

Unexpected Affection Chapter 21-25

By BreaktheBar

Sponsored by Zaralith

Chapter 21

It was late dusk when April drove you around the burm hill and into the park. A couple of cars passed you heading out, and as you pulled into the parking lot the lights on the soccer field got turned off, putting the whole palace into the dim shadow of near-night.

“How did you know about this place?” you asked.

April chuckled softly. “I Googled it,” she said.

You chuckled as well. “Really? What did you Google, ‘Where do people go to hook up?’”

She smirked a little. “More like ‘Where in my city do teens go parking,’” she said. “I figured if worst came to worst we could scare off any teens making out, then use the post ourselves.”

A guy came out of the clubhouse at the end of the field, heading for the last car in the lot other than you. He glanced in your direction but didn’t come over.

“No teenager around yet,” you said.

“Maybe it’s not the cool spot anymore since I could Google it,” April laughed, and you laughed with her. The guy got into his car and a moment later it turned on and he was pulling away, leaving the parking lot. It was mostly ringed by trees except in the direction of the soccer field, which was dark and empty. On the other side of the trees was more park area, and somewhere about a hundred yards away a couple of baseball diamonds.

The big selling point was that you were alone, and it was quiet.

“So...” you said, looking over at her. April drove a small car, and between your height and your size, you were a little crammed in. “I had a really good time today. And I’m still kind of pinching myself that this is real, even with the picture from last time.”

April blushed and smiled as she looked at you through her glasses. “I had a really good time too,” she said. “But I’m not pinching myself. I’m real and you’re real, Ollie. How we *met* is a little ridiculous, sure, but this all *feels* right to me. Does it feel right to you?”

“God, yes,” you said. “Scary, honestly, but yes.”

She unbuckled her seatbelt and shifted to her knees on the driver’s seat, leaning over the middle console to kiss you. You kissed her back, letting yourself get lost in her lips and her smell. She put a hand on your shoulder, keeping you close, and you shifted as much as you could and put a hand on her waist. Smiling into the kiss, April put her hand over yours and slowly moved it up the side of her dress until you were cupping her breasts.

“Every time you make me laugh, it turns me on,” she mumbled through her kisses.

“I could survive just on the way you look at me,” you mumbled back. You felt alive every time she met your gaze, or you turned to her and saw her smiling as she watched you.

The kissing was nice. You’d never made out with someone before, and it felt... intimate. Not like the sex from last time, which had been amazing. This was slower, and the limitations of soft touches over clothes, and lips and tongues, felt more like talking than sex did. Eventually, April swung a leg over the console, getting even closer to you as she pressed her body to yours, kissing you almost feverishly. Then she grabbed both your hands and brought them around to her ass, pulling her lips from yours so she could look into her eyes. “Don’t be shy with me, Ollie,” she said. “You being a complete gentleman in public is absolutely sweet and lovely, but when we’re in private like that I give you permission to touch me wherever you want. Grab my boobs, squeeze my butt. It feels *good*, and touch is one of my love languages - and I don’t usually share that with a guy because usually I don’t feel as safe with a guy as I do you.”

“OK,” you said with a little nod, squeezing her ass cheeks over the skirt of her dress. “Thank you for trusting me with that.”

She sighed happily and leaned in again, kissing you some more. You let your hands move sort of on their own, squeezing and massaging, then sliding up to her waist and holding her, then back down to her butt. Then, deciding to take a small risk, you slid them lower to her thighs and pulled up her skirt to get your hands on her bare skin. She moaned in approval as she kept kissing you, and soon your hands were completely hidden under her skirt as you massaged her bare ass cheeks and felt the fabric of her panties.

“That’s so good, baby,” April groaned against your lips. “Your hands feel so good on me.”

“I can’t believe how good this feels,” you moaned back softly. “Your skin is so soft, April, and I can’t get enough of you. I don’t think I ever could.”

She giggled softly and pulled away again, sitting up tall and biting her lips as she looked at you in the near dark. “Stay right where you are,” she said cryptically, then swung herself awkwardly back into the driver’s seat. You thought she was going to turn the car on, but instead, she opened her door. She hesitated getting out though, seemingly noticing something, and she shut the door again and turned the car on.

“What are we doing?” you asked.

“I just need to reposition the car,” she said, not exactly explaining fully. She pulled the car forward about two feet, leaving the gravel and pulling up onto the grass, and then turned the car off again. She got out this time and practically skipped around the front of the vehicle to your side, opening the door with a grin as she went to her knees. ‘Swing your legs out, baby,’ she said, patting your knee.

