

Unexpected Affection Chapter 1-7

By BreaktheBar

Commissioned by Dissidia

The following story is a custom Harem commission from the user Dissidia over on CHYOA. You can expect many of the same themes as my own regular series, though of note is that the main character is a little different than I would usually write. Hopefully you enjoy these first chapters!

Chapter 1

After a long day at work hunched over the keyboard, it was always a relief to sit down at home and just mellow out for a half hour. Your apartment was set up the perfect way you wanted it, with your Marvel posters framed along the walls of your living room, the shelves displaying your collectable statues now lit by little LED lights, and your hobby desk was *finally* organized to a point where it actually looked clean.

The only thing left that you wanted to do was reorganize your bookshelf.

The last thing that Hannah was going to do was sit around and watch you reorganize your bookshelf.

“Ollie, come on,” she said as she was pacing back and forth between the kitchen and the living room. “You need to get yourself out there. There are plenty of fish in the sea and at least one of them has your name on her.”

“I don’t even like fish,” you said with a little smirk.

It was one of those discussions that you’d had with Hannah for years. The blonde woman was your best and oldest friend, even if you were miles apart in almost every facet of life. You worked a high-paying job coding for a Tech startup, while she worked a surprisingly moderate-paying job as an athletic trainer for the local MLS team. She was a tight little bundle of muscles and energy, you... well, you were fat. You knew it; most fat people *knew* they were fat. You were very aware of it. You just... changing that was hard.

“Fine,” Hannah said. “Then there’s plenty of squirrels in the forest. Or penguins in the Arctic.”

“You know I’m fine,” you said. “What about you? When was the last time you had a boyfriend?”

“I went on a blind date two weeks ago,” Hannah said. “And just because it was kind of awful doesn’t mean I’m going to stop trying. You deserve someone who is going to love you, and so do I.”

“I’ve got you, and I’ve got Hikaru around now too. What do I need a girlfriend for?”

“Sex, Ollie! Romance! You are the sweetest, most loving person I know and you deserve to have that back,” Hannah said, throwing her hands up in the air like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

The whole fat thing wasn’t new. You’d grown up fat. Or ‘big-boned’ as people had said at one point as if they were trying to manifest you becoming a linebacker for the football team in your future. The problem was, you liked music and comics and D&D, not running around slamming into things and risking bodily injury. Sports were a dead end for you, which made your friendship with Hannah all the weirder back then considering she was good at *everything* physical, and up until junior year had been better than all the boys at athletic stuff too.

“Look, I heard about this new app,” Hannah said, coming over and flopping down on the couch next to you, leaning into you and resting her head on your shoulder and taking your phone from the coffee table in front of you. She typed in the password - she’d known it since the eighth grade - and went to the App Store. “It’s supposed to be a dating app for nerds. I want to make a profile for you.”

“Hannah…” you sighed.

“Just let me? Please?” Hannah asked, looking up at you and flashing you that overexaggerated, pouting puppy face she had used since you were both ten.

“Fine,” you said. “Fine, you can make the profile. I don’t know if I’ll ever use it though.”

“Well, one step at a time,” Hannah said, looking it up and quickly downloading it.

You’d tried apps before back in college. It had been a frustrating experience, spending the time to craft funny messages based on a girl’s profile. Agonizing over them for an hour sometimes, just because you knew you needed every ounce of help to get a match. And then none ever coming. What was going to make this dating app experience any better?

“There, downloaded. And we can use those pictures I took when we went to the aquarium and that beer festival,” Hannah said.

She opened the app and started filling out your profile, not even really asking you for anything other than to approve the photos and read out her responses for you to the questions.

“There, done,” she finally said, pressing Save on the profile page. The app loaded and showed the picture of some woman with swiping directions - just like every other dating app. “Wait, what’s this?”

She clicked an icon on the screen and an advertisement came up.

"It's just an ad, tap the X when it shows up in the top corner," you said.

"No, wait," Hannah said. "This is an ad from the app company. They're running a competition with their new spokesperson in the state. You can win a date with her as long as you swipe twenty times every day for the next week."

"Right," you said sarcastically. "They say that, but they probably already know who's going to win. What minor celebrity did they hook into it? The weather woman from Channel 5? Or maybe that lady who reports the sports on Channel 11?"

Hannah snorted and shook her head, her lips breaking into a grin. "Nope," she shook her head. "You are never going to guess who it is."

"So show me," you said, rolling your eyes.

Hannah turned the phone and it took you a second to recognize who it was.

"No way!" you said.

"Way," Hannah said. "One of your Uber-nerd crushes. April Vilanova, voice actress extraordinaire."

"I don't have a crush on her," you said. "I just really like all her work."

"Yeah, enough to buy one of everything she's in," Hannah pointed out.

"Whatever, it's not that bad," you said.

"Well, I'm signing you up for this," Hannah said, tapping your screen. "You better swipe."

"Fine, fine," you said. "I will. But there's no way I win."

"Never say never, Ollie Warren," she said. "You never know when a good thing might fall right in your lap."

