Bloody Ocean Waves

by Twinkledash

Summary

My stomach growls loudly which echoes throughout the large bathroom. Yeah thanks body really needed that reminder, not like I’m already fully aware of how hungry I am. How could I not be when it’s always so painful. Even if I want to eat, which I very clearly DON’T, there was nothing around for light-years. I left my only food source back on Earth.

I could always just ea-

I shook the thoughts from my head before they could finish. It’ll never come to that. I’d willingly launch myself into space to prevent that.

Notes

For all the people reading this that don't know what ghouls are:

Ghouls (喰種グール, gūru, translates approximately to eater species) are a carnivorous and cannibalistic species that are only able to feed on humans and other ghouls. They are as close to humans as possible: They normally have the same physical appearance and intelligence as a human with the exception of diet, mentality, and inner biology.
Also, follow me on tumblr at https://tddashie.tumblr.com/ for ghoul!lance stuff, or just because I post a lot of dumb voltron memes. I’d like to mention this work is un-betaed so please excuse it for not being the most polished.
Ghouls and Galra

My arms wrapped protectively around my legs as I curled into a tight ball, doing my best to disappear. The cold bathroom tiles chilled me to the bone. I didn’t feel well enough to get up and get dressed. My extreme lack of body fat wasn’t really helping either. Fuck I can’t remember the last I ate, though there’s a good reason for that…

Monsters don’t deserve to eat.

My stomach growled loudly which echoed throughout the large bathroom. Yeah thanks, body really needed that reminder, not like I’m already fully aware of how hungry I am. How could I not be when it’s always so painful. Even if I wanted to eat, which I very clearly DON’T, there was nothing around for light-years. I left my only food source back on Earth.

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I shook the thoughts from my head before they could finish. It’ll never come to that. I’d willingly launch myself into space to prevent that. Especially considering the mess I’m in right now. The thing with being one of the saviors of the entire known universe, you aren’t allowed to be weak. But I’m weak. So all I can really do is pretend I’m not. Just keep pretending until it’s true, right? I breathed heavily while my thoughts wandered to my family back on Earth.

They were all “monsters” like me. But they’re the best monsters in the whole wide galaxy. None of us had ever killed, we only fed on the already dead. Mostly suicide victims. Mama always taught us how to hide, we weren’t allowed to live without the constant fear of being found out. Papa was the “hunter” of our family, he was the only one with a job when I was growing up. He had to care and feed for a large family of seven ghouls. Big sis was never ashamed of being a monster like I was, she would always help dad with the “food”. When someone was having a bad day she’d even make us special treats. I never asked her how she made them, I didn’t want them ruined for me. Her name never seemed to match her. Lola meant “sorrows” yet she was anything but.

I never knew my big brother, he was caught before I was born. Mama didn’t like talking about him. Rosa or as I called her “Poco”, ‘cus I was the older twin, was never the same after she lost control for the first time. My bright and curious little sister was gone after she refused to eat for too long. She tended to keep to herself after what happened. Thankfully Mama stopped her before she could kill anyone but… Mama still has the scar. I’m afraid I’ll end up like her, not that I’d survive if I lost myself out here. Either the guys would kill me or I’d do it myself when I come too.

Last were the little twins Verita and Paz, or as I like to call them the little troublemakers. Despite being twins they looked nothing alike yet they were basically the personality-wise. You could never see one without the other. And when you saw neither of them it meant trouble was coming. Mom and Lola were forced to get jobs because of the now larger family. And since I was the eldest I practically raised them myself. Though Poco used to help before her accident. The twins are still too young to understand just what we are.

It’s pretty rare to find a family of ghouls nowadays. Our lifestyle is too dangerous to bring children into, when someone is born a ghoul they might have well been born dead. But I can’t bring myself to be mad at my parents for their choices. They wanted to be happy, they wanted to be human. I can understand the feeling. Anyone would prefer to be human instead of a human-eating monster. I just wish I had a choice to be something else.

I guess I got my wish. I was accepted into the Galaxy Garrison, the top military school for space
exploration. I even got promoted to a fighter class pilot, even if it only because the top pilot dropped out. And god was I reminded of that every day.

“Why can’t you be more like Keith, Lance?”

“Oh if only Keith hadn’t dropped out.”

“Why are you even here Lance.”

