

Utsuro no Hako: Diamond Days

I don't think there are feelings that will never change, except perhaps in an endlessly repeating world.

"Kiri, we have to change, too, you know?" I urged her countless times, but each and every time, my childhood friend Kokone Kirino would only evade my pleas with an uneasy smile.

We were already in the second year of middle school. This is probably the time in your life when you become the most aware of the opposite sex. But Kiri kept hiding behind me and didn't even try to make new friends. It was no good for her, and I couldn't endure it any longer.

I have to take action, I thought and introduced her to Haruaki Usui, one of my best friends. His natural cheerfulness allowed him to quickly get along with her despite her reserved personality. The time that the three of us spent together kept increasing. Bringing in Haru had been a thorough success.

"Kiri, what would you do if Haru confessed to you? Would you date him?"

One day, I asked her that question; ready to be released from my role as her childhood friend.

"Why would you say that, Dai-chan? You of all...?"

That was when I finally realized my idiocy and understood the true state of affairs.

Indeed, there were no unchangeable feelings. Kiri's feelings had changed without me noticing. While her attitude toward me had stayed the same, her underlying feelings had changed since her younger days.

Likewise—that also held true for me.

"...No, that's not what I was trying to get at. I was going to tell you *not* to respond to his confession. Don't date him... is what I wanted to say..."

As pathetic as it sounded, I only noticed my own feelings after seeing Kiri getting along so well with Haru. I didn't like to see her getting close to some other guy. I found myself jealous of Haru even though I had pulled the strings to set them up myself. Seconds later, I became terribly ashamed of the egoistical request I had just made.

However, Kiri just laughed blissfully in response to that egoistical request.

Seeing her smile, a thought crossed my mind.

Although I had no foundation for thinking this, my opinion remained constant: there are no feelings that never change.

But we can still stay together forever without any changes. That's what I thought.

-This is Eiji Mikage's contribution to Dengeki's "Tsunageyou! Kibou no Kizuna!"—a book that contains short stories and illustrations from over a hundred contributors. The money raised by this book was donated to help the victims of the Tsunami catastrophe.

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