You did so, and when she reached for your belt you realised what was happening.

“Are you sure?” you asked. “Here?”

“We probably shouldn’t fuck here,” April said, grinning at you. “But I’m not sending you home from a date this good without at least a blowjob.”

You were helping her get your pants down now. “What about you? Can I eat you out?”

April’s smile brightened a little. “You don’t have to,” she said, and even with your sexual inexperience you could piece together the unsaid ‘But I’d really like you to’ that followed that statement.

“I want to,” you said, really meaning it.

“OK,” she chirped. Then she pulled your boxers down and released your cock, which bobbed up heavily, almost fully hard already. “Fuuuck,” she breathed out, wrapping both her hands around it. “Ollie, baby, I know I said this last time, but you really do have a mammoth cock.”

“Thank you?” you said, a little wary of that fact.

“No,” April said, shaking her head. “You don’t get it. I’m thanking *you*, stud. Last time I said it I know it didn’t exactly land how I meant it, but... Ollie, how you were single when we met I can’t understand. You are sweet, and smart, and funny, and you have a giant fucking cock. I am a very lucky girl.” And then she put her lips to the heads of your cock and your brain fried a little and you weren’t sure how to respond.

Blowjobs, you were coming to understand, were like a slice of heaven.

Chapter 22

"I'm going to come," you groaned.

"Mmm-mmm mmm," April hummed and moaned, not taking her lips off your cock. She had both hands on it still, jerking you off near the base and middle of the shaft, while she kept her lips sealed around the ride of the head and used her tongue like made. You couldn't actually see a whole lot due to night having fully fallen, but it felt stupidly amazing. You also weren't sure exactly what she was trying to say with those sounds even though there had been some inflexion in them. April didn't stop blowing you though.

"Oh my God, April," you groaned. "I'm really going to come... Nnng."

She didn't stop, and you lost your battle with yourself and felt your nuts tighten up as the hot surge of your orgasm raced up your shaft and unloaded into April's. You could feel her mouth filling up - she'd said last time that you shot pretty big loads, so she knew what was coming - but then she was swallowing as you kept coming, her hands still stroking your shaft like she was trying to massage the orgasm out of you and get ever last drop.

When it ended you let out all the breath in your lungs in a long exhalation, your whole body feeling like it had been emptied.

"Oh ma' Ga" April was laughing as she pulled her lips from your cock. She wiped at the corner of her lips and then made a big show of swallowing what she still had in her mouth before wiping her lips again. "Fuck, Ollie," she said. "God, that's so hot."

"Sorry," you chuckled softly.

"Stop being sorry, baby," she said, rubbing her hands on your thighs. "Big dick, big loads - you're like a hentai character come to life. You're not hiding any tentacles somewhere too, are you?"

You snorted and shook your head. Then you sat up, having been uncomfortably leaning back against the middle console. "OK," you said. "Your turn."

"Are you sure?" she asked, looking up at you as she was still on her knees in the grass.

"If I'm not allowed to apologise for things, you can't keep asking me if I'm sure I want to make you feel like you make *me* feel," you said. You offered her a hand and she accepted it, standing up and getting out of the way so that you could get up out of the car as well. She smirked a little as you stood fully, her hand snaking out and grabbing your cock which was still half-hard. Her fingers felt so fucking good, wrapping around your girth.

“Stop teasing,” you said with a little smile, reaching around her to give her butt a little smack over her dress. She laughed playfully at that and you put both hands on her waist, turning the two of you around so she was backed up to the car. “Sit,” you ordered her.

“Mmm,” she hummed, doing so, mirroring how you had been sitting with your legs out the door. “I like it when you’re more forceful.”

“I know,” you said. “And I’ll try to do it more.” Getting down to your knees wasn’t the most graceful process, but you managed not to look like an idiot and slip, and soon you were looking at her in the dark, your eyes about level with her tits. You put your hands on her bare calves, rubbing her smooth legs, and then up higher under the dress to feel her thighs again. “I’ve never done this before either,” you admitted. “So I want you to help me be the best I can be at it for you.”

“Ollie,” April said with a soft smile. “It’s dark, we can barely see anything. Just... explore, OK? And I promise to tell you if something isn’t working. And no biting.”

“OK,” you chuckled and then shuffled a little closer.

April lifted a leg, bringing it up over your shoulder, then the other one as you slowly slid the skirt of her dress higher. You kissed the inside of her knee, and then down on her fleshy thigh, feeling the warmth of her skin on your lips. She shifted slightly, getting the skirt under her butt and then you were looking at her panty-clad crotch in the dark.