Chapter 2

Getting up early was something that you'd been forced into by your job. If you had your way you would be a night owl and sleep in until 11 AM every morning, but the founder of the startup you worked for was one of those 'early bird gets the worm' kind of guys who did CrossFit in his spare time, so you were expected at your desk at the office at a miserable 8:30 AM, which meant you usually needed to be up by 7 AM to get ready for the day and make the commute.

Unfortunately, you had quickly learned, sleeping in on the weekend would fuck with your ability to get up on Monday, so you had to be up anyways. This did have the silver lining of being able to get up to make breakfast for your guest.

"Ollie!" Hikaru said loudly when she came out of your guest room. "*I was going to make you breakfast this morning.*"

That room had once been your home office, but you'd happily shifted things around in the apartment when Hikaru Crockman had called you to ask if you could put her up for a little while. She was your cousin by marriage, which was fairly obvious considering how utterly white you were and how completely Japanese she was. Well, mostly Japanese. Apparently she was a quarter Korean and a quarter White. Her father had married your Aunt Liz and brought Hikaru into the family with him. She was a few years younger than you, but the first time you met her she'd been such a sweet little kid who spoke in Japanese half the time and stumbled through English in such a cute way that you couldn't help but make sure she felt welcome and started learning the language better.

That had been more than a decade and a half ago now, and your step-cousin had graduated college and was moving to the city to look for work.

"Well, I got here first so you're just going to have to eat what I make you," you said with a little grin. It had become a thing in the last couple of weeks since she'd arrived - even though she didn't have a job to go to yet, she woke up early with you and tried to make sure you had something to eat on your way out the door. That first weekend you'd woken up to waffles. Now you wanted to treat her back.

"No, no, no," Hikaru shook her head, stomping over to the kitchen and starting to push you. She was a tall girl but almost willowy thin so the pushing didn't have much effect against your weight, but she was insistent so you let her move you. "I need to pay you back *somehow*, Ollie. You can't just do everything for me."

"I can if I want," you teased her.

"I'm better in the kitchen than you anyways," she said, frowning and pushing you out of the kitchen entirely.

“That’s big talk coming from the girl who used to only eat rice,” you teased her.

“Yeah, when I was six,” Hikaru said. “Now go sit at the table.”

“Alright, alright,” you sighed. You weren’t used to other people doing things around your apartment for you, so it felt weird letting Hikaru do stuff in the kitchen. You went and, instead of sitting, you grabbed some plates, cups and cutlery and set the table before sitting down. From the table you could see Hikaru working in the kitchen, but not what she was working on. Her hair was lighter nowadays, though only half of that was from her mixed genes and the other half was from her adding some auburn highlights to accent the natural waves in her hair. She was dressed in a cute little t-shirt that you hadn’t seen before that had characters from Studio Ghibli films chasing each other around the front and back in a continuous circle, and as she worked she had a soft smile on her face. When she glanced up and saw you looking at her she blushed a little and then scowled at you playfully.

You blushed in return, feeling silly for getting caught looking at her, and you took out your phone.

Hannah had texted you again before her early morning run, reminding you that you needed to swipe twenty times on that dating app again today. It was supposed to be the last day, thankfully, and maybe she’d leave off of her campaign.

You opened the app and started swiping. There were a few scantily-clad women that immediately screamed either Scam or Prostitute to you, and a few more that were obviously just there to advertise their Instagram accounts. Then there were the women that you were a little hypocritical about saying no to - you certainly weren’t a physical catch or specimen by any means, but you should at least feel *some* spark of attraction to someone you swiped positive on, right? You swiped right on two women in total. One was a girl who looked kind of average-pretty, but your years of spending hours in the character select screen of various games told you with a different haircut she’d probably be way prettier. The other was a woman who was clearly way out of your league, who worked in recruitment and headhunting. You weren’t sure whether she was really there for the dating app, or just trolling for potential clients since this was supposed to be an app for nerds to meet and date.

As soon as you swiped left on the final likely-scam, your app exploded with fireworks. That was new, did you get a match or something? It took a moment to load, and then it swapped to your Messages tab - the list where your matches were supposed to be were completely empty except for one lone message with a picture of the app logo instead of a woman.

Frowning to yourself, you opened the message and read it. Then you had to read it again.

“Holy shit,” you said.

“Something wrong?” Hikaru asked, coming out of the kitchen carrying two beautiful-looking omelettes with cheese, veggies and ham inside them. She slid one onto your plate and another onto hers.

“I- No, I guess not,” you said, shaking your head. “I just... I think I won.”

“Won what?” Hikaru asked, raising an eyebrow before she went back to the kitchen to get the OJ.

“That contest on the app that Hannah signed me up for.”

“Wait... really?” Hikaru frowned.

You turned your phone and let her see the message. It was long, explaining the process and how I would receive a call later in the day to get the ball rolling.

“W-wow,” Hikaru said once she had read the whole thing. “You’re really going on a date with April Vilanova?”

