There's Something Wrong With Me

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1521.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Queerphobia
Categories:	Hetero (F/M), Asexual, Aromantic
Fandom:	Lucky Star (Anime & Manga)
Relationships:	Hiiragi Tsukasa / Original Character(s), Hiiragi Tsukasa & Original Character(s), Hiiragi Tsukasa & Izumi Konata
Characters:	Hiiragi Tsukasa, Izumi Konata, Hiiragi Kagami, Original Character(s), Original Female Character(s), Original Male Character(s)
Additional Tags:	Post-Canon, College | University, 2000s, late 2000s specifically, Asexual Character(s), Aromantic Character(s), Aromantic Asexual Character(s), Angst, Angst and Drama, Angst with a Happy Ending, Self-Discovery, One-Sided Relationship, Break Up, Canon Compliant, or at least it tries to be, Autistic Character(s)
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-11-08 Words: 5,878 Chapters: 1/3

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Summary

Around a month into her first year at university, Tsukasa starts going out with a boy. Though inexperienced as she may be, the tips and tricks she's learnt from watching romance movies seem to be doing their job.

So, why in the world does it *still* not feel right?

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1: Meant to be

His name was Keiichi Ashikaga.

Tsukasa had met him one day at her university while waiting outside of her lecture room, idly watching the clock tick by. He was quite an interesting fellow, so to speak; he seemed to have an affinity for metal bands, judging by the logo on his shirt, and his hair was slightly longer than her own. He wasn't on her course, however, his lecture was in the room directly next to hers. So, naturally, the two struck up a conversation. Despite how many times she ended up zoning out and shyly asking him to repeat whatever he had recently said, he never seemed to mind once.

That was how it started, she thought. Just a friendly stranger who engaged her in passing conversation, and nothing more than that.

But, of course, things rarely ever followed their course. At least, not the course Tsukasa imagined they'd follow.

A few hours ago, while she was studying diligently in her bedroom an hour past her usual bed time, she received a text from Keiichi. She was surprised to see that he had bothered to take the time out to message her in the first place; though, when she opened up the message, taking time to let every word he had written sink into her brain…

She imagined her heart would stop, but instead, she started giggling to herself.

> **keiichi989**
> hey i think ur rlly hot… srsly i havvnt been able 2 stop thinkin abt u since i met u. u wanna be my gf? :D

Of course, she accepted his offer without a doubt in her mind. After all, who in the world would be so foolish as to let such an opportunity slip past them?

She was still curled up on her bed, her teddy bear pressed firmly to her chest as joy-filled giggles continued to trickle from her smiling lips, merrily kicking her feet with glee whenever she remembered what had just taken place.

She finally had a boyfriend. A real, *living* boyfriend. One that existed outside of her movies, books and TV shows; a relationship that she, at long last, was no longer merely an observer to.

This, to her, was how things were supposed to be. She had waited for nineteen years – *nineteen years* – and, finally, fate had decided that it was her turn. Many of her friends were already entering relationships of their own; Kagami had gone through many boyfriends of her own already, Miyuki had shown interest in a boy at her university, and Konata… well, her "wife" quit the game almost a year ago now, and the girl was *annoyingly* tight-lipped about whoever she may actually have been interested in at the present moment.

Eventually, the late hour caught up to the girl. Bleary-eyed with exhaustion, she let out a yawn and promptly passed out seconds later, her phone still in her hand with Keiichi's message proudly displayed for all to see.

That night, she dreamt of a vast, endless field of wheat, where the winds were always blustery, yet the lands remained peaceful. At one point, she lay down among the tall strands of wheat, caressed by the cold winds and the never-ending, eternally-blue sky.

The first thing Tsukasa did when she saw Keiichi the next day was hand him a box of chocolates.

