

If You Love Me
by Julia Miller

Scene 1. Ms Parrot's study

Ms Parrot: One of the most interesting shows I know is a television dating show called 'If You Love Me'. I was once invited to be part of the audience . . .

Scene 2. The dating show

Oscar Cicada: Welcome to our show, 'If You Love Me'. We have one handsome man and three lovely ladies.

Wong: Hello. I'm Wong. I'm from China. I'm 28 years old. I studied maths at the University of TransOceania last year. If you were there, you might have seen me.

Oscar Cicada: Ladies, if you like this man, please vote now.

(The girls vote.)

Oscar Cicada: Two of the girls have voted for you and want to know you better. Who do you want to talk to first?

Wong: Number 3.

Girl number 3: I like you, even though you studied maths and I studied history! If my mother were here, she would say you are a nice boy! I want to learn more about your life.

Oscar Cicada: Let's look at your first video clip.

(We see a video of a Chinese house and some people standing in the water fishing.)

Wong: I was quite poor when I was younger. We lived in a small house and I had to help my parents all day. Even if I had homework, I still helped them with their fish farm. I had seventy fish tanks in my bedroom! If I can look after a fish, I can look after a girl!

Girl number 2: I'd like to ask a question. If you had had more money when you were younger, would you have bought a fast car?

Wong: If I had had more money, I would have given it to my parents. And maybe I would have bought a fast car too! But whenever I see someone in trouble, I like to help them. I think you should always stop and help someone, unless they are too dangerous. If you always give, you will always have.

Oscar Cicada: That sounds very generous. Let's see another video clip.

(We see a video of someone walking through snow.)

Wong: I want to find a girlfriend, otherwise I will be lonely. My ideal girl is honest. There's a saying that if you walk on snow, you cannot hide your footprints. Provided that we are both honest with each other and communicate well, I think we could be very happy.

Girl number 3: What would you do if you found your ideal girl?

Wong: I'm in Australia now, so I'd take her to China.

Girl number 3: I always try to be honest and kind, if I can be. But I have a pet snake. Would that be a problem?

Wong: Yes. I have lots of fish at home, as well as some pet mice.

(We see a picture of a snake with a mouse in its mouth.)

Oscar Cicada: If I'm correct, you have no more questions for him. Wong, is she the girl for you?

Wong: If you heat water to 100°C it boils. If you see the right girl, you know. As long as she doesn't bring her pet snake to live with us, she's the one for me.

Oscar Cicada (to Girl number 3): Are you willing to leave the snake behind?

Girl number 3 (after thinking for a moment): Yes.

Oscar Cicada: Go and take her hand if you want to go with her. If not, say 'thank you' and leave without her.

(Wong approaches Girl number 3 and takes her hand. They smile lovingly at each other.)

Oscar Cicada (to Girl number 3): You made a big sacrifice for him. Is he worth it?

Girl number 3: Yes.

Oscar Cicada: Congratulations. I hope you both will be very happy. You (pointing to Girl number 3) will have a pair of fashion shoes for your first date. And for your holiday in Harbin we have these nice boots.

Girl number 2: Oh. Harbin is my home town!

Scene 3. Ms Parrot's study

Ms Parrot: What a lovely couple! And what a lovely show. 'If you love me'. There were lots of 'if' expressions in it. We can use 'if' in lots of ways: to talk about facts, predictions and imaginary situations. English learners are often taught four different kinds of conditional sentences, called *zero*, *first*, *second* and *third* conditional. For example:

Wong: If you heat water to 100°C it boils.

Ms Parrot: That's a zero conditional. It describes a scientific fact – something that happens any time. And here's a first conditional:

Wong: If you always give, you will always have.

Ms Parrot: This is making a strong prediction about the future. And here's a second conditional:

Girl number 3: What would you do if you found your ideal girl?

Ms Parrot: That second conditional is used for something that is possible. Wong *might* meet his ideal girl. It's what we call a hypothetical situation, because it could possibly happen. And here is a third conditional:

Wong: If I had had more money, I would have given it to my parents. And maybe I would have bought a fast car too.

Ms Parrot: The young man is talking about an impossible, totally imaginary situation. He didn't have much money, so he did not buy a fast car.

Ms Parrot: That's called a counterfactual situation, because it didn't happen and we can't change the past. You might be familiar with zero, first, second and third conditionals. However, there are many *more* kinds of conditional sentences, using all kinds of tenses, as we saw in the dating show. Look at the show again and see how many you can identify.

This chart [on the English for Uni website] divides conditionals up into nine types, based on whether they are factual, predicting the future, hypothetical or counterfactual. You can see that lots of tenses are possible. This example uses a modal verb, 'should', and a present tense:

Wong: I think you should always stop and help someone, unless they are too dangerous.

Ms Parrot: We can also use other words instead of 'if' in a conditional clause. For example, we could say 'unless', 'provided that' or 'whenever'. There are lots of examples on the English for Uni website (www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni), and you can see the chart in more detail there too. If you've learnt something more about conditionals today, I'll be very happy!