“Well, it’s supposed to be dinner and a movie,” you said. “And it’s all a photo opp for the app I guess, so it’s more like I get to meet her and take some photos than going on an actual *date*.”

“Still, though...” Hikaru said. “That’s a big deal, right? She’s famous.”

“Mhmm,” you nodded, and then shook your head as you put your phone down so you could carve into the omelette she made. You popped the first bite into your mouth and you were hit with a swirl of flavours that exploded on your tongue. “Mm!” you hummed in surprise, then swallowed and blinked, looking over at Hikaru. “That’s amazing!”

“Really?” she asked, blushing and grinning widely. “You like it?”

“I love it,” you said, reaching across the table and squeezing her hand. “Maybe you really *do* know how to cook. You’re going to make whoever smartens up and dates you a very happy man.”

“I hope so,” she said, smiling proudly. “But, um, shouldn’t you tell Hannah about the thing? She did sign you up for it, right?”

You quickly dialled Hannah, and she picked up on the second ring. “Hey, Ollie! What’s shakin’?”

“You know that date raffle you signed me up for?” you asked. “Well, I won.”

“What?!” she shouted into the phone. You weren’t sure where she was, but hopefully she was alone. “You won?”

“Yeah,” you said. “I wasn’t expecting it either. I’m supposed to get more details from them later.”

“Ho-ly shit,” Hannah said. “Wow, that’s so cool!”

“Let me talk to her,” Hikaru requested, asking for your phone.

“Hikaru wants to talk to you,” you said. “Hold on.”

You passed over the phone, and the girls started talking quickly and you lost any say in what they were planning. Apparently, you needed new clothes and a haircut. Soon they were planning a shopping trip for you, and they would bring along your friend Margot from next door to boot since she would obviously want in on helping you out as well.

You didn’t think that was necessary, but when two of your closest people were insisting, how could you say no?

“Bye, Hannah,” you said once Hikaru finally passed back your phone.

“Bye, Ollie,” Hannah said. “See you later! Don’t try and get out of it, we’re counting on you here.”

“OK, OK,” you said. “I’ll be there.”

You hung up, and Hikaru was smiling softly. “What?” you asked.

“Nothing,” she said. “You just seemed to really like my omelette.”

You had, in fact, practically inhaled it. Blushing, you shrugged. “Alright, I admit it. You’re better than OK at breakfast.”

That got her smiling even wider.

Chapter 3

You were nervous as hell. Not because you were going out or anything - you'd long ago gotten used to the occasional looks you got for your size, and while you didn't usually eat at fancy places like the restaurant the town car was pulling up in front of, it wasn't like you were worried about getting your forks wrong or something (mostly because it wasn't *that* fancy).

No, you were shitting bricks because you were about to meet April Freaking Vilanova.

The week and a half since you had gotten the message that you'd won the raffle on the app had been a bit hectic. Your coworkers at work either didn't care, or *really* cared because they were also fans of the different TV shows and games that she'd voiced characters for. Hannah and Hikaru were relentless in getting you 'prepared' for the date, and you'd had a couple of 'practice dates' with both of them at your apartment over dinner. You felt like those had made you more nervous rather than less as both women insisted you learn to be more direct at flirting.

Even Margot, your friend from the apartment next door, had been in on it. She'd helped pick out your outfit along with the others, and had sat in on one of the 'practice dates' to help give you encouragement. All three of them seemed to think you should know all of these different signals and gestures and things that, deep down, you knew were silly.

Yeah, this was a 'date.' But it wasn't a *date*. It was more like a meet-and-greet at a Comic Con - April Vilanova was getting paid to be the face of the App, which meant she was getting paid to be on this 'date.' And that kinda felt a little gross to you, and also a little bad.

You still didn't want to waste the opportunity to meet her though, and you'd already been sweating a little when the town car that the App 'event manager' had booked for you showed up in front of your apartment. Now you were getting out in front of the steakhouse and had to blink a couple of times because of all the extra lights. There was a red carpet leading from the parking lot which definitely wasn't usually there, and they had erected one of those background walls that had the app logo and the steakhouse logo and a couple of others repeated over and over.

There was a photographer already taking photos of you coming out of the car, and that made you immediately feel self-conscious, but you did the first thing your friends had told you to do and you fixed your posture and smoothed out your suit jacket, then put on a smile.

Fake it 'till you make it, Ollie, you could hear Hannah's voice in your head.

You were approached by the event planner, who shook your hand and then led you down the short carpet to the photo-op wall. You already knew everything she told you since she seemed to just be repeating the instructions she'd told you on the phone, and over email. Twice.

Then she left you there in front of the two photographers and you felt awkward as fuck. They also seemed to be feeling awkward.

“Sorry if I have a nip slip, fellas,” you said. “This dress just doesn’t want to cooperate with me.”

One of them smirked and the other smiled and snorted at your stupid joke.

At some unheard cue, both of them raised their cameras and started snapping pictures off to the side, and you looked around and realized April was coming up the red carpet from the other direction as you had where a walled tent had been set up.

Holy shit, she was actually here.

“Wow,” she said with a grin as she walked up to you. “You’re a lot taller than I expected.”