But I still tried every day while I was there. I wanted to be more than a ghoul, I wanted to be an astronaut. I wanted to be like my hero Shiro. But I never succeeded no matter how hard I tried. I guess monsters aren’t allowed to have dreams. But then I found a giant mechanical space lion with Keith, Shiro, Hunk, and Pidge. Then that lion chose me as her pilot and the five of us were sent far away from our planet.

We were thrust into a galaxy ruined by another kind of monster, The Galra. Purple space aliens that had spent the last 10,000 years ruling and expanding their empire. We met Allura and Coran, more aliens, that told us we had to pilot five ancient lions that combine into the legendary warrior “Voltron”. We were told we had to fight this war because no one else could and if we didn’t Earth would soon be conquered. I didn’t even have a chance to say goodbye to everyone, they probably think I’m dead.

It seemed everyone sans me took to the whole “savior of the universe” thing. Shiro was an escaped prisoner of the Galra who wanted to make this universe free once again, he’s our super cool leader. Pidge’s family were taken prisoner by the Galra along with Shiro and she spends every moment she can looking for them. Keith aka Mr. "I'm super cool and don't try with anything but still succeed because I'm so PERFECT" was meant for this life, a life of battle and bloodshed. Hunk took the longest to reach his full potential, I mean he’s still incredibly nervous and panicky about everything but after seeing what the Galra are really capable of he started to grow into the role.

Meanwhile, I’m just here starving. I’m not a good leader like Shiro, or a stupidly talented hacker like Pidge, or a super skilled fighter and pilot like Keith, or even a great chef and engineer like Hunk. I don’t have a “thing”. Well, my thing is being a bloodthirsty monster but I try to forget that. But I’m not allowed to show my ever growing weakness so I cover it up with bad flirting and even worse puns and jokes. I’m the weak link already, I can’t let myself be even weaker by showing just how unstable I really am.

Not that anyone seems to notice, no one thinks anything’s wrong with “jokester” Lance. Guess I should be happy no one knows about how fucked I really am. Wonder if that’s because I’m such a good actor or because no one cares to look deeper. I’d guess on the latter. Even Hunk and Coran who like me only like the front I put. They’d all be terrified of me if they knew I’m a ghoul. Ghouls don’t really have the best reputation with good reason. After all, we are superhuman, human-looking, and human eating monsters.

I raised my head from my knees. Guess I’ve sulked here long enough, not that anyone would really notice my lack of presence. I picked myself off the ground and walked over to where I left my clothes before taking my shower. That happened to be in front of a mirror. I looked at my reflection, our malnourished bodies that really showed how long it had been since we’ve had a meal, our still damp hair that hung over our borderline skeletal face, and just how human we looked.

For the first time in awhile, I switched to what I like to call "ghoul mode”. Bright blue pupils quickly changed to a deep red with a black background that leaked red veins onto my face. Funny how I can barely see the ones on my eyebags, guess I haven’t been sleeping enough lately either. A brightly colored “tail” sprung from my tailbone. It was made up of countless shades of blue that
collided and bled into each other before ending into a white seafoam-like color at the tip. This “tail” is, of course, my kagune, a special organ that only ghouls have that can manifest outside the body. It kind of looks like when an ocean wave hits a rock that sprays seawater everywhere. The coloring and shape were the same. I’ve always loved the ocean. I used to think my kagune was beautiful when I was young and naive. Now it’s just a reminder of the monster I really am.

I relished in my monstrous appearance for a few minutes before tucking it away. I can’t afford to be found out. No matter how much it hurts to keep it hidden for so long.

Monsters aren’t allowed comfort.

I quickly got dressed before leaving my bathroom and into my room. Though it wasn’t really my room since I left that back home. This room was missing the glow in the dark stars glued to the ceiling and walls, the posters of various shows, the waterbed my mom finally let me get after years of begging, my surfboard I’d always hang over that same bed, but most importantly it was missing the sounds of a family of seven living together in a small house. Poco and I used to share that room before her accident, after that she always just slept on the couch. I guess she wasn’t comfortable sleeping next to someone.

I left my room and stalked down the long and empty halls that made up the ship. Most of this place was empty and abandoned with only me exploring the many rooms scattered throughout the castle-ship. I guess the others had better things to do. Either way, I love finding new secret rooms that I can use for whatever I want. Sometimes if I just forgot about everything and watched the colorful galaxies swirling into each other while bright stars twinkled all around me, I enjoyed myself. I love space I mean I wanted to be an astronaut, of course I love space. I guess it’s not the worse place to die in hindsight, just wish I said goodbye to everyone. Man, I’m pretty damn depressive today. Well enough moping I’ve got a galaxy to defend and a space princess to save.