Admittedly, it wasn't something she had planned beforehand. She woke up that morning in a frenzy of sorts, desperate to do something – *anything* – to repay him for becoming her boyfriend, or… perhaps not exactly that, but she wanted to thank in some way. So, she dug out a few chocolates she had made during Valentine's day, assorted them neatly into a box, and clumsily shoved them into his hands before her lecture, running away before she could see his reaction.

Of course, later that day, he went over to see her. He patted her on the head, thanking her for the box of chocolates before mentioning how unusual it was for girls to give him such gifts before stopping short of mentioning anything that she may not have wanted to hear.

Tsukasa couldn't really make sense of it. What *wouldn't* she want to hear?

Regardless, her plan had, ultimately, worked. Her romance films were based in truth after all – boys did, in fact, like chocolates. At one point, she noticed him snacking on one of them, his eyes lighting up with joy, and she felt a pleasant feeling of pride settle deep within her chest.

So, she kept it going. Every morning, she would give him gifts. Every time, he would accept each and every one of them.

The next day, she gave him some sweets. The day after that, a bouquet of flowers; then a teddy bear holding a giant heart; a spare CD copy of her favourite love song, by none other than Sayuri; and then—

"Tsukasa, babe," Wait a second. This was different. Did she pick out a bad gift? "I appreciate everything you give me, I *really* do… but don't you think this is a little much?"
"...Is it?" She asked, tilting her head in similar fashion to a puppy,
"Well… I don't *not* like all these things you're giving me, but," He desperately tried to save himself, "I don't have unlimited space in my room, y'know? And… isn't this a lot of money? Giving me something every day?"
"Oh… uh, yeah… I…" Tsukasa stammered, the tips of her ears flushing a bright crimson, "I didn't… think about that."

A moment of silence passed between them. The situation had suddenly grown uncomfortably awkward.

“...Sorry,” she mumbled, bashfully.
“No, no, don’t be! It’s really kind of you,” He patted her on the head, before slicking back his chestnut hair, “Seriously, babe. No other girl’s done this for me. It’s really special. Just… don’t spend so much money on me, alright? You’ve got your own bills to pay, eh?”
“...Okay!” Tsukasa, despite the shade of crimson she was currently sporting, smiled brightly, “I’m not really used to all this stuff… I’ve never had a boyfriend before, so….”
Keiichi gave a hearty laugh, “I know, I know. Stuff happens. It’s okay. I’m not mad.”

He ruffled her hair, scratching her scalp before pressing a quick peck to her cheek - a gesture which elicited a smile from the shorter girl, who giggled to herself gleefully. The two of them locked eyes a few moments later, and flashed a mutual grin.
“Well, I’ll be on my way now,” Already, he was skipping along to wherever he was meant to be, “Talk to you later, alright? Love you!”
“I love you too!” She replied, waving at him as he disappeared into the distance.

She hummed happily, mumbling the words to herself a few more times in a higher pitch while twisting her hands.

Even after all of that, he still took the cassette she made with him.

Tsukasa patted the spot on her cheek marked by his lips, gleefully tapping her foot as she calmly wiped away some of the residual saliva.

Yep. She was doing it right for sure. Even if she had made a few mistakes along the way. She was already pretty good at this whole “girlfriend” thing.

A few days had passed since she and Keiichi had started going out. They didn’t do much together, at first; they only really saw each other in between lectures, save for the times where they would go out to grab lunch together, and the majority of their later conversations took place over the phone or in that chatroom program that Konata had helped her to set up years ago.

Tsukasa didn’t really mind it all that much – in fact, part of her even *preferred* it that way. It was slow-paced, sure, but it was peaceful. There weren’t any expectations weighing her down or hanging over her head. She could just… move at her own pace. She had even caught herself nearly *forgetting* that she was in a relationship on numerous occasions.

On one such evening, she was relaxing idly as usual, decompressing from the stresses of the outside world by cocooning herself in blankets and stuffed animals galore. Just as she was about to be lulled into a peaceful, unplanned slumber, her cellphone buzzed with yet another text message.