Your mouth worked once as you took her in, unable to produce sound for a split second. April was... well, she was gorgeous, but in a different way than the photos you’d seen of her. And even then the interviews you’d seen from various conventions or online reporters. You realized quickly it was because she wasn’t just an image on a screen, she was here in front of you.

April had a naturally warm, tanned skin tone from her Sicilian heritage, along with gorgeous brown eyes and dark chestnut hair that had been styled and coiffed by a professional. Her nose had a slight hook to it, like the beak of a bird of prey, but it suited her face. She was also a little short, maybe the same height as Hannah when you had expected her to be a little taller like Hikaru, but she was wearing a pretty burgundy dress with a slit up one leg that revealed the matching burgundy heels she was wearing. It also featured a generous amount of her rather prodigious amount of cleavage.

“H-Hi,” you said. “I get that a lot, actually. You make that dress look really beautiful.” It felt stupid coming out of your mouth, and part of you panicked that you’d fumbled the compliment - Margot had drilled into your head that you should compliment what she was wearing once, and her hair once, and something about her smile later on.

April smiled though, her eyes narrowing as she did it and cocked her head to the side. “Thank you so much, that’s sweet! So, are you ready to take some pictures with me, tall, dark and handsome?”

“Sure,” you said.

April knew what to do. You definitely didn’t. You felt like an idiot for the first couple of minutes, but you tried your best to keep a smile on your face, to suck in your gut a little but not so much it was obvious, and you made sure you did the one thing that Hannah had beaten into your head.

No Hover Handing.

The first time you touched April's shoulder you were nervous as fuck. It wasn't touching a woman that had you feeling that way, just the whole overwhelming situation of it all. Still, she didn't cry out or shoot you a sour look or anything, so you got a little more comfortable that she was OK with it.

Then she turned to you. "James Bond pose?" she asked with a grin.

"OK," you chuckled, and you both turned and pressed your backs together, raising up finger guns as you posed. Then she called out, "Lightsaber battle!" and soon you were making silly faces at each other as you swung pretend lightsabers. Then she was pretend-stabbing you in the chest as you looked shocked. Old Timey Fisticuffs. Kawaii Japanese Schoolgirl throwing up peace signs. Horrified by something off camera. Looking stoically off into the distance. Old Farmer Couple.

"Alright," the event manager finally said as April seemed to start running out of silly ideas. You were both laughing at your mutual antics. "We need to get you inside now. We'll take a few photos during the meal, but we'll try to be circumspect. Then you two are off to a private screening of *For the Money of Love*."

"Great," April said with a smile, then looped her arm through yours and looked up at you with a smile. "I'm so sorry, but after all that I've completely forgotten your name and they just told me in the tent."

"I'm Ollie," you said.

"Well, it's nice to meet you, Ollie," she said. "I'm April. Let's go eat, I could murder a cow for the steak right now."

Chapter 4

Inside the restaurant the lighting was just slightly lowered, creating a comfortable and intimate ambience that partnered with the fancy but not ostentatious decor. The place was nicer than a 'brand name' steakhouse for sure but wasn't trying to be a Michelin star sort of restaurant, which you assumed made it a good first date location, and also aesthetically pleasing for the photographers.

You could feel the eyes on you and April as you walked in and the host met you at the front and immediately escorted you deeper into the dining area. Realistically you knew it had to be because of the photographers - the other clientele of the place didn't exactly scream 'nerds who would recognize April' to you. It was business and salesmen with their wives or girlfriends, a smattering of older wealthy folks, and way at the back what looked like a big wealthy Greek family with about eight kids and eight adults around a table. The problem was that even though you knew it wasn't you they were looking at, it still felt like it.

You just felt out of place. In your clothes, in the restaurant. With April on your arm.

The host turned to you as he gestured to a table that was set a little bit away from the others, likely to give better room for the photographers. You stepped forward and swallowed a little before pulling your arm from April's and sliding out the chair for her.

She smiled again at you, the emotion reaching up to her eyes in a sort of genuine way that made you believe she wasn't just putting it on, and she sat lightly. "Thank you," she said.

"You're welcome," you managed to say without stammering and shuffled around the table to sit across from her.

Almost as soon as the host left, your waiter appeared and began rattling off the menu for the evening - apparently, it was set and you weren't getting a choice - though he did suggest wine pairings. As he talked you felt the beating of your heart in your ears drowning out his words, the *whump whump whump* in time with your nervousness as you tried not to gape at your surroundings, or at April.

"What do you think, Ollie?" April asked you, knocking you out of your head. "Are you a wine guy, or should we go for something else?"

"I- uh- well if you'd like wine then I'm totally OK with that, but I'm not much of a drinker at all really," you said. "I could do a cider though, that's refreshing."

"Oh, that sounds perfect," April said, turning to the waiter. "I'll do the same, please."

The waiter gave a slight frown, just a fraction of a moment at not making out like a bandit since we hadn't ordered an expensive bottle, but nodded and backed away.

