

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.

“Waah!”

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 Ryuichi's expression turn confused.

But I can't let that affect me.

"I love you, Ryuichi."

Ryuichi'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 Shinju."

Is what he'll say. ♡

That means we've exchanged our vows of love!

Now all that's left...

Is the kiss.

Aaaaaaaah~~~~♡

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!