuuichi's feelings?

"Being in love means you have to put in a lot of effort."

Without thinking, I stuck my face up against the fish tank.

I didn't even notice that I was smushing my nose against it.

"Are you putting in effort?"

"I don't even know if Ryuuichi likes me or any other girl for that matter."

"But you like Ryuuichi, right?"

"Yes. When he was little his mom died, and so now he seems really family-oriented and concerned for their well-being."

"I see!"

Oh.

I can't, I can't.

I can't talk so loudly.

I put my finger over my mouth.

"I haven't been in the human world for very long, and there's lots I don't know."

"I see."

In the human world, I was like a newborn.

But the butterfly fish had been around Ryuichi for a long time.

So I thought I'd get their advice.

He really is family-oriented.

.....!?

Huh?

Who was that, just now?

Seiko again?

It felt like there was someone standing in the doorway, listening to my confession.

What a relief.

I could hear Seiko's voice from far off in the distance.

So I guess I'm safe.

It must have just been the butterfly fish.

Peek, peek.

I looked around the room but didn't see anything.

There's no one there.

Maybe it was nothing.

Now where was I? Oh yes.

Ryuuichi's... feelings...

I hadn't really thought about them.

If I thought he liked me, I'd be OK to tell him my feelings.

But.

It just wasn't that simple yet.

It could be terrible to find out that I was in love with him and he didn't feel anything in return.

He wouldn't kiss me, for sure.

"I'll be okay..."

"Why are you being so timid? Shinju, you're the princess!"

"Yeah."

"And Shinju, everyone is waiting for you!"

"Oh, fishies..."

"Shinju, we're the butterfly fishes, and we're here for you."

The fishes swam around in their tank, lovely butterfly fishes so far away from their own real home, here to support me.

I felt a lot of love.

It'll be okay.

I've just got to keep doing my best.



It's not just an unrequited love!

"Hey, hey, did you see the new transfer student who joined the class next door?"

"Whaaaaat, another transfer student?! But Shinju just transferred into our class."

"I can't believe we're getting transfer students this close before summer vacation."

Isn't it a shock that the magic of the pearl lets me pass for a student?

I can't tell if it's just really powerful magic, or if it makes people dumb.

Anyway, since I'm 15 years old I'm in my third year of high school.

And by a stroke of luck, Ryuuichi is 15 years old too, and he's also in his third year.

I think it's super, super lucky...

But it's too bad.

Ryuuichi is in a different class.

Ah.

Seiko is in her first year.

Since she's in different grade, she's in a different class too.

So at least she can't get between me and Ryuuichi at school.

I'm glad.

But.

Maybe the magic only did half of what it was supposed to?

Anyway, it would have been nice if I were in the same class as him.

But now, somehow, like Seiko and Ryuuichi I just want to get through high school.

I really, really hope the magic pulls through for me...

"What's wrong, Izumi? You were staring off into space."

"Oh, ah, Shinju...."



Izumi is always staring out of the window, off into space.

Somehow, it makes me worried.

She's the girl who sits next to me - her full name is Izumi Imada.

Ever since I transferred into this class, she's been really kind to me.

She's kind of a reserved type of girl, but, she's really nice.

Actually, Izumi is my first friend here in the human world.

"Izumi, what are you looking at?"

"Oh, um, I-I'm not really looking at anything."

It's strange how she gets so bashful.

Hey.

Her face went red.

So I.

I looked out of the window to see what Izumi was looking at.

And there was really nothing there.

There was just a group of people having lunch outside on the lawn.

The weather outside is really nice.

Having lunch outside in such perfect weather must be great.

"They really aren't doing anything."

Izumi's face melted into a smile.

"Could it be, Izumi, that you like one of the people sitting out there?"

Just then, the girl who sits behind Izumi, a girl named Harumi sat down and interrupted our conversation.

Maybe Izumi really does like someone?

"Ah, Harumi."

"Shinju, didn't you know that Izumi is involved in an unrequited love?"

I thought Harumi must be teasing poor Izumi.

"Come on Harumi, knock it off."

Izumi's face went bright red.

She looked like she might burst into flames at any time, she was fuming so badly.

"But Izumi, I didn't think you liked anyone."

"That's enough. Let's change the topic."

And Izumi shifted uncomfortably in her seat.

Harumi finally shut her mouth.

But, I think Harumi shouldn't let Izumi give up so easily.

"So changing the subject away from Izumi - Shinju, is there someone you like?"

So now Harumi was going to question me.

Without thinking, I started to nod my head.

But.

I caught myself before I said anything out loud.

Just like I had when I was talking with the fish in the tank.

It's a lot of effort to like someone.

I can't believe I'm the only girl who likes Ryuuichi, though.

But I'm glad I had that talk with the fish, I think it made me stronger.

"I bet he likes the kind of family-oriented girls who make boxed lunches and stuff."

Harumi looked at the boxed lunch Izumi prepared as she opened it

"Huh, family-oriented?!"

My ears perked up.

I think I had heard that word somewhere before.

"Hey, I bet he does like family-oriented girls, boys definitely like girls who make boxed lunches."

Both girls stared at me intently.

"That's what I think. So Izumi, with boxed lunches like yours, you've definitely got a shot!"

Looking inside her little lunch box, I saw a neat little line of gyoza in various colors.

They looked really delicious.

"Boxed lunches..."

"Izumi, your boxed lunches are so great they could be featured in magazines!"

"Yeah!"

"Show me how!"

"Okay."

Izumi showed me one of her many magazines.

I bet I could be a natural at cooking.

Of course, I was just eating a sandwich I bought at the convenience store.