You’d seen her pussy last time, but you hadn’t eaten her out or gotten a big look at it. Now you wanted to try and study it - you wanted to go full nerd and take notes as you teased every curve and fold of her skin so that you could remember all the things she liked best and apply them in the future.

But it was dark, and you could barely see. *Just explore*, she said.

So that’s what you did.

You leaned in, kissing even closer to the prize on her opposite thigh, and then kissed her mound through her panties. She moaned softly, running her fingers through your hair, and breathing in and out deeply.

Kissing April’s pussy through her panties was kind of hot, and you knew intellectually that teasing and arousing a woman was supposed to help make the direct stimulation feel better later. You could feel, just barely, the folds of her pussy on the other side of the fabric. You could even taste it a little as you kissed and licked her.

“God, baby,” April groaned softly. “Just pull them aside and *lick* me.”

“What if I want to keep teasing you,” you said with a little smirk. “What if I want to spend *hours* down here.”

“We can do this over and over,” April said. “I just want to feel it *now*.”

“Patience is a virtue, beautiful.”

April sat up, grabbing your face and looking at you intently. “You’re turning me on, teasing me like that,” she said. “But seriously, Ollie. I’ve been turned on for hours. Now I’m revving like a truck engine. I’m the USS Enterprise already flying at Warp 5, and I want you to get me to Warp 8.”

“Not Warp 9?” you asked.

“That would require your dick slamming into me again,” she smirked.

You kissed her gently, then pushed her back and ducked your head low. Peeling her now-soaked panties aside, you got your first lick of her and knew that you were in love.

Chapter 23

"This is it," you said, sighing and squeezing April's hand. You hadn't known what her plan for the day was so you'd taken the bus down to meet her originally, and now she'd driven you home after your 'adventure' in the park. Eating her out had been fun, and awkward, and weird, and delightful. All the things. All at once. You'd tasted and teased, learning the little nooks and crannies of her pussy in the dark with just your lips and tongue. Then she'd prompted you to use your fingers, and you'd fit two inside her and slowly fingered her as you focused on her clit.

"Nice building," April said, squeezing your hand back as she craned her neck to look out the windshield. "What floor are you on?"

"The twelfth," you said. "About halfway up. It's one of the ones on the right side with the little balcony."

"That's nice," April said. "But I'm betting you don't sit out there at all."

"No," you chuckled. "But I open the door sometimes just to get some fresh air in the summer."

She turned back to you, having put the car in park, and she smiled and reached over to rub her finger on your cheek right next to your lips. "Why do I feel like you've still got my taste on you?"

"Maybe because you got it all over me," you chuckled, reaching up to take her hand and bringing her fingers to your lips so you could kiss them. It seemed like after a sexual encounter you felt a lot more at ease being touchy with her.

"Sorry," April said with a bashful look. "I got a little worked up."

She'd come twice in quick succession when you'd been eating her out and fingering her, and you checked that off as a major accomplishment for yourself. The second one, however, had been accompanied by her basically grinding her pussy all over your face - hot, and enjoyable in a kinky way, but it *had* gotten her all over you.

"It's OK," you said and raised her hand to kiss it again. "Considering I covered *you* last time, it's probably fair."

"True," April laughed.

"Um, I'd really like to invite you up, but I think Hikaru, Hannah and Margot are all up there still," you said. "So unless you want to face the Spanish Inquisition right now...?"

"Hah, no," she said. "Good reference, but no. Not while I look like this." You thought she looked gorgeous, but it was sexual acts with you that had messed up her hair and lipstick. It wasn't as bad as snuggling in bed after the first time, but you finally understood the 'just fucked' mussy

look. It wasn't far off from 'had a long night and dragged myself into work' look that some of your coworkers would have on a Friday... Unless maybe they were coming in late because they'd been having sex.

"What about next weekend?" you asked. "I'll cook, and you can meet Margot and Hikaru first?"

"I would love to, Ollie," April said as she beamed at you. "Yes, absolutely. But after that, I need to travel for most of the week starting on Monday so I can't see you until maybe the next Sunday. And I want to see you more than that. What about a mid-week date this week, too? I know it's kind of fast, planning two dates in advance, but these two have already gone so well."

"I'd love that," you said eagerly, shifting a little so you could face her more. "Would you want it to be just us, or should I see if I can set something up so you can meet Hannah before you go, too?"