It was strange. Whenever Keiichi messaged out of the blue, she could never anticipate just *what* was on the boy’s mind.

keiichi989
u wanna go out tmrw?

She would be a fool to decline such an offer. Besides, the girl had never really seen much of central Tokyo, having gone only a handful of times herself. She figured it would be a good opportunity to explore the city, *and* get to know her boyfriend some more to boot.

Her lectures for the day had drawn to a close. She had parleyed with him briefly during lunch, having spotted him at the cafeteria. Now, he was the one waiting for her, donning a faux-fur-hooded coat, announcing his presence by patting her on the shoulder, causing her to squeak a little from the surprise.
"K-Keiichi?" She stammered, swivelling around on her heel.
"Heh, sorry for the fright," He flashed a cheeky grin, "You wanna head to the city now?"
"Yeah! I remember now!" She nodded wildly, "Let's go!"
"Alright," The two of them set off, walking at a brisk pace, "I know some good places. Trust me, you'll love them."

Unfortunately for Tsukasa, by the time the two of them had reached the train station, it was already well into rush hour – and as such, the station was particularly packed. All around her, busy commuters rushed to and fro; some loudly conversed over the phone, airing out dirty laundry that neither she nor anyone else were awfully interested in being subjected to. The air had grown thick, suffocating, and suppressive, sweat dampening her clothes and driving her mad; and, to make matters even worse for the poor girl, the fluorescent lights were horribly outdated, and were constantly flickering.

Though he didn't seem nearly as bothered by the fracas as she was, Keiichi, too, was more than eager to get to the city center as quickly as possible. So, they boarded the first train that they could – which, somehow, was even *more* cramped than the station was – and, after another agonising hour, they were home free, the both of them breathing a grand sigh of relief as they took their first steps into the heart of the city.

Tsukasa's hands trembled idly as she thought hard about where her feet were going. Yet, despite herself, she forced herself to take deep, slow breaths; in for seven, and out for eleven, just as her therapist had taught her.

The city standing before her practically had a pulse of its own. The roads were fairly busy, but, by some miracle, were not completely packed. Cars drifted along idly to wherever they needed to go, occasionally blaring their horns in frustration. People from various different backgrounds and places crawled along the streets, most of whom were there for the same reasons that she was; and almost every tall building in the surrounding area had a billboard plastered on its side. Though, before she could truly absorb the sights that surrounded her, Keiichi took her by the hand, leading her along to whatever location he had set his mind to.

"Where are we going?" She asked, her voice shaking a little,
"The best restaurant in the city, obviously!" He beamed, confidently, "Trust me. I used to live here when I was little. I know this place like the back of my hand."
Tsukasa simply nodded in response, silently placing all of her faith onto him.

And so, they continued on. They soldiered through the endless sea of people, cutting through the chaos of the bustling streets. Tsukasa tightly squeezed Keiichi's hand as if he were mere moments away from vanishing off the face of the earth.

The restaurant itself was… an interesting place, to say the least. It was the sort of place anyone else would miss amongst the chaos of the city - out of the way, but not isolated enough to the point where it would be a detriment to business. A place which, according to Keiichi, was typically rather quiet – maybe a little busy in the later hours of the night, but never overcrowded.

Apparently, their definitions of overcrowded were *wildly* different.

Tsukasa had been seated for not twenty-five minutes, yet she could already feel an uncomfortable pressure pressing against every corner of her skull. Conversations from every angle of the room charged head-first into her ears, clogging up her mind with useless fragments of meaningless words. The clattering of plates in the kitchen felt like nails drilling deep into her brain, and the dreadful scratching of knives and forks left her quietly grinding her teeth in an attempt to stop herself from bursting into tears right there and then. Already, she felt as though her brain would burst at any given moment.

No matter how desperately she tried to follow along with whatever it was that Keiichi was talking about, she kept losing track of his words, too occupied with the incessant racket that permeated the room to pay much attention to anything else. Eventually, she gave up, resorting to idly nodding, chuckling, and sipping her grape juice whenever he took a swig of his cola.