On our last mission Princess Allura was captured by the Galra and was taken to their home base by the order of Zarkon, leader of the Galra. Our ship was currently traveling by wormhole to get there after all of us, sans Keith the dick, decided to rescue her. While we were indeed traveling pretty fast to her location The Galra were still about an hour and a half away from us. When we first entered the wormhole Shiro ordered us all to get prepared for the upcoming battle. I went to take a shower and ended up moping for a lot longer than the healthy amount but whatever it’s totally fine~

The ship’s intercoms sparked alive.

“Paladins we are nearing The Galra’s home base, get to your Lions!” Coran’s voice echoed throughout the empty hallways. I quickened my pace to Blue.

Once I reached her hanger she sprung to life shield going down and eyes brightening up. She switched from her sitting position to rest her head on her paws with her rear high in the air with a grace that shouldn’t be possible from a giant robot. She looked like a dog. I rested my hand on her snout and I felt her purr resonate throughout my mind. Guess she could tell I’ve been having a shitty day. She’s so beautiful and wonderful and caring I love her so much how can a mechanical lion be this adorable.

Not wanting to waste any more time I quickly hopped into her cockpit and took control of her movements. I switched the intercom in my helmet on was met by an eerie quiet uncommon of our radio station. I guess everyone knew just how serious this was, after all, we might just lose a teammate today. Whether it was a Paladin or the Princess didn’t matter. This was without a doubt the most dangerous mission we’ve been on so far since we first became Paladins of Voltron two months ago.
“Blue Paladin ready for action!” I spoke into my helmet’s mic to alert the others I’ve made it to my lion. A cocky tone seeped into my voice. Hopefully acting like nothing was wrong could bring the mood up.

“Lance what took you so long?!” Keith, The Red Paladin, spoke first.

“Even Hunk got here before you.” Pidge, The Green Paladin, was next with a halfway serious halfway teasing comment.

“Hey! I’m not that bad...” Hunk, The Yellow Paladin and the human embodiment of everything good and pure in this universe spoke next.

“Guys focus! Lance’s here now and that’s all that matters.” Our very own Black Paladin Shiro was quick to defuse the situation in his typical leaderly manner.

“Paladins we’ll be exiting the wormhole in exactly thirty ticks!” Coran’s voice rang through our helmets. Ticks are like a second I think? Wow did I show up late.

“Everyone we only have one chance to get Allura and escape, the moment we leave the ship we form into Voltron and hit fast. Our only objective here is to save her and escape remember that. Don’t do anything reckless.”

“Fifteen ticks!”

“Is everyone ready?!” Shiro commanded.

“YEAH!” We all responded in unison.

As the seconds counted down all of us kept silent in anticipation. Ten seconds left. I could feel my nervousness bleeding into my mental connection with Blue, she was quick to send me her own feelings of an oddly mother-like calm. Five seconds left. I flexed my fingers around Blue’s controls and took a deep breath in. Three seconds left. I let it lose just as the ship exited it’s wormhole.

“NOW!” Shiro orderly loudly, we were all prepared.

All of our lions flew out of their hangers in perfect sync and out into the cold vacuum of space. The Galra base was right in front of us and it was huuuuuuge. The main battleship was easily the size of a moon or a small planet with numerous smaller battleships surrounding it. And surrounding that was this huge mechanical ring. It was a terrifying sight to see so many of those warships at once, it was difficult for Voltron to take down one of those things let alone thousands. This was no time to get distracted. As our lions flew in sync all of them starting changing shape. The red and green lions became arms, the blue and yellow lions became legs, and finally the black lion became the torso. As Blue’s cockpit shuttered and shook I could tell she was connecting with the other lions. Where five lions once were now stood a multicolored humanoid robot. This was Voltron, legendary defender of the universe. Voltron… wasn’t moving?!

“What’s happening?” I cried out.

“Something’s wrong with Black I can’t control her.” Shiro called out, it obvious that he was trying to keep the panic out of his voice. After all, if our leader doesn’t have a cool head then none of us do.

“Uh guys we got company!” Pidge shouted as the hundreds of Galra battleships unleashed their fighter drones while their heavy cannons started charging. Those cannons could level a city in one blast and we are currently a giant multicolored STATUE. I know I said I wasn’t gonna be super
negative for the rest of today but we are so fucked right now.