"Oh course! Boxed lunches..."

"But you know, the boxed lunches can't just look great. They have to taste great too."

Harumi nodded.

Mmmhmm.

Izumi gave me a sidelong glance.

"I see. But I already decided to give him up."

"But why?"

Without thinking, I asked.

"Because...nobody...could like someone like me."

And as she said it, Izumi turned bright red again.



Uggghhh.

I couldn't believe her.

"But anyway, Shinju, I didn't know you had an interest in family-oriented hobbies!

Izumi had no idea about the situation I was in. How could she understand my problems?

But, I guess it can't be helped.

"Yeah, what's the deal with that all of a sudden, Shinju?"

Now Harumi was piling on too.

So I just gave them the first excuse that came to mind.

"I guess the truth is, the guy I like is into girls who have those hobbies."

I blurted it all out.

Just like that. This is bad.

"Whaaaaat! Shinju, there's someone you like? Who, who is it??"

"Shinju, you like someone too??"

"Well come on, who is it?"

"Harumi, jeaz, keep your voice down!"

"But come on, me and Izumi wanna know!"

"Um...umm...."

"Come on Shinju, tell us who it is you like!"

The two of them stared at me with complete interest in their eyes.

"Ryuuichi."

I said it.

So clearly.

Outloud. I said it.

But.

They were just staring at me.

But why?

They were making such a face.

"Shinju, how did you just admit to that so easily?"

"It doesn't seem like the truth."

"That does seem like a lie... Ahh, sorry. I shouldn't have said something like that. I don't usually just blurt things out -"

"Are you just joking?"

Izumi listened intently.

She thinks I'm lying?

That I'm joking?

"I'm serious. I like him. I think he's interesting."

But I was really just telling the truth.

"You're serious? I wouldn't have guessed you were into him."

"Yeah"

"Seriously?"

"Yes."

Both of them nodded their heads in confirmation.

Izumi just looked at me in disbelief.

"It's odd that you started to like him just because you think he's interesting."

"It's not odd..."

Yeah.

Me liking him is not weird.

"But it's not weird..."

Huh?

Do they really think me liking him is weird, too?

"Why would it be weird?"

Without thinking, I blurted out the question."

"It's not exactly weird...but...it just seems that you don't really like his company..."

Huh.

What an interesting scene I must paint.

So I thought about it.

Did I dislike him?:

Did I ignore him?

I tried to stop and remember anything I might have said or done.

"No, it's not like that."

I said clearly.

Huh?

In the instant I said that.

Izumi's face.

Turned deep and dark.

"Izumi, what's wrong?"

"I..see..."

"Izumi?"

Seeing Izumi's face like that made me worried.

She looked like she was about to cry.

What should I do?

It seemed like what I said made Izumi mad.

"So Shinju, you really do like Ryuichi..."

It struck me.

The way Izumi said that.

I see.

She wasn't happy.

Because of the "Mermaid's Legend".

I knew.

Why Izumi suddenly looked like she was about to cry.

My chest started pounding.

Without thinking, I panicked.

I felt terrible.

Izumi was feeling so sad.

"Izumi, don't make such a face."

And then.

Izumi's shoulders stiffened.

Ah.

That's better.

I knew she wouldn't forget what I was about to say.

"The truth is, I was only kidding around about Ryuuichi."

And I started to chuckle.

But.

Izumi still looked sad.

I was surprised to see her still looking so upset.

"Izumi?"

I got really worried.

"But when you said like you liked Ryuuichi, Shinju, you looked so cute and sincere."

"Oh come on Izumi. Surely you can take a joke."

Harumi looked back and forth between me and Izumi, and then puffed out her chest.

"Yeah, yeah, when I think about what Shinju said, it didn't seem like she wanted you to feel sad."

"What about my feelings?"

I wonder if Ryuuichi would feel sad if he knew how I felt for him.

Ughhh

I won't give up.

I've gotta do my best.

That was my only thought.

And I don't want anyone to feel sad about it.

"Izumi, I didn't want you to feel sad."

"Shinju"

"I do like Ryuuichi, but, I don't think he's interested in girls - he really only cares about his family."

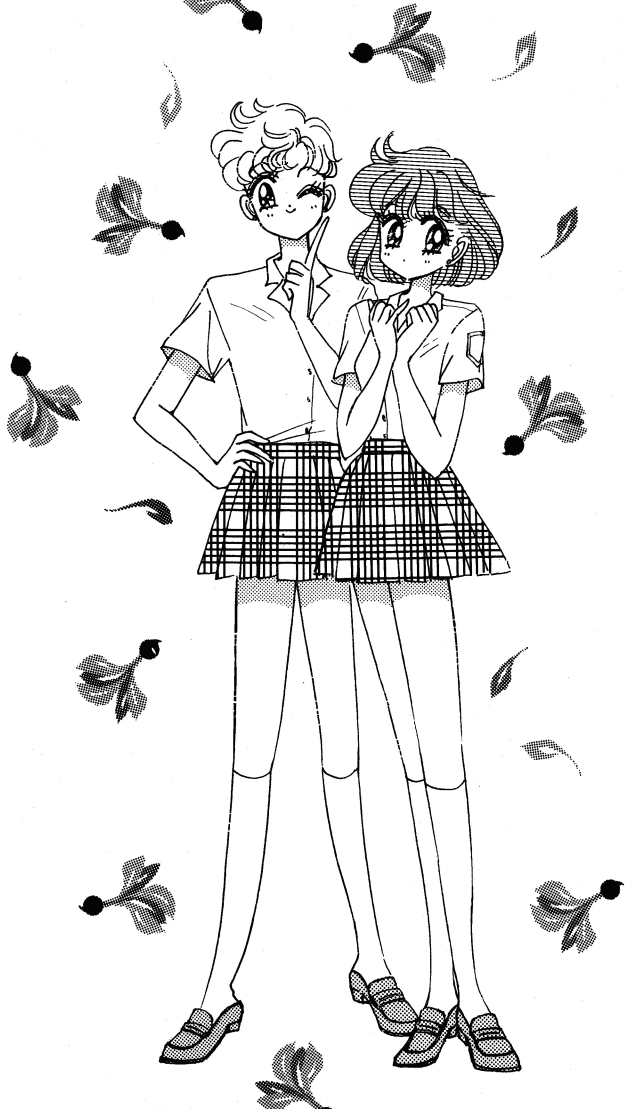
I was letting it all out.