“God, I’m glad you’re not a wine guy,” April said, leaning forward with a little conspiratorial smirk. “I mean, I can drink it, but all I taste is the alcohol. I never get any of the ‘flavours’ that everyone talks about.”

“Same,” you said and chuckled. “I just don’t have a refined enough palette, I guess.”

“Well, we’ll cheers to unrefined palettes then when we’ve got our pleb ciders,” April grinned. “So, Ollie. What’s a guy like you doing in a place like this?”

That made you smile a little. “Well, my friend Hannah decided I *had* to get on the app and she made my profile for me.”

“Looking for something in particular?” April asked.

You, you thought, but didn’t say it. “Just someone who likes me, and who I can give my all to,” you said instead. “I like people, so someone who isn’t afraid to socialize or anything.”

“So Hannah is shy?” April asked,

That made you bark a laugh. “No,” you said, shaking your head. “God, no. We’re the exact opposites except for that. We’ve been friends since we were six.”

April asked you questions, and you answered them as truthfully as you could. You told her about Hannah and some silly stories from when the two of you were kids, and about Hikaru as well. She laughed along, and you realized that you felt... comfortable just talking. You asked her who her Hannah was, and she named a couple of people, and most of her stories revolved around a woman named Ellen that was her closest friend.

Then April pivoted the conversation and asked if you watched anime, and you complimented her on a couple of her more fringe early performances from when she was just starting out in voice acting. That got you down a rabbit hole about an anime that she’d had a bit part in but that she loved as you worked your way through your appetizer salads.

“And honestly,” April said, “I kind of developed a new hobby because- and I don’t talk about this in interviews so promise me you won’t spread it around- I started collecting the statues of the big mechs, right? Like the ones you have to build. But I didn’t like how some of them were painted or were just saw plastic, so I learned how to paint and weather them and stuff, and that got me into tabletop games.”

“No way,” you chuckled. “What games?”

“Well, I have stuff from the big games, but my favourite models right now are from this company Arclite. I just love the space-fantasy vibe with the magic and the tech combined. And the big mechs, obviously.”

“No way!” You repeated yourself. “I collect and paint the Transhumans. What faction are you collecting?”

April’s jaw dropped. “You’re a transhuman scum?!” she laughed and grinned. “I collect Dragonaughts.”

You shook yourself like you were disgusted, and she scoffed and you both started laughing.

“Do you have any pictures of your army?” April asked.

“Yeah,” you said, pulling out your phone. “Hold on. But I want to see yours, too.”

“OK,” she said and started pulling up her own photos on her phone too. Soon you traded phones and were swiping through the albums. “Oh, Jesus, you’re way better at painting than me,” she said.

“No way, you’re really good,” you said. Her colour scheme was bright and made the dragon-mechs look like they were bursting with fire or lava.

“Yours look so much more gritty and realistic though.”

“But yours are blasting with colour, and you got it really vibrant in contrast to the dark armour. I bet they look great on a table to play,” you said, handing back her phone.

She shrugged a little. “I’ve never actually played,” she said. “I don’t know anyone else who does, and it’s kind of intimidating just going into a shop to buy a kit or two.”

“Oh, I know a place that’s really friendly,” you said. “It’s the shop down on 43rd. Their staff is great and do teaching games for all the big games, and they stay open late pretty much every night of the week if you’re busy during the day.”

“Cool,” she said, smiling happily as she passed your phone back as well. Your conversation halted for a minute as your main courses were delivered - prime rib with assorted vegetables and a smear of mashed potatoes that you were pretty sure were supposed to be decorative - and once the waiter left to get you each a new cider, April looked up to you again. “So, did you read the Arclite novel that came out earlier this year?”

Chapter 5

"OK, I have a question," April said. You had both finished your main courses about twenty minutes earlier and were picking away at the almost-too-sweet creme brulee that had been given to you as desserts.

"You've had a lot of questions," you teased lightly, smiling across the table at her.

She rolled her eyes a little and shook her head. "You know what I mean."

"Go for it," you said.

"Do you actually want to see this movie?" April asked. "Because I'm pretty sure they want a few more pictures of us leaving, but there aren't any photo-op things at the theatre so we could maybe blow it off and go check out that store you were talking about?"

You blinked and raised your eyebrows. "I don't really care about the movie at all if that's what you want to do."

She grinned broadly. "God, yes. I don't need to see another RomCom - I tried to get them to make the movie that new Objective Improbable movie but apparently that was a no-go."

"I saw that with Hannah," you said. "It was pretty good."

"No spoilers!" April said. "I still haven't seen it."

The two of you finished your desserts and as you got up to leave you pulled out your wallet to leave a tip on the table. The App company was paying for the whole date but you still felt like you should leave something for the decent service you'd gotten. The event manager bustled over and practically shoved your wallet back in your pocket though, insisting that you not, and you caught April trying to suppress a grin as she watched you get fussed over.

You were brought back outside and took a few more photos in front of the photo-op screen, and then the event manager asked you both how the date had been going so far and some other questions while they recorded some video. You couldn't hear April's answers at the other end of the red carpet, but you were honest about how lovely she was, and how lucky you felt to have had dinner and a great conversation with her.