“Shiro what’s wrong?” Keith asked in a mix of concern and panic.

“Black is rejecting me for some reason!” Just as he spoke Voltron split apart leaving five dazed lions and their equally dazed paladins. Wait no make that four dazed lions and five equally dazed paladins. The Black Lion ejected Shiro from her cockpit before flying full speed towards the Galra home base, to Zarkon. Shiro, like the truly badass leader he is, quickly regained his hold on the situation.

“Alright change of plans Pidge you help me get into that base to rescue Allura. Keith you keep Black from getting to Zarkon. Hunk, Lance it’s up to you two to keep the Galra distracted!”

He all nodded our agreement in sync. Or at least I think we all nodded I mean I nodded but I can’t really see the others but- whatever let’s just say we all nodded.

As I took off towards the nearest cluster of Galra fighter drones I saw Shiro getting into the Green Lion alongside Pidge who then switched her ion into stealth mode. Hunk followed me as quickly as he could in the admittedly slow Yellow Lion. No offense to Yellow though I know he’s a real sweetheart just like his paladin. I mean if anyone knows how much a sweetheart Hunk is it’s me I mean I’ve known him forever and he always bakes me stuff even though it tastes disgusting to me, being a ghoul and all, but I always eat it anyways and yeah I know that’s not healthy bu- OH SHIT LASERS.

I veered Blue sharply to the right to a sudden barrage of Galra laser fire. Right, I can’t get distracted right now this is serious, especially if I ramble when I’m nervous. Not allowed to ramble in battle. I turned this sudden right turn into a tailspin to move Blue towards a mass of drones. There were a lot of them, I’d say like thirty, but they’re all pretty close together. So ice beam it is then. I swiftly charged up Blue’s ice beam and it struck the drone fleet dead on, I mean of course it hit dead on I’m the sharpshooter of Voltron. Even though I’m the only one that seems to think that-I’m getting off track again. About twenty of the fighters were rendered unusable from that blast and the remaining ten split off.

I aimed the regular beam towards three fighters that flew away together to make their own little group and fired. Blue’s laser beam hit one of them right through the cockpit causing it to crash into another ship, destroying both in a pretty cool looking explosion. That just leaves one left for me, assuming that Hunk takes care of the other five that flew off. It charged towards me guns a blazing. I gracefully avoided all the shots by rapidly dipping and spinning Blue around. Soon the fighter was up close enough to grab. I launched Blue at the drone and her massive jaws crushed the cockpit of the ship, she then threw the ruined fighter drone at another one that was closing in on us. The drones collided into each other began spiraling out of control, what a good kitty. I felt Blue’s affection come in mental waves at the compliment. I turned around and sped off towards Hunk who I saw had finished the five fighters that had split off and was now taking down a new cluster of drones.

The Yellow Lion was relatively short-ranged compared to his sisters but was perfect for close-range combat with its heavily armored body than could bash and bite better than any of the other lions. Hunk was perfectly aware of this fact and was taking down enemy after enemy. It was a super cool sight to see not that I should be watching instead of fighting. I was about to launch Blue into battle but something stopped me. I saw that a nearby Galra battleship had finished charging it’s heavy cannon.

“HUNK DUCK!”
But I knew that the Yellow Lion wouldn’t be fast enough to evade the blast and even if he was the most heavily armored none of us could take a laser like that head-on. Without a second thought I sped Blue right into the side of Yellow, knocking him and his paladins out of the blast range. I piloted Blue into a nosedive to escape the blast range but it was too late. Just as we were about to escape the cannon fired. Blue’s lower half was directly hit. Suddenly I was shot out of my chair in Blue’s cockpit and violently thrown about as Blue was knocked by the blast. Fortunately my hard ghoul skin and rapid healing factor kept me awake, or unfortunately since I was being smashed into every wall and panel in Blue’s cockpit repeatedly.

“LANCE!”

I was thrown against the right wall once again but Blue had stopped moving. The cockpit was completely dark, or it would have been to a regular human but hey night vision, as Blue’s power had cut out. That only ever happened when she was really injured. I hastily pulled myself over to the piloting and hissed in pain when I sat down. That’s totally a broken tailbone. My lungs pressed painfully against my ribs making it difficult to breathe, so a few broken ribs as well. Hopefully, none of them puncture a lung, a ghoul’s healing can only help so much. Blue’s cockpit flickered alive though the blue light was dimmer than it was before.