"Wow, that's really kind of him don't you think, Shinju?"

"Definitely."

And with that, the tension was broken.





"He really is a good person"

A small smile returned to Izumi's face.

It was surprising how suddenly it came.

"I'm glad you said that, Shinju"

Izumi said to me.

I felt a lot better.

"Well, tomorrow we'll have to remind you again"

I started to tease her.

"Oh there's no point. I already know I'm involved in a one-sided romance...I just thought...he might like me back."

"Really?"

"Yeah."

I think she knew she wasn't the only one who liked him.

Because of the "Mermaid's Legend", I have to stay strong and go through this.

A Rival Appears!

"Hey, wasn't that Ryuichi down there having lunch?"

I looked out of the window.

Izumi turned as well.

"Oh, oh, where, where?"

"Look."

Izumi squinted, searching for his face in the crowd outside.

"I can't see him anywhere."

"Shinju, do you know if he's out there with someone? You look all pissed off."

"Nah, nothing like that. Just curious."

I decided to take a look outside. Back in the ocean world, I had really good eyesight.

And just like that.

I made a super shocked face, just like Izumi's.

"No way...it can't be...I didn't know Ryuuichi would be out there...who is that he's with?"

"I don't remember ever seeing her before...could it be, all this time, he's had someone he likes after all? I mean look, he's staring her right in the eyes!"

"R-really?"

I.

I thought I was the only one who looked into Ryuuichi's eyes like that.

I was shocked...

I see.

I guess I really do like Ryuuichi.

That must be why I'm feeling so upset.

But.

For the sake of the "Mermaid's Legend", I've got to do my best.

"Hey, who is he having lunch with?"

"I'm not sure - I couldn't get a good look at her face."

Once again.

Outside of the window.

On the lawn.

Staring at him.

Ryuichi ♡

He really was eating lunch on the lawn.

Without thinking, I sprang out the window and ran to him.

“Ryuuchiiiiiiii ~”

I.

I called out his name, shouting and waving my hands.

Glancing up from his lunch, Ryuichi noticed me coming towards him and met my gaze.

He was facing me now.

Or so you could say.

Actually, he seemed to be disregarding me completely.

I'd never been ignored by him before...

But.

So long as I can become the girl Ryuichi likes, I don't mind.

And I know he will.

Huh?

Suddenly, I noticed a girl sitting next to Ryuichi.

I couldn't see her from where I was before, because she was slightly behind him.

She seems quiet and sweet, and she's cute too.

But.

Hold up.

Stop.

Huh?

Was that just my imagination?

The girl sitting next to Ryuichi.

I could have sworn she was there just a moment ago.

And she was staring back at me...

Hmmmm.

I don't think I was just imagining it.

She was staring at me.

Hmmm.

But it wasn't a regular stare.

She was smiling.

A smile like she had just beaten me at something.

She had long straight black hair.

And dark eyes.

As deep as the ocean.

My grandma would have said that she was a dangerous sort of person.

Like the depths of the ocean.

I took a deep breath.

I wonder,

Why that girl was smiling at me like that.

Like she had won something.

Ahh!

She almost seemed like she was leaning up against Ryouichi while he spoke.

I'll try to see her around again.

Not exactly "try" - I'll definitely see that girl again!

A rival.

In my head.

Those five letters flashed before *my eyes*.

"Hey, did you see that girl? I heard she's a transfer student."



"Oh Harumi-chan, really?"

"I haven't seen her yet myself, but that's what I heard."

"I bet she'll end up in Ryuichi's class."

"What?! The same class as Ryuichi?!"

Suddenly, I had a bad feeling.

"I saw her lunch box, and it was amazing!"

Haruma suddenly raised her voice.

Maybe that's what the girl's victory while was over - and here I had forgotten all about lunch.

Seriously.

So I took a peek.

It was ultra-luxurious.

Was it this heavy before?

There is tons of food packed in here.

Ryuichi was eating his like it was really delicious.

But...

I don't really cook.

I wonder if I could even do it.

But.

I won't let this get me down.

I've got to succeed because of the "Mermaid's Legend".

"I won't give up. I'll have to learn how to make lunches."

I curled my hand into a fist.

I'll do my best!

I've gotta do my best...

"Shinju, you're strong."

"Huh?"

"You look really positive all of a sudden."

Izumi turned her gloomy face towards me.

"It's only because I have a mission."

"A mission?"

"Oh, um, it's nothing."

It's no good. It's no good.

Without thinking, I almost told someone all about the "Mermaid's Legend".

Ahh.

That's right.

That's a good idea.

Later that day, after school -

"Hey Izumi. Will you please do something for me? ♡"

I held out my hands in front of me like I was praying.

"Do something for you?"