Then the photographers were packing up, and a couple of workers were rolling up the red carpet and taking down the photo-op wall.

"Ollie!" April called to you. You looked over and she was near the walled tent, half inside. "I'm going to change quickly, OK?"

You nodded and she winked at you and disappeared into the tent. She only took about five minutes and came back out wearing a completely different outfit. The dress was gone and she was wearing a T-shirt under a zip-up hoodie, along with tight black jeans and bright red Converse shoes. She was still all done up with her makeup, but she was wearing a pair of black and red-rimmed glasses that suited her face and a rough woven beanie.

“Sorry I put the girls away,” she laughed as she walked up to you. “I figured if we’re going to a game store I should probably dress down.”

“Well, I like this look,” you said with a smile. “It suits you. I’m feeling overdressed now, though.”

“Oh, you’re fine,” April assured you, then reached up and gestured for you to take off your suit jacket. “Here, I’ll give your jacket to my assistant and she’ll drop it off with you tomorrow. Hannah and Hikaru have good taste, this shirt looked good under the jacket and without it.”

You pulled off the jacket and she carefully folded it and brought it back over to the tent. Then you gulped a little as you felt more exposed. It was a warm evening so it wasn’t the chill - the suit jacket had been like a little suit of armour helping cover you up. Your new shirt, which was collarless but had buttons like a golf shirt, fit you well enough but at your size it still showed your bulging gut. You quickly untucked your shirt to try and make it a little less obvious and then chewed on your upper lip for a moment.

“There, all set,” April said as she came back to you and slipped her arm through yours again. “I checked and that shop is only a few blocks away. We could get a ride but I thought it would be nice to walk?”

“Sure,” you said and took a breath.

The two of you set off. It would be a fifteen-minute walk, and you and April slipped back into the conversation from the dinner table. She really was the happy, preppy nerd that she came across as in her interviews, and she really was a fan of all the shows she’d gotten to work on. She played video games, she loved movies, and she had even just started reading one of the big fantasy series that you loved and owned all the books for in hardcover.

You were about a block and a half from the game shop when you saw the homeless couple bundled up on the stoop of another closed store. “Just one second,” you said to April and slowed as you approached them. You spoke up. “Hey, folks. Can I offer you some help for food tonight?”

In the dim lighting from the nearby streetlights, you could tell that the man was zonked out on some sort of a drug, but the woman looked up at you a little glassy-eyed. “I could eat,” she said.

You pulled out your wallet and grabbed a couple of the cards that you kept there and slipped the wallet back into your pocket before stepping forward and handing her two of them. “The grocery store is closed now, but you should be able to get something tomorrow morning.”

The woman held up the cards and realized they were gift cards to the local supermarket. She frowned for a moment, obviously annoyed that you weren’t handing her cash, but then shifted uncomfortably and looked up at you. “Thanks.”

“You’re welcome. Stay safe,” you said.

April slipped her arm through yours again as you started walking.

“That was really nice,” she said quietly. “You just keep gift cards in your wallet like that?”

“I’m lucky to have what I do,” you said. “And to not have made some simple mistakes back in high school. It doesn’t take much to feel life has turned against you and just ride it to the bottom. I just carry the gift cards because I was always taught not to just hand over cash because that gets wasted too easily on smokes or drugs.”

“Ollie, has anyone ever told you that you are an absolute gem?” April asked. “I do some volunteer work with a Homeless Shelter, and I know what you mean. The stories I’ve heard from folks...” she sighed. “The gift cards are definitely better than cash.”

April hugged your arm for a moment and shot you a lopsided grin, and you shrugged and smiled back before you continued walking.

Chapter 6

“Oh my God, this one is so cute,” April said as she held up a model pack from the shelf.

You had been in the shop for about half an hour, slowly browsing the store. The two staff that were on had both waved hello to you and called some quick greetings, but there was a Magic event going on and they were fairly busy. That meant you and April had the big retail part of the store to yourself. You’d already been through the comics and the board games, and now you were in amongst the miniatures and tabletop stuff.

“April, that thing is disgusting,” you laughed. She was holding up a slime demon from the latest release of Battlehammer, its box art painted to be a disgusting vomit green mixed with fluorescent oranges that made you think of dangerous mushrooms.

“But look at his little face,” April said, holding it closer to you. “Imagine painting those eyes a normal colour.”

The model *did* have a weirdly puppy-like face when you ignored the disgusting paint scheme. “OK, I see it, I just don’t agree with the idea of making a slime demon cute,” you chuckled.

“That’s fine,” she said, putting the box back as her other hand rested on your arm. She reached up and pulled a bigger box from a higher shelf, and you helped her get it down. “This was actually my very first kit.” It was a big battle mech from the anime show that she’d done some voicing of minor characters for.

“You started with one this big?” you asked in surprise.

“Go big or go home,” she laughed. “You know what they say about big power fists, right?”