The room was spinning.

The lights were burning her eyes.

She tried to keep it together. She really, *really* tried. But eventually–

“I-I– uh– *sorry–*” She abruptly stood up, “I need to– go to the—”

Her words failed her mid sentence. Within an instant, she was off, plunging directly into the crowd without a real sense of where she was going. For a brief, terrifying moment, she ended up being swept away by the raging human current, during which she very nearly began to sob uncontrollably; though, thankfully, she managed to break free from the crowd and locate the disabled toilets. She pushed her full weight against the door as she fumbled with the handle, stumbling as it swung open and swiftly locking it behind her before she so much as gave herself a chance to catch her breath.

For a moment, she breathed a sigh of relief, relishing in the newfound tranquility.

Yet, moments later, she was hunched over the sink, her tears dripping onto the basin as they streamed down her cheeks. She let out a strained whine, before her knees finally gave out, causing her to topple over. Before she knew it, she was sitting against the door, her knees hugged close to her chest, sobbing quietly as she hyperventilated.

The throbbing agony which rippled through her skull prompted her to immediately squeeze her eyes shut in an attempt to drown out the bright, blinding light that invaded her eyesight, and she attempted to steady her breathing at the same. Slow, steady breaths, sniffled through her nose and hiccuped out of her mouth. Yet, before she could even *begin* to calm down—

A series of firm knocks shook the door.

“Hey? Babe?” It was, of course, none other than Keiichi, “You okay in there? You, uh… ran off all of a sudden..”
At first, Tsukasa’s voice failed her.
“Uh…”
In truth, the thought of telling him the truth made Tsukasa wish for someone to finish her off right then and there. Yet, she remembered – she was *supposed* to be honest with him, wasn’t she? Wasn’t he supposed to be able to *trust* her?

So, with a shaky breath, she started again.

“I…” She strained, “I… my head…. it’s too… too loud— I– I wanna go home– or– *ugh*—”
“Hey, woah, darling,” He reassured, “It’s okay. Really. Take all the time you need.”

Slowly, Tsukasa lifted herself up from the floor, her frail limbs shaking with their every movement. Despite the overwhelming nausea pooling at the back of her throat, she was, by some miracle, able to unlock the door, falling into Keiichi’s arms the moment she did so.

He held her tightly, silently rocking her back and forth as every ounce of tension left her body. Tsukasa was a little taken aback by how comforting it all felt. It bewildered her to no end – things like this simply did *not* happen to people like her.

Yet… standing there, overwhelmed and at her wits end, comforted by a man whom she had known for not even a week… it proved to her that her favourite stories were more than just mere fantasy. Love stories *were* real. True love *could* happen.

It quickly became apparent to the both of them that Tsukasa was far too exhausted to so much as lift a muscle, what with the way she had been reduced to dead weight in Keiichi’s arms. So, he ended up piggy-backing her all the way to the student accommodation. Not the place she would have stayed on any other night, of course, but Tsukasa didn’t mind all that much. Her parents were likely asleep to begin with, and she would hate to disturb their rest.

She drifted off into a peaceful dream about halfway to his apartment, finding herself alone, floating off into the cosmos. Yet, despite everything that had happened, there was not a moment within that eternal solitude where she felt the slightest bit lonely.

There was no chaos in that vast expanse. She could simply exist in peace, free from life’s endless disturbances.

It quickly became a regular occurrence for the girl to stay over at Keiichi’s apartment.

Perhaps not as *regular* as one may initially believe; Tsukasa was still *deeply* attached to her own bedroom, and would commute home more days than she stayed over at Keiichi’s – yet, it remained a growing trend. Most of the time, their impromptu sleepovers were the result of a movie night dragging on into the late hours of night, or if Tsukasa was particularly burnt out after a stressful day and was unwilling to suffer through the arduous commute home.