"I want you to teach me how to make a lunch for Ryuichi."

And I bowed.

I lowered my head.

"O-okay. I'll show you how I always make mine."

And Izumi gave a little smile.

Izumi, you're so nice. ♡

That's reassuring.

"Do you want to come over to my house today?"

"Huh, to your house, Shinju?!"

"Yeah! Actually, I'm kind of freeloading over at the Kaidou's house."

"What the heck!?"

"It's fine, it's fine - come on."

I was basically forcing her to come.

Maybe we'd run into the girl who was sitting near Ryouichi while we're there.

And it'll all go smoothly.

And Ryouichi will fall in love with me.

And then, of course, he'd want to kiss me.

But for the time being, I'll settle for a *vow of love*.

Until then, I'll just remain cheerful and hopeful.

Then, I'll strike when the iron is hot!

My bag and Izumi's bag.

Were swaying back and forth behind us as we walked home.

## **MERMAID PANIC ①**

"Shinjuu?"

"Let's go, Izumi. ♡"

As I said it, Izumi's bag stopped swaying.

I had been walking along pretty briskly.

"Wait a minute, Shinju."

Izumi was almost having to chase me to keep up.

"Hurry up, Izumi, come on, come onnn~ AHHH!!!"

Thud.

"Owwwiiiiieee"

Dang, that hurts.

I tripped on a rock.

And banged my knee pretty bad.

I crossed my legs and held my knee tenderly while rocking back and forth.

On top of that.

Worse, everything from in my backpack spilled all down the stairs to my house.

And worse.

I had tripped Izumi too, and all her stuff was spilled all over too.

"I'm sorry, Izumi."

"It's okay, I'm fine, are you alright?"

Izumi is so nice.

"I didn't expect that, Shinju, are you really okay?"

"Yeah, I should have practiced more before zooming off like that."

"Practiced more?"

Izumi repeated back what I said to her.

Oh yeah.

It does sound a bit strange to say that you need practice running.

"Oh uhm, haha, it's nothing, really! Hahahahaha!"

I didn't feel the least bit exhausted at least.

"I- I see. Izumi, this may sound bad, but the truth is I'm clumsy and fall down all the time. Could you help me? I seem to always trip on stairs."

"It's fine, I'll go."

"Izumi."

"But, Shinju, you hurt your knee when you fell down didn't you? It's all red."

"Izumi..."

Izumi was walking around lightly, step step step, gingerly going down the stairs.

Izumi is really, really, really a good person.

If I could fulfill the "Mermaid's Legend" with another girl, then Izumi would definitely be the one I'd pick.

*Awwwww.*

Izumi is so nice, it's really made an impression on me.

"Yes."

*Before my eyes.*

Izumi bent over and picked up my notebook and ruler, which were scattered down the stairs.

"Thank you very much."

She's a really kind person.

I took back my notebook and ruler, and was so moved by Izumi's kindness.

!

Something fell out of my notebook.

A photo?

I picked it up, and it was definitely a photograph.

A photo of Ryuichi.

But how?

How did a photo of Ryuichi find its way in there?

Man, I want to keep this. ♡

I'm lucky I'm in good company when I found this.

Izumi was busy looking in her own notebook.



Izumi seemed like she was waiting for something.

But why?

In an instant, I felt a pang of doubt.

There wasn't a clear answer.

I don't know much because this is my first experience with love.

I love Ryuichi, so I want to keep his photo.

But Izumi likes Ryuichi too...

The person Izumi loves is Ryuichi.

I don't know why I wasn't able to admit that earlier.

But.

Izumi's love is unrequited. And she's a family-oriented girl, exactly the kind he said he'd like.

Maybe Ryuichi doesn't really want that.

But that's what Ryuichi said when we talked about it.

Her face looked so sad and disappointed when talking about her unrequited love.

But,

But,

There's nothing I can say to help exactly...

I wish there was something I could say to help with her liking Ryuichi so much.

But...

I wonder if I'm in the same boat, in love with Ryuichi, carrying his photo around with me.

I can't confess my feelings to anyone, and I can't give up.

I can't confess anything to anyone until this is all over, I think.

And because I can't confess anything, there's no one who can help me.

This really must be love.

**Could it be, a black pearl?!**

Hey.

My *mechanical pencil* is gone.

I bet I lost it in one of the hallways at school.

I squatted down to search for it in my bag.

Everything else is there...

Izumi is...

Under the stairs.

Waiting for me to finish picking up all the things I dropped again.

I,

Looked at my photo of Ryouichi.

So Izumi wouldn't get upset, I shoved it into the pocket of my school uniform.

Even though it was just one photo, my pocket felt heavy.

What should I do?

Today, Izumi promised that she'd teach me how to cook.

"You're Shinju Himeno, right?"

Huh?

Someone was standing behind me.

Suddenly, I turned *my* head as they said my name.

And they met my eyes.

It was the girl with the jet black straight hair.

With jet black eyes.

I feel like I've seen her somewhere before...

Oh.

Ohhh.

Ohhhhhh.

I remembered.

It's that girl with the smirk like she won something.

It's the girl who was having lunch with Ryunichi.

"I knew it, you are Shinju."

"How do you know my name?"

"Too hee hee."

What the heck.

I asked her a question, and she just laughed in response.

How rude.

She was looking at me like my silence was cute.

Her true personality didn't change at all, though.

She must be the new transfer student everyone has been talking about.

Huh?

There's something shining.

On her chest.

A necklace.

A pearl?

Just like mine?

No.

It's different.

I only saw it for a second but.

It wasn't pink.

It was a totally different color.

It was a color like the depths of the sea.

