

好きっていいなよ

S a y " I l o v e y o u " .

A Heartwarming Story of Young Love

By Kaitlin Meaney

Well, it's February, the month of Valentine's Day! I know it might not be the best holiday for some of us but the anime I will be introducing you to this month will surely make you feel the warm and fuzzies!

This month I'll be reviewing a series called *Say I Love You* (*Sukkitte Ii na yo* in Japanese) Yet another series that I re-watched for this article, this show had such an affect on me when I first watched it that I had been itching to talk about it. Thankfully I have a way of reviewing it now so get ready for some possible fangirling!

Anyone ever had a relationship in high school that helped you understand how relationships work? If not, then this show will show you what it's like. It centers around a girl named Mei Tachibana who has given up on making friends because she thinks that any friend she makes will just betray her and take advantage of her friendship. She has grown up being bullied because of her anti-social behaviour but she prefers to be alone. That is, until Yamato Kurosawa, the most popular guy in school, takes notice of her. They begin a budding romance that happens throughout the course of the series learning about what it really means to be in love and how it works. Mei also befriends other classmates through Yamato and begins trusting the people around her once again.



(From left: Aiko, Mei, Yamato, Asami and Nakanishi)

Now, in shoujo anime (anime aimed towards girls) the story often ends once the relationship between the two love interests begins. In this series, it begins the relationship very early. They finally meet in the first episode and they start dating in the third. Due to this fact we get to see their relationship grow and blossom while things beyond their control are threatening to pull them apart. They power through once they realize that there is more to a relationship than they thought. I found myself spending a lot of my time watching this saying to these characters in my thoughts through all the misunderstandings: *just talk, that's all you need to do to fix this issue*. But that is something they have to learn themselves rather than being told. The part where this happens for the first time after Yamato and Mei have begun their relationship. A model named Megumi comes around and recruits Yamato so model with her. He decides to do so because Mei encourages him. Rumours fly that Yamato is practically cheating on Mei and their friends convince them to talk. The episode ends with Mei saying that that they're both new to love which is why everything is so scary. I found this to be my favourite part of the series because it was so relatable. Misunderstandings happen a lot in relationships and communication is important to prevent them. I really love that this was used in the series because it realistically conveys how naïve these characters are and how much more they need to learn as they go along.

Mei is a fascinating character, in my opinion. Heck the first time she speaks to Yamato she kicks him in the face because his friend Nakanishi pulled on her skirt. She grows so much throughout the series, even in the first few episodes where she makes new friends while dating Yamato and even realizing her feelings for him. She is very real and honest and helps her friends in anyway she can, while learning that she must help herself as well. Help herself to understand that she needs to trust Yamato. When something happens between her and Yamato she always assumes it's her fault and she overthinks everything. In the final episode when Yamato is home sick and Mei decides to visit him and his sister makes her think that he doesn't want to see her. She goes on to think that he's mad at her for other things she did that might have angered him. Honestly I found myself telling the screen, *No Mei he loves you, he wouldn't say that come on!* But this show, obviously, creates drama simply to fill the length of the episodes but at times it does leave you in enough suspense to keep you interested. Wondering what each character is really thinking is fascinating. Every character is relatable. They all have their own issues and regrets they have to work through. In the end they all realize, Mei especially, that one doesn't need to suffer alone, it's okay to rely on the people who care about you.

If anyone reading this had relationships in high school this show will for sure resonate with you. Love is a fragile thing and in those developmental years of high school it is a learning experience and that's what this anime is trying to convey with this sweet story of two young people. It's an innocent and beautiful love story that I encourage anyone to watch single or not.