Naturally, the previous night had been one such night. She had woken up that morning in a frenzy of sorts, unsure of where she was or how she had ended up there in the first place, before the unfamiliar ceiling gradually morphed into something more familiar to her. It was… surprisingly peaceful, to say the least. She and Keiichi talked about nothing in particular, laughed at something that wasn't awfully funny on the TV, and then, eventually, it was time for his morning lecture; so, he got up, packed his things and briefly pecked her on the lips before setting off.

…

He… pecked her.

…

He… kissed her… on the lips. Briefly, sure, but… he *did* do that.

Tsukasa hummed happily to herself, sipping her grape juice as her friends talked idly around her in the cafeteria. It was a little loud, sure, but she was managing just fine. If anything, she was just glad that she was doing this whole *girlfriend* thing right.

Though, during her brief, cheery daydream, she had neglected to remember one very important detail.

When it came to *anything* involving romance, her friends could sense it in the same way a shark smells blood in the water.

Especially Yuuka.

"Hey," Yuuka called out, akin to how one would beckon a cat, her eyes sparkling with excitement as she wringed her bracelets. "Hiiragi-chan… that smile doesn't look like it came from nowhere. Did you and Keiichi–"
Riko silently nudged her with her elbow, staring daggers into her soul.
"Wha– I wasn't gonna–"
"You absolutely were," Riko deadpanned.

"Uh…" Already, Tsukasa was a little confused, "Well… he did kiss me today–"
"He did?!" Yuuka explained, prompting Riko to nudge her again, "Ow—"
"He *kissed* you?"

Now Tsukasa was completely lost. Everyone on her table was in varying states of awe. Yuka's eyes sparkled with glee as she briefly fixed a lock of her purple hair, the sleeve of her plaid shirt getting caught on a stray strand. Riko, though clearly unimpressed, also seemed to be decently interested – moreso than she usually was in whatever Yuuka was typically obsessing over – her brown hair falling over her eyes as she leaned in a little closer. Even Kaori, who was usually rather quiet, had cut into the conversation, her teal hair flowing over her arm as she sported an unusually surprised visage.

"Y…Yeah?" *Why were they so intrigued?* "It was– he did it quickly before he left, so–"
"Okay, yeah, he didn't use tongue, whatever," Tsukasa furrowed her brow at Yuuka's words,

“But, he *still* kissed you! That’s *amazing!* How do you feel?”
“...Normal?”
“Right, but like,” Yuuka, clearly, wasn’t impressed by her answer, “What did you feel, like, in the moment?”
“His… *lips?”*
Yuuka groaned frustratedly, “No– like– did you— *augh*, did you feel *funny* or like–”
“I think she’s trying to ask if the kiss made you feel something,” Riko explained, to the best of her ability, “So… did it?”

Tsukasa paused for a moment. She thought long and hard about Yuuka’s question, trying to figure out if the kiss had made her feel *anything*, thumbing through her memory and attempting to decode any other sensations that may have been there. Yet, instead, her brain kept turning up blank after blank. There were no extra sensations - apart from his lips, and the brief shock, of course – but, after that… nothing.

Nothing at all.

That was no good. Tsukasa knew her friends would be puzzled if she outright told them that she felt absolutely *nothing.* So, she came up with the next best thing.

“Happy!” She beamed.

Her friends all shot her *deeply* confused looks. Yuuka looked borderline concerned, covering her mouth to suppress a laugh that nearly crawled out of her throat. An awkward silence fell over the table, Tsukasa’s cheeks quickly heating up from embarrassment.