Dark black...

My necklace has a pink pearl.

But I was surprised at how similar her necklace is to mine.

A black pearl...

My grandma said something about that once...

It had to do with the sea witch Wyndia.

She said she used magic with her black pearl.

I wonder if the black pearl on this girl's necklace is magic too...

No.

It can't be.

I'm overthinking this.

Oh! ♡

I found it!

Ryuichi.

He must be on his way home after extracurriculars.

Lots of people were clamoring down the hallway with him.

But.

My eyes instantly focused in on Ryuichi.

"Ryuichi! ♡"

I called to him.

Actually, I kind of shouted down the hallway to him.

But, the girl in front of me didn't seem to notice Ryuichi.

When I called Ryuichi's name, he jumped and looked around.

"Hey, what are you doing shouting at Ryuichi like that?"

"W-well, it's crowded so..."

"If he loved you, he'd notice you right away and you wouldn't need to shout."



That's what Izumi said.

At lunch.

Outside the window.

The first person to look for Ryuichi was Izumi.

I wouldn't have noticed him without her saying something.

And so.

Although Ryuichi makes me happy, he can't be mine alone.

But.

I wonder if Ryuichi could at least return *my* feelings.

Ryuichi.

By my side.

Thinking of him next to another girl sends a jolt of pain through my chest.

"What are you doing?"

"Ah, Ryuichi! ♡"

She was smiling at Ryuichi.

"I'm sorry."

That girl.

She's totally different around him than around me.

She almost seems kind of cute.

"Miss Shinju, today Ryuichi and I made a promise to each other, and so, I apologize for my rudeness earlier."

Whaaaaat.

A promise?!

No way.

I can't believe it.

What the hell.

"Big brother"

Suddenly, Seiko appeared and stood right next to Ryuichi.

The freshman classroom had just dismissed.

I can't believe they didn't get out until we were already dismissed.

But, that's Seiko for you. *An overachiever.*

She really does love her big brother, though.

"Seiko, what are you doing here?"

"Hey, big brother, who is that girl with you? Are you two going somewhere together?"

Even though I wanted to hear his response, I could tell Seiko was intently listening too.

"You goof. You know I'm part of the committee in my class who does orientation for all the transfer students."

Ryunichi explained to Seiko.

Oh.

Thank god.

But,

That girl's smile - like she had won something.

It bothers me.

Ryuichi.

I took a final glance at him.

He turned his head back to glance at me too.

And he turned and faced me while walking backwards.

For a moment.

He really looked at me.

It almost seemed like he really took notice of me for the first time.

"The Mermaid's Legend"

Once every 1000 years.

A Mermaid Princess becomes human.

If she finds the person she loves by her 16th birthday.

And makes a vow of love.

But,

If by her 16th birthday she doesn't find her lover,

And doesn't make a vow of love,

And doesn't get a kiss on the lips...

Then, the mermaid world will disappear.

And so,

I can't give up!

If I can become the girl Ryunichi loves, I'll be OK!

It'll be okay...right?

But,

In my heart,

From the first moment we met, my heart has made me wonder.

What if he never falls in love with me... or what if he decides he hates me... what will I do?

Don't give up, Princess!

Cooking in the Kaidou family kitchen.

Practicing making tomorrow's lunches.

I'm doing OK at making chicken katsu.

But, it doesn't look anything like the kind Izumi makes.

Then again, Izumi is 100% the family-oriented type.

She wouldn't be the type to make Ryusachi complain.

Actually, I think the two of them would get along really well.

But,

"N-no!!! The water isn't supposed to boil over like that!!"

"Shinju, if we don't use water, then there's no way we can cook."

"But I don't want to."

"Is there some reason you're against using water?"

Izumi made a mysterious face.

But if I touch water, I'll turn back into a mermaid.

And I don't want anyone to find out that I'm a mermaid.

So,

Cooking is hard.

I think I'll stick to chopping vegetables, and leave the washing up and anything else to do with water to someone else.

This is really important, so I can't mess it up and forget.

"What are you doing, Shinju?"

"Well, You said if I don't use water, I can't really cook anything."

Lunch with the transfer student girl.

In my head, I kept thinking of her over and over.

She was really gorgeous.

She looked really sweet too.



I glanced over at Izumi's lunch, and it looked really good.

Even though I can't use water, I shouldn't just give up.

I don't want Rynnichi to hate me...

I can't let anything other than him liking me be an option.

So, I've got to become the kind of girl that Rynnichi likes.

What...

What should I do?

Izumi's "love".

The transfer student girl's "love".

Seiko's "love".

And my "Love" too -

"Izumi, I can't give up."

I've got to be true to myself.

"Shinju?"

"I'm never going to be family-oriented, so I give up on that."

Really.

I can't be around water.

There's nothing to be done about that.

"Are you going to give up on Ryouichi, too?"

Well...

"I mean, I can do my best at cooking, but I think others will still be better than me at that..."

And that's true but...

I.

I don't want to force someone to like me.

And when I met Ryouichi for the first time,

I realized I liked him.

I'll confess.

I'm shaking.

But.

I think I'll be okay.

But.

He might hate me.

But.

Maybe it'll make Ryouichi like me.

"But, that's no good."

"I'm being serious. I really do like Ryouichi, I think."

"I like him. But..."

If even one drop of water touches me, I'll definitely turn into a mermaid.

And I can't let him see me as anything other than human.

I can't give up.

It can't be helped.

But -

My heart stopped.

Is this - "The Legend of the Mermaid"?

Maybe my feelings are wrong.

Maybe I've misunderstood how I really feel.

