

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, Ryuichi 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."

"Tha'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 Ryuuchi 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"

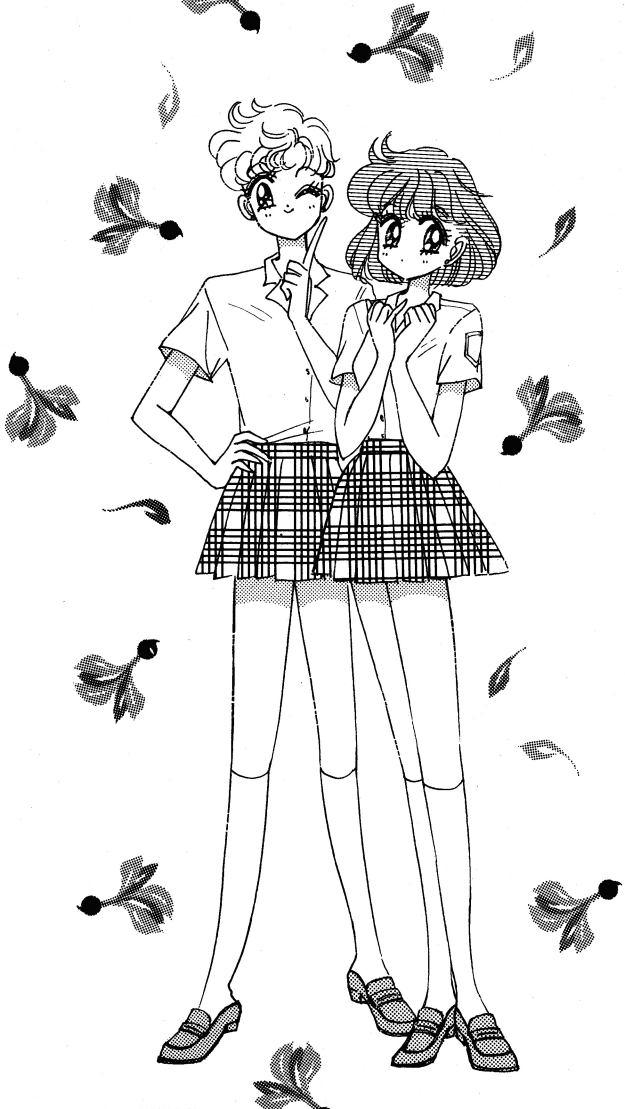
"I do like Ryuuchi, but, I don't think he's interested in girls - he really only cares about his family."

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.