“What…?” She asked, meekly, “Was that the wrong thing to say?”
“Well… okay. Put it this way,” Yuuka explained, carefully, “When I first kissed someone, it felt like someone lit a fire in my chest. My heart didn’t stop pounding for hours!”
Tsukasa shivered a little, “That sounds *horrible!* Were you okay?”
Yuuka guffawed, “Of course I was okay! The kiss made everything worth it! *Man*, I was desperate at the time… good thing I have a boyfriend now, ‘cause if I were single, I would be going feral *every day!”*

Every girl except Tsukasa laughed amongst themselves; a knowing kind of laughter, one that spoke of experience and understanding, all the while Tsukasa blushed a deeper shade of red.
“What do you mean?” Tsukasa asked, “I… I was single until recently, but… I was fine with it! It didn’t really bother me, to be honest!”
“Really?” Yuuka leaned in, “Nah. You’re lying. You have to be. *Every* girl feels like that at least once in their lives!”
“Well… I haven’t,” Tsukasa stated, folding her arms awkwardly.

Riko glared at Yuuka once more, *“Yuuka,”*
“What?”
“You know…. ah, forget it,” Defeated, Riko slumped over in her seat, her head hitting the desk with a resounding *thunk*, “I can’t even argue with you on that one.”

Kaori gave a nervous chuckle, reaching over to pat Tsukasa’s hair. She smiled a little at the contact.

“Don’t worry, Tsukasa-chan,” she reassured, “You and Keiichi have something wonderful going on. You two’ll be fine. I’m sure of it.”
“...Yeah,” Tsukasa breathed, already slipping back into her daydream.

The conversation gradually shifted to a completely different topic. Every now and then, Tsukasa would chime in with a contribution of her own, before immediately retreating back into the comfort of her imagination.

Or, at least, it was comforting at first. But, for some reason, the earlier conversation about *Keiichi* had burrowed into her mind like an invasive parasite, rearing its ugly head at any chance it got.

They didn’t understand her. They thought the way she experienced things was *strange*. Yet, at the same time… she found them quite strange, as well. How in the world could they function, constantly longing for a partner like that? Why did they *need* to be in a romantic relationship, if only to combat the melancholy of solitude? They had *friends*, for crying out loud! Surely a good friend was all that one needed, right?

She nervously chewed the inside of her cheek, a myriad of questions now swirling around in her head. Questions which would follow her throughout the day, accompanying her during her lectures, rendering her unable to focus on any words that came out of her professor’s mouth; riding the train home with her and announcing their presence while she was chatting with Keiichi on the computer, leading her to lie on her bed, arms and legs splayed to her sides in a starfish position, trying her best to weather the endless stream of thoughts.

Something wasn’t right.

She loved Keiichi. She did. She was supposed to love him. He loved her, after all. But something wasn’t right.

Dread had already corroded her heart. Her chest had tightened to a painful degree; she turned to her side, desperately squeezing her teddy bear with a vice-grip hug, trying to comfort herself by imagining that it was Keiichi but then culling that thought once the nausea bubbled up in her throat a little, scalding acid searing her way down her stomach, oh god she was doing everything *wrong* why was she *so scared–*

She took a deep breath. In, and out. Her grip on her teddy bear loosened. For good measure, she threw her weighted blanket over her knees, and surrounded herself with some more stuffed animals.

Relax. You’re just overthinking things, she told herself, *Just… calm down.*

It worked, as it always did. Soon enough, she was peacefully curled up in her bed, flanked by her stuffed animals, well on the way to a peaceful, dreamless sleep. Yet, even then, the fear never truly went away. It merely retreated deep into the furthest recesses of her mind, scratching and clawing at the enclosure it found itself trapped within.

“Babe! Come in, come in!”
Already, Keiichi was warmly welcoming her into his apartment. It was a place she had visited about three times in her life, yet, already, she had familiarised herself with the place quite well.

As usual, he hugged her, and she hugged him back as tightly as she could, despite the fact that he practically towered over her. In response, he picked her up and twirled her around, eliciting a series of giggles from deep within her chest.