Bam.

The front door suddenly slammed.

Soon after, Seiko's voice followed.

"Big brother, are you home yet?"

"Seiko-chan?"

What is she doing here.

She was huffing and wheezing.

Did she run home?

She seemed completely out of breath.

Her face looked blue.

"Where's my brother?"

"He's not home yet"

"I saw him waiting for someone at the school gate, and thought maybe he had gotten home and came in through the back."

Seiko.

She was always waiting around for Ryouichi.

She really does love him.

"Before I came home, I thought I saw that girl he was hanging around before."

"The girl from before?"

I'm sure she meant that transfer student girl.

She was with him...

Seiko had explained that Ryouichi was on a class committee to take all transfer students through orientation.

But,

The clock on the wall.

Showed that it was nearly 6 PM.

There was no way he was still doing an orientation by now.

"I can't believe it, jeeezeez. He should be home by now."

Seiko hit the nail on the head.

"JEEZ!"

Without thinking, I shouted.

Seiko jumped, and made water splash near me.

Oh no, I'm in danger now.

I noticed that Seiko was all wet.

"Ah, sorry, it was raining on my way home."

Rain?

Oh, it is raining.

I can see it outside of the window.

It's still raining.

"Hey, Shinju, you dropped something."

Huh?

Dropped something...?

Izumi looked thoughtfully at me.

And suddenly I had a really bad feeling.

"What is this?"

"Oh, thanks Izumi. I'll pick it up."

That's what I said.

But it was already too late.

Izumi saw what I dropped.

"Shinju, that picture..."

I knew I had a bad feeling for a reason.

My picture of Ryuichi had fallen on the ground.

Izumi turned to me with a shocked face.

I could tell from her face that she was upset.

"I'm sorry...When you dropped your bag, Izumi, it fell out."

That part of what I was saying was true.

"I just forgot to give it back to you."

"Well, now I guess you know how I really feel."

"I knew about it even before this."

Izumi untied her apron.

All the time I had been talking to Izumi about Ryuichi, she had felt the same way about him.

Izumi's face looked sad.

In all the time I thought about Ryuichi, I never wanted her to make that face.

"I know that the person you liked, Izumi...was Ryuichi, all along..."



Izumi nodded her head.

Izumi must really, really, really be in love with Ryuichi.

"Well then - why did you say you wanted my help with him?"

"When you knew...that I wasn't even brave enough to confess how I feel about him..."

"Because I thought that out of the two of us, Ryuichi definitely likes you better."

Izumi smiled as soon as I said that.

"I'm pretty sure Ryuichi likes you more than me, Shinja."

Izumi thinks that Ryuichi likes me more than her.

Secretly I agreed.

But,

I wouldn't let her know that.

The rain outside of the window.  
Kept getting heavier.

"What's wrong, Shinja? Are you waiting around to welcome Ryuichi home?"

"It's just that, I can't go out there."

"Why not? I don't think you'll get locked out."

"I just can't go out."

*If even one drop of the rain touches me, I'll turn into a mermaid.*

*And another drop of rain would turn me back into a human again.*

*Anyway, the humans definitely must not see me in my mermaid form,*

*And then I won't be the girl that Ryunichi likes.*

*He won't like me at all.*

*So I've just got to hope that he likes me like this instead.*

*I am a Princess, after all.*

*The one the "Mermaid's Legend" foretells of.*

*I thought that being more like Izumi would help my chances.*

*But maybe that's not enough.*

The Sea Witch Wyndia?!

Splash.

I swooshed my tail, and water sprayed everywhere.

In the ocean.

I can swim freely.

The night sky is clearer than yesterday.

But it looks like it might rain.

On days like this, it's safer to just stay in the water.

Swimming in the ocean feels good.

It really does.

When I'm in here I feel like a bird in the sky.

It's definitely better to be a mermaid than a human.

*Ac-tu-all-y.*

It's been a while since I was a mermaid.

"Oh, Shinju, hey it's been a while!"

I kept hearing the same thing over and over from all the fish as they passed by.

"Oh hey, good to see you again!"

*Again and again.*

It was nice to swim among them again.

"Hey Shinju, have you gotten a kiss yet?"

*Jeez.*

If I had become a full human I wouldn't be swimming here.

Being here felt like I had to give a report.

"Ha ha ha..."

I laughed like nothing was the matter.

But, I had to at least give an update to the fish.

"Oh I see, so you haven't yet..."

I could hear the disappointment in their voices.

"I'm sorry."

"It's okay, it's alright. You've only just started out, after all."

That's true.

I did just turn 15.

And the "Legend of the Mermaid" has really only just begun.

I.

I'm not the girl that Ryuichi likes yet.

So it can't be helped that we're not in love yet.

I'll have to confess it to him somehow.

And if he rejects me I'll be sad.

I just didn't expect to have a rival for his affections.

When I look around, I see a lot of people that I could "like" I suppose.

Maybe my "liking" someone isn't the same as real "love".

If I don't like them, and I'm not in love with them, maybe there's no point in trying.

I.

I would really like to find someone to love.

Yeah.

So do your best, Shinju.

I've got to return to the human world now.

If my grandma finds me here she'll be really upset.

But you know, it's really nice to go out for a swim for a while.

Bobbing up and down between the waves.

I swam up and peeked my head above water.

Peek peek.

I took a look around.

The wind is really strong today.

I had a feeling the waves were going to get even taller.

The clouds above me were swirling around and getting darker, and I had the feeling it was going to rain soon.

This is not good.

If it rains, I'll get all wet.

And if I get wet, I won't be able to transform back into a human from my mermaid form.