"Let's do something casual and fun again if we're doing dinner on the weekend," April said. "What about Puttputt Golf? There's a glow-in-the-dark one down near the outlet mall."

You quickly agreed on the timing for your Wednesday date, and that you would see about getting Hannah to come along. There was little doubt in your mind that you could; Hannah would be hungry to meet April and suss her out more. She'd been asking questions almost daily about April along with your usual banter and updates.

"I want to meet your friends too," you said. "But I know you talk about them less than I do."

"I know, and we'll do that soon too," April assured you. "My best friends are Zara and Ellen, but you can only meet Zara when she's in town since she travels more than I do. Ellen is married and has a baby, so we'll need to plan a Couples Thing or something for it to happen."

"Whenever you want," you said.

She leaned over and kissed you softly. "I wish we had more time," she said. "God, I want to fuck you."

You groaned and kissed her back, reaching over and squeezing her breast through her dress. That made her groan right back before you pulled your hand away.

"Tease," she said.

"Gorgeous," you countered. "Beautiful. Stunning."

"Big, charming tease," she countered back.

"Delightful, sexy goddess."

“Scruffy nerf herder,” she said, sticking her tongue out playfully.

“Who’s scruffy lookin’?” you asked back, completing the quote and laughing with her.

She kissed you again, and you kissed her back.

“Call me when you make it home safe?” you asked gently.

“I will,” she nodded. “Or, I’ll text. You’ve got an Inquisitorial squad up there, but I’ve got my father ready to do a Count Rugen impression.”

“Wait,” you said. “Count Rugen?”

“The Pit of Despair,” she prompted you.

It took you a second for it to click. “Ooooh,” you said. “Wait, I thought you said you liked your parents. Either your Dad has six fingers on his right hand, or he’s a real creep.”

“Neither,” April snorted. “Rugen was the only other pop culture torturer I could think of.”

“Yeah, but all his good lines are because of Inigo Montoya,” you said, then did your best Mandy Patinkin impression. “Offer me money.”

“Power, too,” April joined in immediately. “Promise me that.”

“All that I have and more. Please...” you said, switching to a vaguely British accent to play Rugen.

“Offer me everything that I ask for,” April said, continuing the impression.

“Anything you want...” you said, and switched back to the Patinkin impression as you both said together, “I want my father back, you son of a bitch!”

Your laughs, and another kiss, sealed the date.

Chapter 24

“Hello, Oliver,” Hannah said as she flicked on the light. She was sitting in the chair in the living room area of the apartment, while Margot and Hikaru were sitting on the couch. You’d just come in, finding it strange that all the lights had been off.

Now that they were pulling ‘angry parents waiting for you to get home,’ you got the joke.

“It’s almost 11 PM, Oliver,” Margot said, putting on an equally silly-serious face to Hannah’s. “We were worried about you.”

“You’ll need to explain what you’ve been doing,” Hikaru said. “Who have you been hanging out with? Are they pressuring you to do the drugs?”

“Are you selling drugs now, son?” Hannah asked. “Are you into the crack cocaine?”

“Or is it the Devil’s Lettuce?” Margot asked.

“Or maybe you’ve been selling and/or ingesting Shrooms,” Hikaru added on. “Are you tripping balls right now, Oliver?”

“Yeah, are you tripping balls?” Hannah asked, barely keeping her smile from her face.

“No,” you said, shaking your head as you stepped into the living room area. “I have not, in fact, been ‘tripping balls,’ selling drugs, or getting peer pressured into using them.”

“Then where have you been, Oliver Warren?” Hannah asked, doing a pretty good impression of your Mom.

“What the hell were you guys watching tonight?” you asked. “The Wire? Law and Order?”

“We’re asking the questions here,” Hannah said, tilting the lamp next to her so that the light was more directly on you.

“Start from the beginning, Mr Warren,” Margot smirked, trying to hold in her laughter. “*If* that’s your real name.”

You rolled your eyes and shook your head, but gave them the bullet point list of the things you’d done on your date with April. When you got to the last little bit at the park, you said you’d gone on a walk and didn’t mention what you’d actually been doing. “Then we came back here, and we talked about our next dates.”

“Dates?” Hikaru asked.

“Wait, wait, wait,” Margot said. “You guys just walked through the park holding hands? At night?”

“Well, we were... talking,” you said. “And we might have kissed a few times.”

“Ugh, disgustingly cute,” Hannah said.

Margot was giving you a look, and you could tell that she was seeing through your explanation, but she didn’t push it any further.

“What were you saying about next dates?” Hikaru asked again.