“Sorry beautiful.” I said softly as I grabbed hold of her controls.

“Lance are you okay??” Hunk sounded like he was on the verge of a panic attack, better calm him down fast.

“Yeah I’m cool, both in health and personality.”

He breathed a sigh of relief. Now that Blue’s monitors were online again I could that Yellow was braced against Blue which is what stopped that roller coaster of pain earlier.

“Thanks for the save.”

“Are you sure you’re okay that blast looked really bad.” Ah Hunk, always the worried mom friend.

“Yeah yeah no I’m super it’s gonna take more than that to take out the great blue paladin of Voltron.”

I get the feeling that Hunk didn’t believe me, he was always the one who could see through my act. Better change the subject before he presses more.

“Hunk I need you to take out as many cannons as you can, I’ll handle the drones for now.”

“But you’re injured!”

“Hunk please I’m fine but neither of us will be if the rest of the cannons start firing.” I pleaded with him.

“Alright...” He sounded concerned as he usually is but he took off to the nearest Galra battleship without further complaints. I trusted that he could handle himself.

I launched Blue at the nearest drone fighter and she easily tore into it. Another ten or so surrounded us as we finished off the first one. I fired her ice beam to my right and it froze two fighters solid while the rest scattered. I would have liked to chase after them but Blue’s pretty banged up, I don’t want her to get hurt anymore. I could feel her in the back of my mind reminding me that I’m also banged up. Instead of chasing after them I flew in the opposite direction and activated the long-term cannon, or as I like to call it the “sniper rifle”. Ahead of me, there were two drones heading for us. They swerved left and right rapidly to avoid being hit but that’s alright, patience is key for a
sniper. I waited as they closed in on us. In their random swerving they had accidentally lined up, but it’ll only be for a second.

Now!

I shot a beam directly through the one in front that passed through its cockpit to blow the wing off of the one in the back. The fighter drone in the front exploded and the other veered off coarse before crashing into the body of a nearby battleship. I allowed myself a small whoop of joy. Now I don’t mean to toot my horn but- okay no I am totally tooting my own horn that was awesome. Man I wonder if anyone else saw that.

“Paladins I have been safely returned to the castle and am now preparing for a wormhole jump, everyone returns to the ship!” Allura’s angelic voice rang throughout our radio channel, looks like Shiro and Pidge got her out without much problem. Thank god she’s safe now.

“Looks like we’re heading back babe” I said softly to Blue. I was just about to turn around and fly back to the ship but the action was short by a sudden scream in my ear. It was Keith’s voice.

“KEITH!” I heard the others scream.

Looking to my left I could see The Red Lion getting its mechanical ass kicked by- ZARKON?! Apparently when Keith hears “Protect the Black Lion from Zarkon” he translates that to “Go get your ass kicked by Zarkon”. What a modern Einstein we’ve got here. Well looks like I’m gonna have to step up as the hero here, out of my duty as a Paladin of Voltron not because I care about him. I had Blue launch herself at the two figures at top speed.

The funny thing about Keith’s battle against Zarkon was Keith was piloting a giant space lion while Zarkon was piloting nothing, he was winning without even a spaceship. Oh man why am I getting into this I’m gonna die. Oh well, might as well go down swinging I guess. Maybe I’ll get a sweet Viking funeral or like a really cool tombstone that’s got my face carved into it so even in death people can appreciate my beautiful face. That’d be pretty sweet. I’m rambling again oh man I’m totally gonna die.

Blue crashed right into Zarkon right before he could strike down Keith, who was currently sitting in the cockpit of a powered down Red Lion. Zarkon jumped back and out of Blue’s reach before he could be crushed but it gave me just enough time to grab Keith and get out of here. I had Blue pick up Red by her scruff, does she have a scruff I mean she is a cat but a scruff is just a bunch of flesh on the back of a cat’s neck and robots don’t really have flesh ya know? Whatever I picked Red up and I started my very heroic escape. I heard Zarkon scream in anger behind me and it was pretty damn terrifying, not that the heroic Blue Paladin of Voltron was easily frightened.

“Haggar don’t let anymore escape!” He hissed. I’m pretty sure Haggar was that druid lady that hung around inside their ship. Looks like the others had made it to the ship though considering how pissed he sounded. But how is he expecting some hag inside their ship to do to us? Honestly kind of stupid- what the hell is that.