My pink pearl necklace.

This is what I use to transform into a human.

But.

I've got to head back to the Kaidou residence.

If I don't hurry, I won't be able to see Ryouichi.

Or Seiko.

I wouldn't be able to see Izumi again either.

And Izumi is my friend now.

But.

I really want her to keep doing her best for Ryouichi.

She can't give up to that new transfer student girl.

The early morning coastline.

I don't think I'll run into anyone here.

But someone is walking alongside it from a distance.

Ryouichi.

It's just like the first time we met.

Walking his dog along the beach.

But Ryouichi...isn't alone...

Huh?

Who is that?



That looks like that new transfer student girl.

...No way...

As she's walking along, I can see that her whole body is covered by a black aura.

It must be because of her black pearl's magic that she was able to transform into a human, into looking like an ordinary high school student.

I swam closer.

I could clearly see her now.

She was definitely enveloped in a black aura.

"Shinju, that's Wyndia."

"Huh?"

Wyndia, as in the Sea Witch Wyndia?

But.

It can't be.

"I bet you she used her black learn magic to turn into a human so she could get in your way, Shinju."

"No way."

Without thinking I blurted it out.

But I guess that explains why that girl is so cocky.

And why she knows about me.

I could see something glimmer off of her chest.

It was her black pearl necklace.

There was no mistaking it.

The Sea Witch Wyndia appeared in our world in a bubble 1,000 years ago.

And when she came in her bubble -

When the Sea Witch Wyndia appeared, she plunged our blue oceans into a world of darkness in an instant.

Using her powers, the Sea Witch Wyndia almost destroyed our world.

And the "Mermaid's Legend" is what stopped her.

The Sea Witch Wyndia, wielding her black pearl magic.

"Shinju, he's in danger."

"Huh?"

"Wyndia is going to manipulate him to do what she wants, Shinju, by any means necessary."

By any means necessary.

W-what does that mean?!

The wind started to get stronger.

And the waves grew taller and taller.

The wind felt like it was blowing out of control.

The waves got bigger and bigger.

Ryuichi glanced over to look at them.

"Check out those waves - "

"Wyndia is making the wind stronger, he's in danger!"

"Wow, check that out, the waves are getting really huge."

I would hate for Ryuichi to get injured and have it be my fault.

Yeah.

If these waves keep getting bigger, he's going to get hurt.

The ocean was getting so restless, it was pulling me under.

But I can't let him die.

I can't let this be my fault.

I don't know if I'm in love with Ryuichi or not, but I've got to do something to save him.

Maybe my "liking him" isn't really "love" but...

I can't let anything bad happen to him because of me.

And so.

What the heck am I gonna do now?!

"Ryuichi!"

Wyndia called out Ryuichi's name.

At the sound of her voice, Ryuichi turned to face her.

And in that moment -

NOOOOOO!!

A whirlpool formed in the waves.

And it sprang up to attack Ryuichi.

In the middle of the ocean.

The water swirled around Ryuichi, and pulled him underwater.

Fwahahaha, bwahahahahaha!

Wyndia cackled and he was sucked under.

As she shook with laughter it glimmered on her chest.

The black pearl necklace.

Wyndia's chest glimmered,

And her form

Began to change.

Her jet black hair grew longer and longer.

And her eyes grew narrower.

And then,

It got dark, and her voice grew deep.

"I'm going to kill the man you love, Mermaid Princess. And the 'Mermaid's Legend' will be over, and the whole ocean will be mine!"

Wyndia turned to face me, with a gloating smile on her face.

"Moron!"

I screamed at Wyndia with all my might.

"What did you say?!"

"I'm not even really in love with Ryouichi!"



I've got to say something.

Something in my chest was crying out.

"Don't lie!"

"But it's true."

I

Was getting angry.

I puffed up my chest.

And for some reason.

A tear.

One after another.

Falling down my face.

Tears like baby pearls.

I realized I must really love Ryuichi afterall.

And because of that fact, I was crying.



"I've gotta save Ryouichi!"

"But Shinju, if he sees you like that..."

I was still in Mermaid form.

I wouldn't be able to see Ryouichi anymore.

But.

The waves were overtaking Ryouichi.

And humans can't breathe underwater.

If I don't help him, and quick, he'll die.

He's going to have to see me in my Mermaid form...

"I have an idea. If I break Wyndia's black pearl necklace, surely that'll interrupt her magic spell!"

"But, what should I do..."

I was in such a panic, I couldn't think of how best to do it.

"Shinju, we'll chew through her necklace so you can go and save him!"

"Everyone...thank you."

"Leave it to us!"

And the little fish swam off to approach Wyndia.

To chew through the chain of her necklace.

A moment later.

"Gwahhhhh..."

Wyndia cried out.

And her body started to shrink, smaller and smaller.

It sounded like her death rattle.

But, if we don't want our Mermaid world to plunge into darkness, we're not done with her yet.

The whole ocean, and everyone in it, could die.

I sped off to find Ryouichi.

He's going to see me as a Mermaid.

And we probably won't see each  
other again.

He was deep, deep in the ocean.

And I swam down after him.

*Awaken, with a kiss of love!*

*"The Mermaid's Legend".*

*1000 years ago,*

*The Mermaid Princess became human.*

*She found her beloved before her 16th birthday.*

*And made a pledge of love,*

*And then,*

*They exchanged a kiss of love.*

*But,*

*If I don't find my beloved before my 16th birthday, then -*

If I don't make a pledge of love then -

And if I don't exchange a kiss with my lover then -

The mermaids, and everyone in the ocean will disappear.