She quite liked the feeling of being spun around. Tsukasa herself used to do it back in middle school, whenever she was listless yet full of energy at the same time. Sometimes she’d still do it, albeit a little slower – roughly the pace of a phonograph record – as a way of decompressing, especially if she had someplace to be. Even if it only lasted for a moment, it almost never failed to melt the thin layer of anxiety that seemed to constantly coat the surface of her brain.

Tonight was, of course, another one of their movie nights. Keiichi was in the driver’s seat this time; Tsukasa had consistently picked out her favourite romance films each time it was her turn to pick, and, though he never outright displayed any particular disdain towards any film of her choosing, the thought of being able to pick out a movie for himself seemed to put a spring in his step.

She followed Keiichi to the kitchen, helping him out with some of the snacks. Cooking was her specialty, after all; why *else* would she be taking it as her university course, if not for it being her lifelong calling? Diligently, she prepared a vast array of different snacks – of course, she was merely using what Keiichi had already bought from the nearby supermarket, but she was quite skilled at making it seem visually appealing. Judging from the wonder in her boyfriend’s eyes, she was certain that he had never seen a bowl of crisps prepared so professionally before. Neither had he seen ramen prepared in such a fashion.

Everything was prepared. The movie had been picked – Keiichi wanted to watch three episodes of the *Stardust Crusaders* adaptation that came out well over a decade ago; combined, they were more or less feature-length, and Tsukasa had heard Konata speaking highly of the original work, so she decided to go along with it, like she always had done in the past. There was little left to do now, apart from head over to—

the bedroom, apparently, *why were they going to the bedroom there was a TV downstairs*—

The doubt clouding Tsukasa’s mind vanished in an instant once she saw the state of the bedroom. It had been… well prepared, to say the least. The blanket covering the sheets looked particularly comfortable, as did the pillows. She absentmindedly wandered over to the bed, lying back and sinking into the mattress, allowing herself to relax as Keiichi set up the DVD player. At some point, she started to smell a particularly strong, lavender-esque scent, accompanied by the faint aroma of smoke; after which, Keiichi settled down next to her. Naturally, she sat upright, scooting closer to him and settling into his warmth, her head landing on his shoulder as he tightly secured his around her waist.

Tsukasa wasn’t really paying attention to the movie. She was far too distracted by the comfort she found herself surrounded in to truly focus on anything specific; the blankets were far

fluffier than any of her own, the mattress was soft enough for her to simply sink her whole weight into, and the same could be said for the cushions. She giggled to herself, her head lolling further into Keiichi's shoulder as he gently combed his fingers through her hair.

Her stomach growled a little over halfway through the second episode. Reluctantly, she willed herself to leave her world of comfort, if only enough to reach over and grab a fistful of crisps from the bowl. However, as she turned back, ready to be submerged deep within the warmth of the pillows and blankets once more…

Her eyes met with Keiichi's.

It wasn't anything special, of course. This had happened many times before, and most of the time they would simply smile at each other. She giggled, and he half-stifled a chuckle.

Then his eyes flicked downwards. Then back into hers. His lips pursed slightly.

There was something in his eyes. Something… fierce. It was as if a raging inferno had been lit within the confines of his pupils, faint flames flickering within the distant reflection of his irises.

At first, Tsukasa didn't think much about it. But then, he leaned in – cautiously, to begin with, but then he boldly closed the distance a little more. Before long, a question trickled out of his lips.
"Do you wanna… kiss?" He asked,
Tsukasa nodded. "Yeah,"

The distance between the two closed a little more, and then, eventually, their lips met. Tsukasa had already grown quite used to this, what with how many times they had kissed each other goodbye since a few mornings ago; little more than a simple peck, of course, but Tsukasa didn't mind. In fact, she was certain that Keiichi himself found it somewhat endearing.

But then his bottom lip interlocked with hers.

And, from there, everything she thought she knew began to crumble into pulver.