Behind me I saw what I could only describe as something ripped straight from a fantasy game. A beam of purple lightning was coming from the castle and headed right towards Keith and I. It didn’t look like one of the ship’s weapons, it looked like magic. And I knew what a Galra druid’s magic could do to someone.

“Lance dodge!” Oh looks like Keith finally came to good work there champ totally didn’t know I had to avoid the magical death beam.
I couldn’t move Blue away quick enough, not while carrying Red as well. The beam hit both lions dead on. Words cannot describe the pain that rocked my entire body. It felt like someone with cold, sharp, and wrong hands were ripping me apart and putting me back together. I could feel those hands everywhere. I could feel them stroking my kagune even if it wasn’t out. Each stroke felt wronger and more painful. It was like very secret I’ve hidden was torn right out of my body. Oh god, my eyes are gonna pop out of my head. I heard someone screaming, I wonder if it was me or Keith.

Then suddenly the pain was replaced with an extreme lack of breath. All the air had been knocked out of my body and all of my limbs felt heavier than should be possible. I collapsed back in my chair while trying suck in a breath of air. I felt uncomfortable in my own skin everything was wrong. Whatever that witch did she knew what I was now. I could still feel her gripping my tail and pulling as hard as she could. I could feel her ripping open my eyelids and pressing her fingertips down into the sockets. Oh god I think I’m going into shock.

“Lance! Keith!” I heard Shiro yell as Black stood protectively over the collapsed Blue and Red Lions. I wearily pulled myself out of my stupor and gripped Blue’s controls just as she came back online. The moment she was awake she filled my mind with calming and concerned thoughts. I shook my head slightly and mumbled “m f’ine” to both my team and to Blue. I could hear Keith groaning in the background, looks like he’s doing just as well as I am.

I stood Blue up just as Black picked up Red by her not-scruff and took off once Shiro was sure I could pilot Blue back to the ship. I followed behind as quickly as someone who might be in shock could, I don’t think Zarkon was following us. I hope he wasn’t I can barely keep my eyes-cold nails tracing the sides of my pupil- open. Before I even knew it all three of us were back in the castle and I could hear the rest of the team talking to each other but it sounded really mumbled to me. Surely I could take a quick nap now that we were back at the castle…

Wait, I hear them yelling at each other something’s wrong. I can’t sleep yet oh god what are they saying I can’t focus.

“-ormhole!”

“Corrupt-”

“Can’t stay toget-”

“PIDGE!”

“HUNK!!”

“LANCE NO!”

Huh? When did Blue leave her hanger, why are we outside? Why am I in a wormhole? Why’s Keith about to crash into me-
Crash Landing

Chapter Summary

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Chapter Notes

I drew a quick ghoul!lance to go along with this ‘fic

https://tddashie.tumblr.com/post/158789298092/i-drew-a-quick-lance-to-go-along-with-my

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Darkness, silence, and overwhelming pain. What a way to wake up. My eyelids feel stuck to my face like they’re covered in glue. I tried to open them but failed. Something had crusted over them completely, I think its blood. I attempted to scrape the blood off with my right hand but found it stuck. My entire right arm felt buried under something. Was I still in Blue’s cockpit? I reached out to her mentally but I couldn’t feel her. That’s… worrying. I bit my lip and tasted something metallic. Seems like my entire face is covered in old blood. That can’t be good for my complexion. I groaned loudly, I just hope Blue’s okay. She’s only gone offline when seriously injured or… please let her be alright.

How did I get here again? Something about saving Allura, we were about to wormhole but then… Keith got hurt. Then something went wrong with the wormhole and Keith was with me. Keith’s hurt and alone. Oh god, I need to find Keith. I tested my left hand to find it wasn’t buried under a load of rubble. I harshly wiped the dried blood from my eyes. I blinked rapidly to return vision to my eyes. I wasn’t in Blue’s cockpit but looking to my left I could see a powered down Blue with deep scrapes littering her body. Nothing that looks fatal, she’s just healing herself right now. I breathed a sigh of relief. I don’t know what I’d do without her.
I looked at my right arm to see it crushed by a large overturned tree. I tried to roll the tree off but my limbs felt heavy and numb. It was a pitiful attempt. Something was keeping me from properly moving around, and it wasn’t the tree. Looking down I could see where all the blood had come from. There was a sharp looking tree branch coming out of my gut. I couldn’t move at all. I grabbed the tree branch and tried pulling it out of me but just as an inch gave away I felt something snag into of me. OOOOOooioooO0OOOOOH fffffffffUCK THAT HURTS! I bit my lip to prevent myself from screaming.