Everyone in the depths of our ocean bubble will die.

The world of Mermaids will be totally destroyed.

And Mermaids will cease to exist.

And that's not all.

The Sea Witch Wyndia will plunge the entire ocean, perhaps even the entire world, into the depths of darkness.

The oceans will all turn black.

The fish.

And the corals.

And the shellfish.

Everyone.

Everyone.

Everyone will die.

And the ocean will become the property of the Sea Witch Wyndia.

For 1000 years, the Mermaids have been waiting for the Sea Witch Wyndia to return to threaten them once again.

"H-huh?"

"Oh, I'm glad I found you."

"I..."

Ryunichi was dripping wet, and looked shocked when he saw me.

It seemed that when he was washed ashore he had lost his memory.

I am so relieved.

"Who are you...?"

"Um, I'm the girl from the next class over....Izumi Imada."

"You saved me..."

"I-it was nothing..."

Izumi's face,

Turned bright red,

Hang in there, Izumi.

But I had a good feeling about this.

Thank you, Izumi.

The truth is,

When I pulled Ryouichi out of the ocean.

I turned back into a human, and then called Izumi.

"One of our friends from school is passed out on the beach." I said.

And of course, I hope that there is a happy ending for Izumi and Ryouichi.

I hope Izumi can tell me about it some day.

As for me, I've got to return to the ocean.

So now, I've got to go back to being a Mermaid.

I've got to go undercover to check out the situation.

And honestly, I don't have a moment to spare.

Something has been reaaaaaaaallyy bothering me.

"I could have sworn that I met someone underwater, but my head is all fuzzy."

When he said he met someone, could it be that he was talking about me?

How terrible.

But.

I guess.

I've got to remember that I'm really a Mermaid.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Sigh.



Wanting to See Him One More Time ♡

"I'm home! ♡"

I rushed through the door excitedly.  
And ran into the living room.

"Moron, where are you running off to exactly?"

It was.  
Ryunichi's voice that called out to me.

But,

I couldn't meet his glance.

"No matter where it is, you should slow down and walk."

I kinda lied.

Actually, it's more like I haven't told you the rest of the story.

I looked out of the window.

The ocean.

Still shining as blue and quietly as ever.

I recently

Came back to live with the Kaidou family.

But.

Ryuichi doesn't have any memory of seeing me as a mermaid.

Which is no problem.

But I came for another reason.

Well.

I don't know why exactly.

I just wanted to see Ryuichi again.

I really, really, wanted to come back to this place.

I.

Really want to hurry and find the  
person who will be my lover.

But the Sea Witch Wyndia's been  
getting in the way of that plan.

So I've been doing nothing on that  
front, basically.

And really.

All I know is that I'm the Mermaid  
Princess.

Anyway, I'll keep doing my best! ♡

t o b e c o n t i n u e d

## Afterward

Everyone, did you like the story?

Did Ms. Koizumi's story surprise you at all?

Ah! ☆

I can't tell you what will happen next.

You'll have to check out Ms. Koizumi's next book.

In the next volume, she'll tell the story of what happened with Izumi.

There's a lot of school romance in the next volume too.

And if you're interested, Ms. Koizumi even goes into more detail about Izumi's backstory in the next volume (but why would you care about that when there's an epic legend going on?).

Anyway, definitely check out the next volume.

There's a lot more Mermaid Panic next time!

Hi there, Marie Koizumi here. I wrote this series after reading Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid", which I absolutely adored. His version doesn't have a happy ending exactly, so I got to thinking about making an alternate story that did have a happy ending.

Anyway,

That's how I came about writing this book about mermaids, and lucky me, I get to work with the incredible Naoko Takeuchi who is taking care of all of the illustrations. ♡

Mermaids are supernatural beings, and it's a lot of fun to write about them. The series I'm creating continues on –

It's a lot of fun to develop all of hte characters.

And it's a lot of fun for me, personally, to work on this.

Anyway, I have a lot of people to thank for making this story possible.

First is my manager, Mr. Murai.

He's my most important, most important, most important person in this because he gives me so much support.

Also, Ms Naoko's manager Mr. Osabu has been great - he's been bringing us hunch!

I'm also terribly grateful to Ms. Naoko herself, since she's been readjusting her whole schedule to help me when it gets busy.

Thank you all so much.

*And of course.*

Ms. Naoko. ♡

Thank you.

I love you.

Even in tough and busy times, she's done an amazing job with all of the illustrations and with helping me.

I'm pretty lucky, don't you think?

I'm sorry, I'm prattling on.

I'm just glad we're friends.

Anyway, we're done with the first book!

We'll have to do some research at a delicious restaurant.

And then we'll go shopping afterwards.

And maybe even go on a vacation together (How about Hawaii?? Let's go to Hawaii)

Yes!

Actually, I have a free pass to go for a swim to a hotel pool. Let's go there together!

We'll wear baby pink swimsuits.

Sounds good, right? ♡

*An-y-way*

Thank you for reading this book.

Thank you so much.

I appreciate your patronage.

The next book will go on sale on October 4th.

There will be a lot of school romance stories in the next volume.

So be sure to pick up "Mermaid Panic" volume 2 when it goes on sale.

Don't forget, be sure to mark October 4th on your calendars.

Until then!

We'll meet again in October, I look forward to it!

**Marie Kozumi**

So, what did you think of Ms.  
Koizumi's book "Mermaid  
Panic" Volume 1?

Ms. Koizumi and Ms. Takeuchi  
both send their thanks for  
checking it out!

If you want to write them a fan  
letter, here is the address:

Attention: Marie Koizumi  
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