“No?” you asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Big power pistons,” she giggled, squeezing your arm before pushing the kit back up on the shelf.

You browsed a little more, with April exclaiming over this kit or that one, and asking your opinion on things that were right in front of you, or seemingly pulled out of thin air. Eventually, you worked your way out of the tabletop area and into the decorative statues and random collectables.

“Oooh,” she said, picking up a plastic version of the One Ring. “Let’s check if it works.” She slipped it onto her finger.

“April?” you asked. “April, where’d you go?” You waved your hands around like you couldn’t find her and messed up her hair a little as she laughed and caught your hands with hers.

She pulled off the prop ring and put it back, then turned to you while still holding both your hands. "Ollie, how the hell are you single?"

"Um-" you said, feeling the blood run from your face a little. "I- well, I mean... I've just never really met someone who I liked that also liked me back that way. I've always been, well... like this and-"

"Oh, fuck," April said, her eyes going wide as she realised how embarrassed you were. And then she did something that you weren't expecting at all.

April went up on her toes and gave you a peck on the lips.

"I'm so sorry for being a dick," April said. "I wasn't thinking that would be some sort of a rude question. But obviously, it was. I just put my foot in my mouth."

"Uhm, well..." you said, blinking rapidly as you tried to compute that April had just- She'd-

"Ollie," she said, smiling up at you softly as she squeezed your hands. "I gotta tell you, you're cute when you're flustered."

"Thanks?" you said questioningly.

"I really am sorry," she repeated, dropping one of your hands to pull you over to the next display. "I didn't mean it in a bad way, I just can't believe a guy with your heart and your quick intelligence isn't-" She took a breath, checking herself for a moment, then looked back at you. "I just think you're a really great guy, is what I meant. I'm really enjoying this first date with you."

"Thanks," you said, breathing out a slight sigh and trying to get out of your head.

"Are those prop lightsabers over there?" April asked.

"Yeah," you nodded. "Hold on, I bet Anthony over at the cash will let me open up the case if I ask for the key. One second."

"Come on up," April said, pulling Ollie from the back of the Uber. It had been a bit of a tight squeeze knees-wise to get in for you, but when you and April had finished touring the game shop, each of you leaving with a couple of comic books that she wouldn't let you pay for, she'd said she wanted to show you a good time like you'd shown her.

Pulling up in front of the hotel had been a bit of a surprise, but you quickly realized she probably needed to grab something before you headed where she wanted to bring you. Part of you

hoped she wanted to go dancing - you loved the idea of it, but your size had always made you feel off about going out unless it was in a big group and you hadn't done that since college. If you were going to a dance club she would need to change into something nicer again, which made sense.

She held your hand in the elevator, the two of you talking about the latest season of Throne of Bones and how you hoped the season finale wouldn't be a dud. It felt like hanging out with Hannah, though April was way nerdier than your best friend.

April led you to her room and asked you in politely, and you followed to find she'd been given a small suite by the App company.

"I'll be right back," she said as she flipped on the bathroom light. "Feel free to get comfortable."

"OK?" you said, frowning a little as you looked around the fancy hotel room. There was a little living area and an open archway that led right into the bedroom. It looked like April had been here at least a day or two and she'd left a book in the sitting area. You sat down and kicked off your shoes, then reached for the book. You hadn't read it before, and it had an attractive cover that hinted at it being a fantasy adventure, so you cracked it open and started reading the first page. You doubted you'd get very far if you were just there to pick something up, or if she just didn't like public toilets which was reasonable, but maybe you could see if it was a book you should pick up yourself.

Chapter 7

You looked up from the book, about three pages in and already decided that you would probably find a copy for yourself when April came back out of the bathroom. She'd touched up her makeup, and her hat was gone and she'd redone her hair. It wasn't quite as perfectly presented as it had been earlier for the photos, but looked more natural because of it.

"This is pretty good," you said, raising the book and then closing it.

"I'm enjoying it so far," she said, walking across the living room area with a slightly raised eyebrow as she looked you over. You started to stand up, thinking you'd be leaving, but she stepped right up to you and put a hand on your chest, leaning in and kissing you.

"Mm!" you mumbled in surprise and sat back down, April followed you without breaking lip contact and then was straddling and sitting on your knee as she kept kissing you.

"I don't normally do this," she murmured in between kisses. "I just really like you, Ollie."

And she kissed you again.

Eventually, she realized you weren't really kissing her back and she pulled away looking confused. Then she saw the look on your face. "Wait, what's wrong?"

"I- uh... um..." you stammered.

"Do you not... was I reading all of this wrong?" April asked.

"I... April, I don't know what's going on," you said.

April looked at you like you'd spoken in Klingon or something. "Wait, I thought you were flirting with me," she said. "And I was flirting back. I invited you up..."

"Oooh," you said, things clicking into place. "I didn't realise-"

She blinked. "You didn't realise... what asking you up to my room meant?"

"Um- No," you said, blushing furiously.

April opened her mouth a little and then clicked it shut as she looked your face over again. She frowned a little and reached down and took your hands in hers as she looked at you seriously. "Ollie, are you a virgin?"