This… was certainly *not* the sort of kiss that she was used to. It radiated passion like a potent toxin, and seemingly possessed the minds of those who partook in it. At least… it had *certainly* taken control of Keiichi. His kisses only grew more fervourous, causing Tsukasa's lungs to work overtime as the room warped and twisted around her, fogginess clouding her mind like a hazy heatwave, and suddenly, she found herself being uprooted from her place on the bed, leaning back as her head hit the pillow.

He slid his tongue into her mouth, a parasite feeding off her every breath, and she tried to return the favour, but was instead repulsed by the taste that swiftly overwhelmed her senses. It was strange. *Far* too strange. Her friends *constantly* daydreamed about this moment. Yuuka had told her it would be the best thing she could ever dream of experiencing.

So… why wasn't she feeling anything? Why was she so… *nauseous?* This wasn't right. Nothing about this felt right. It was all *wrong.* Wrong, wrong, *wrong,* so dreadfully *wrong,* yet, she hadn't a clue of what she was *supposed* to do about it and the way her lungs *screamed* out for air made her stop kissing him back long ago and now his hand was on her collar, unbuttoning the buttons of her blouse as it moved further yet further—

A primal fear overrode her every thought, and, immediately, Tsukasa grabbed the appendage that had tried to rid her of her blouse, stopping it in its tracks before it could travel down any further. The kiss between her and Keiichi was quickly broken soon after, rendering the shorter girl a gasping, spluttering mess, her head spinning from the sudden outburst of passion.

"Babe?" Keiichi's voice was tinged with worry, "You okay? What's wrong?"
"I…" Tsukasa spluttered out a wet cough, "I… I-I'm not ready…"
"...Oh."

The atmosphere was now frosty, awkward and downright uncomfortable. Keiichi laughed awkwardly, fixing her blouse before slowly scooting away from her. He silently slurped some ramen from the pot he had prepared some time ago, cringing ever slightly as he did so. Tsukasa, on the other hand, simply drew her knees to her chest, hugging them tightly.

The blankets weren't as soft as she remembered them being.

"...I'm sor—"
"No, I'm sorry," Keiichi interjected, "That, uh… that wasn't cool of me. I thought you were… and then we… I wanted to ask, but… I should've… asked if you wanted to…"
"Have sex?"
"Wha— No, *no,* of course not!" Keiichi flushed a deep shade of red, "Well– if you ever *wanted* to, or— I need to buy condoms first *obviously,* but I was trying to kiss your, uh… neck. Yeah."
"Oh." Tsukasa, too, was nearly as flushed as she was, "Oh. *Oh.* I— I guess I was a little nervous of—"
"---and, I mean, I do wanna do that with you someday—"
"Yep, yep! I knew that! Yeah!"

Nope. No more. Tsukasa no longer wanted to hear anything. She never wanted to hear another word from anyone ever again. If hellfire and brimstone rained upon the earth the next morning, that would be fine by her.
The two of them laughed at their mutual embarrassment. Of course, an hour or so later, Tsukasa conveniently had a train to catch. It wasn't the least part suspicious; at least, not to her. These things simply happened from time to time.

It was just too early, she had told him. She wasn't ready yet. She was too anxious. Someday, at some time… the moment would come.

She believed it wholeheartedly. She knew that she was supposed to like him on a more physical level, too.

So why did she *still* feel as if she were lying as easily as she breathed?

End Notes

huzzah! my first fic posted during the outage!

i started writing this one before the outage and my god it is one of the best ideas i've ever had. i always read tsukasa as some sort of aroace... i know you LITERALLY date her in her rgo route, but still. the way she views romance and relationships is so fucking relatable dude... you view yourself as a bystander to romance? you view it as something that's more fun to read about? me too bro!! me too!!

of course this is all my own interpretation, if other folks have different interpretations then that's just fine... that being said i hope whoever's reading enjoys this fic! this'll be crossposted to squidgeworld and other sites of course, unfortunately squidgeworld is DOWN right now so it might be a little longer before this one crops up there as well. as always when ao3 comes back up i'll post this one there too

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!