“Well, we both want to keep seeing each other,” you said. “And since she needs to travel for work the week after next, we planned two dates. The first one is on Wednesday, and I was thinking that you might want to come with us, Hannah? April wants to meet you, and I know you want to meet her so you can ask me fewer questions about her constantly.”

“Oh,” Hannah said, blinking and a little surprised. Then she smirked a little. “Are you asking me out on a date with you and your girlfriend, Ollie?”

You rolled your eyes. “Do you want to come to Puttputt golf with us and meet April or not?”

“Yes, obviously,” Hannah laughed.

“What about us?” Margot asked.

“Well, we also made plans for Saturday,” you said. “I’m going to make dinner here, and I’m hoping you two will join us? Then she’ll have met all three of you.”

“Dinner sounds good,” Margot smiled and nodded.

Hikaru looked a little distant, but she met your eyes and smiled softly. “OK,” she said. “It’ll be cool to meet her.”

“Awesome,” you said. “Um, alright. How was your night here?”

“Vat did I say, Mister Varren?” Hannah said, putting on an awful German accent as she pointed the lamp at you again. “Ve ask ze questions here!”

The ladies had ordered in Chinese food, of which there were leftovers in the fridge for you, and had a Girly Night and done each other’s nails and watched a movie and gossiped. They made it a point to tell you they mostly gossiped about you since you’d abandoned them for some other woman. They laid it on thick enough to make sure you knew they were joking.

You got a text a little while later from April letting you know she'd gotten home safe and survived her parental grilling, and you let her know you'd survived your witch trial with the Spanish Inquisition. She sent you back a GIF of the Monty Python Spanish Inquisition, and then a picture of her making a kissy face at her camera and wishing you good night. You hesitated but sent her a heart back and wished her good night as well.

Emojis weren't like saying 'I Love You,' right?

Eventually, Hannah had to call it a night since she had to work at her part-time gig at the gym the next day, and she crashed into you with a big hug before she left. Margot went soon after when the three of you started yawning, giving you a kiss on the cheek and telling you she was happy that your date went well. That left you with Hikaru.

"You OK?" you asked. "You were quiet tonight."

"Yeah, I am," she said with a bit of a sigh. "I just... can I have a hug?"

"Of course," you said, standing back up. She came to you and the hug wasn't the heavy, hard squeeze like from Hannah, or the quick and sure one from Margot. It was tentative and soft, and it lingered a long time as you held Hikaru and she pressed her cheek to your shoulder looking away from you. "Are you sure you're OK? You know you can talk to me about anything," you said.

"I'll be fine," she said quietly, then pulled out of the hug and looked into your eyes. "I love you, Ollie. I just want you to know that."

"I love you too, Hikaru," you said sincerely. "Forever and ever."

She kissed you on the cheek much like Margot had, and then headed for her room for the night.

Chapter 25

“Ollie!” Hikaru said, her voice brimming with energy and excitement as she came in the apartment door. It was Sunday and you’d woken up earlier than you wanted, as usual, so that your sleep schedule wouldn’t get out of whack for the work week. She’d gotten up, as usual, and made breakfast while refusing to let you help, and then while you had settled in to get some painting done on a new unit of Arclite Transhuman Ravagers that you’d put together last week, she’d headed out.

“What is it?” you asked, setting down the mini you’d been painting and looking over at her.

She’d kicked off her shoes and came over to you, and big smile on her face. “I got a job offer!” she said. “Well, I was asked to apply, and they said I’m pretty much a shoo-in. And it’s not in my field or anything, but it’s a part-time job so I can start actually working and making money and being an adult. Guess where it is?”

You were pretty sure you knew exactly where it was, but you didn’t want her to know you’d had a hand in it. “Where?” you asked instead.

“The Cafe around the corner, so it’s super close to home too!” Hikaru squealed happily. “Your friend Paula came up to me after the whole breakfast rush cleared out and talked to me for a bit, and then she told me I should apply and she could get me to start with a training shift this week. It’s just a barista job but it’s still *something*.”

“That’s fantastic, Hikaru,” you said, standing up and squeezing her in a hug as she practically vibrated in your arms with excitement.

“Thank you so, so much for everything you’ve been doing, Ollie,” she said, still hugging you. “Letting me stay here without rent or anything, buying all the groceries - you’re the absolute best person I know.”

“You’re my favourite cousin,” you said. “How could I not?”

“I’m not even your cousin anymore though,” she said, pulling back from the hug and looking at you. “I’m like... your ex-cousin if that’s even a thing. But you’re the sweetest person I know. And now I can finally start chipping in.”