Again, that heat in your face got warmer. "Yeah. I- Is this like a candid camera prank show or something? Because I don't-"

“No!” April said. “God, no, Ollie. The whole App thing ended as soon as we left the restaurant. I promise. Cross my heart. Fuck, I should have realized I guess...” She stopped and took a breath. “Ollie, I really like you. I didn’t know what to expect with the whole App contest thing. I figured I’d show up, take some photos with a fan, have an awkward dinner and then go see that crappy movie. Maybe give him a kiss on the cheek before I got a ride back here. I *never* thought I would meet someone as sweet, and goofy, and full of heart like you. You’re funny and get my references and the way you talk about your friends tells me you really love them and that tells me a lot about who you are. And then you brought me to a place that was special to you, and you didn’t try to show off by telling them who I was, and you made it special for me too. You swept me off my feet - this has been the best date I’ve ever been on, and that includes when my high school crush asked me to the prom.”

You looked at her, a million thoughts running through your mind all at once and becoming a jumbled mess.

“Really?” you asked.

“Yes, really,” she said. And then she sealed it by kissing you again. This time you managed to kiss her back a little.

“So... what happens now?” you asked, thinking of the fact that April would be leaving sometime soon. It wasn’t like you could date her or something, even if that would be awesome.

“Now, I need you to trust me,” she said and slipped from his knee to stand. She was even shorter without her heels or just the small boost of her Converse shoes, but she still pulled you to standing and led you from the living area into the bedroom. You were sweating as she brought you over to the end of the bed and had you sit. Then she took a step back, letting go of your hands, and she unzipped her sweater and let it drop from her shoulders before pulling her shirt up and over her head to reveal the smooth, softly caramel-coloured skin of her stomach and the burgundy bra that was holding her heavy breasts in place. It was lingerie the same colour as the dress she had worn earlier, with a flower-like lace detailing that was sheer enough in places that you could see the soft outline of her areola through it.

April wasn’t done though, and she undid her pants and slowly pushed them down from her hips and legs, kicking them off roughly from her ankles. She wasn’t the kind of curvy woman with big hips to match her chest, and that made her seem more real and natural to you. April was a real person who took care of herself but wasn’t obsessed with her looks, or her weight. Her body was soft, her matching underwear to the bra softly bulging a little above and below the elastic of the undergarment. She jiggled a little as she moved, not in a fat way like you hated to see in yourself in the mirror, but in a healthy way that spoke of a sexy squishy feeling.

“Wow,” you said, unable to stop your eyes from looking her up and down repeatedly.

“Thanks,” she said, flashing a bit of a shy smile as she let you look at her. She stepped forward and tilted your chin up, standing a little taller than you sat on the low bed, and she kissed you again. Then she pulled back a little. “I want to prove to you this is real, Ollie. I- I don’t know if it’s your first time, but if it is I’d like to give you a blowjob. Is that OK?”

“Um, y-yeah. Yes,” you said, still stunned at what was happening.

“OK,” she nodded. “I want to do this, OK? So I just want you to enjoy it.”

“OK,” you nodded, your mind feeling like you’d left your body and it was on autopilot, watching a porno occurring in front of you instead of to you.

April slowly went to her knees and ran her hands up the thighs of your slacks. You were already starting to get hard, and when her hand hit the bulge of your cock it felt amazing. She looked up at you with eyes that you could only think of as ‘sex’ and then she reached up and undid your belt from under your gut, then the button and zipper of your pants and you sat up a little to help her pull them off of you. Your boxers went with them, caught with her fingers, and for the first time ever your cock was out in front of a woman.

Her mouth opened a little as she looked at it, then looked back up at your face, then back at it.

“Holy shit, Ollie,” she said as she slowly, almost timidly, reached forward and wrapped her fingers partially around your quickly-hardening cock. “This is huge. You’re really a virgin?”

“Mhmm?” you mumbled. “I don’t know. Is it?”

April looked up into your eyes again as she took a firmer grip on your cock with her hand, right below the head. Her fingers didn’t close around it. “Ollie,” she said. “I’m no slut with a huge amount of experience, but this is *the* biggest cock I’ve ever seen in my life.”

“Is that bad?” Ollie asked.

“I mean, if I was some little twig of a thing it could be,” April said. “But I’m not. It’s... It’s scary like getting hooked up to a bungee-jump rig. You know it’ll be fine, but it’s still a thrill of excitement and worry and wonder.”

“I’ve never been bungee-jumping,” you said a little stupidly.

“Stop thinking about that,” she giggled, almost a little manic as she slowly stroked your cock down the shaft to the fattest part, then back up. “Just- I want to make you feel good, Ollie. I want to make you feel wanted. So just tell me when you’re about to pop, OK? It doesn’t matter if it happens fast, you’re a virgin and you’re not used to this. I won’t be mad or disappointed, OK? I expect it, and that just means that we can go longer before the next one.”

You nodded, your eyes wide, and April lowered her mouth to the head of your cock and took a long lick as she stared into your eyes.