“Whoa,” you said, shaking your head. “You need savings, and to be able to buy stuff for yourself. There’s no way I’m letting you chip in on rent or something when I was already covering this place by myself.”

“Ollie-” she started to complain.

“You already make me breakfast, and most of my dinners,” you said. “And don’t think I haven’t noticed you cleaning up around here too. That’s more than enough ‘chipping in’ for now, OK?”

She gave you a look and then sighed in acceptance. “Fine,” she said. “But that means you can’t fight me over making breakfast anymore. Just accept that I’m doing it.”

“Fine,” you agreed. “But only if you agree that if you get sick or something, I’m going to be the one taking care of *you* and you don’t try to push yourself.”

“Agreed,” she said, holding out a hand. You shook it with a smile and then pulled her into another hug.

“I’m so happy for you,” you said. “And proud.”

“Thanks, Ollie,” she said softly, and it was good to hear the smile on her lips.

The ringing of your Discord app from your computer wasn’t something you were expecting. It was late-ish on Sunday night and you’d spent the afternoon at the Game Store playing Arclite even though you hadn’t gotten your new Ravager unit painted up completely. The game went longer than expected, but then they always did, and you’d made it home just in time for dinner with Hikaru and Margot. Now you were going through the notes that Hannah had sent you on your upcoming fitness journey.

What you were, and were not, allowed to eat was depressing. You were already missing Paula’s pastries.

You clicked over to your Discord and raised your eyebrows, grabbing your headset and putting it on before accepting the call.

“Hey, Charli,” you said. “It’s good to hear from you. What’s up?”

“Hey, Ollie,” Charli said on the other end of the call. Her voice was almost cartoonishly high, which you knew she hated, but she also sounded ridiculous if she tried to talk in a lower register so she’d long ago learned to live it. The fact that she compensated for having ‘Kid Voice’ by going Goth wasn’t lost on you. “How are things?”

“Pretty good,” you said. “Nothing I can complain about at all. And I saw that you hit another milestone on your YouTube channel. Congratulations!”

“Thanks,” she said warmly. “And I did see your text when it happened, I appreciated it. Sorry I didn’t text back, I was kind of getting flooded at the time.”

“No problem at all,” you said. Charli had graduated from college at the same time as you with a double major in communications and psychology and had started up her own YouTube channel that covered a bunch of nerdy news stuff, interviews at conventions, and highlighted her cosplay and LARP activities. Considering she’d been the President of the university LARP club back in college, you’d never been surprised by her success in the nerd sphere.

“So, this is a little awkward,” she said. “I’m coming to your city next month for Sword and Blaster Con because they invited me to attend as a guest judge for their cosplay and mini painting contests, but the event staff just got back to me and one of their board members fucked off with a bunch of their funds and there’s a legal thing now. The long and short of it is that the Con is still going to happen, but they can’t cover my hotel stay like they were supposed to. I was wondering if you could put me up the weekend of the 17th? I can get you and a couple of friends some VIP passes to the Con, and chip in for meals and stuff.”

Your immediate gut reaction was to say yes - Charli might not have been as old or good a friend as Hannah or Margot, but she *was* a friend even if you hadn’t talked properly in a couple of years. That was adult life though - things happened, and people got busy. There was, however, another issue.

“I’d love to,” you said. “One thing is, my cousin is living with me so my guest room is kind of occupied. She’ll probably still be here then, so I can offer you a very nice couch. Oh, or I can ask my neighbour Margot - she lives alone right now and has a guest room too, she’d probably be willing to let you stay with her and then you can just come one apartment over for meals and stuff.”

“Well, obviously I’d prefer a room and a bed, but I’ll take a couch,” Charli said. “You said your cousin is a she?”

“Yes,” you said.

“Then I’m good with it,” she said. “God, Ollie. Thank you so much. This means a lot. Let me know how many VIP passes I should get set aside - are you still stuck at the hip with Hannah?”

“I am,” you chuckled. “Always will be. I’ll see if she wants to go, and a couple of other friends, and I’ll get you a number.”

“You’re amazing, Ollie,” Charli said. “OK! Now I can get back to planning this trip, and everything else. I’ll give you a shout. Thank you!”

“You’re welcome,” you said, and the two of you hung up the call.

It took almost twenty minutes before you realised that you hadn’t told her about April. *That* was going to be a fun surprise for her - Charli loved one of the darker anime that April had voiced a major character in, along with two of the games. She was going to be *shocked*.