I let out a whimper of pain when my body convulses in agony which leads to even more pain. My insides are being torn apart by that damn stick with every small movement. I let out a small gasp of pain but manage to stop my body from moving around so much. Alright, so moving around is a big no-no which is just great to know. I looked down to see that the top half of my paladin’s armor was heavily cracked and was barely hanging onto me. I could see my helmet lying to my left with a broken visor. So the helmet’s visor broke while I was wearing it, that’d explain where all of this blood on my face came from. I couldn’t see my own face so I don’t know if said cuts are still there. They might have healed already depending on how long I’ve been out and how bad they were in the first place.

Alright, so I’ve got nature’s natural harpoon impaling me, a crushed and broken right arm, probably a broken rib judging by how hard it was to breathe, and no time to deal with any of this because my regular human teammate is bleeding to death somewhere. I could survive all of this due to my healing factor but Keith couldn’t. And I’m too useless to do anything to help him! I growled it anger and grabbed at the tree branch again. I could handle the pain. Keith needed me right now.

I gripped the tree branch and pulled as hard as I could. I screamed in agony. I could feel it violently shifting inside of me. It’s jagged sides caught on my organs and pulled them with it. A harsh whimper escaped my throat. I gave a harsh tug but it wasn’t budging anymore, tugging just seemed to bring more pain. Just how long is this thing!? Wait there’s a smart way to go about this. I was about to let out my kagune but to my surprise found that I’m already in “ghoul mode”. Guess I must have switched while in a half conscious panic. I shifted to my right slightly to allow it to slither out from underneath me. The tree branch pressed painfully against my insides as I moved, I ignored the pain. Now that it wasn’t crushed under me I sliced through the tree branch, cutting off the top half of it. Now I could just lift myself out of it, or I would have if my arm wasn’t crushed.

I slid my kagune to my right and propped it under the tree. A ghoul’s kagune is naturally their strongest limb so this should work. It’d work like a crowbar right? Easy enough. With all my might I lifted the tree. I could feel it rising off of my arm. I gritted my teeth in pain as the last of the energy in my body faded away. I was so close come on. The tree dropped onto my arm again. I jerked forward in agony. I can’t let Keith die! The tree rose farther up this time. "For Keith!!" The tree was propelled about a foot in the air, it was honestly kind of pathetic considering I’m using to doing much more when not dying but whatever I’ll take what I can get. I grabbed my right arm and pulled it to my chest before the tree could come back down. It landed with a loud thud that seemed to shake the quiet forest I had landed in.

I panted heavily and gazed down at my arm- if you can even call it that. A regular human would have this amputated. Even a ghoul would take a while to heal from this. The top half of my armor all fell off during the process of removing my arm. The black undersuit was torn enough for me to see parts of my arm. It was bloody and mangled, I could see bits of bone peaking out from the ruined skin. The skin that wasn’t covered in blood was either a deep purple in color or a rotten black. I think all my fingernails fell off as well. I’m not done yet though I can’t rest. Keith’s still waiting for me.
I pulled myself off the tree branch slowly and carefully, the direct opposite of my actions against it earlier. I flattened my kagune against the ground and pushed up with it. I fell forward rather ungracefully and directly on my ruined arm. I was completely overwhelmed by the pain for a solid minute. A scream of pain escaped me but hooray I was free! I pulled myself off my face and onto my knees, my right arm hanging limply from my shoulder. I should probably brace that once I know Keith’s alright. I stumbled from my knees to my feet, my kagune swaying left and right to keep me balanced. Once I was firmly on my feet and confident enough to not need it for balance anymore I tucked it away.

Or I tried to. I stared at it in alarm. I couldn’t return to human form. This had never happened before hell I’ve never even heard of this happening even in all those stories Lola had told me when I was a kid. Oh god if I can’t disguise myself how can I form Voltron how can I even return to the team looking like this. I couldn’t see my eyes but I knew they were that horribly ugly red against black I’ve come to hate. How can I even save Keith like this? What even caused it how could this happen why me!!? I’ve done my best to be human so why me?? My whole life I’ve tried to ignore my ghoul heritage. This is my worse nightmare, a nightmare I’ve never even thought of before. What did I do to deserve this!!? I felt my broken rib rub against my lungs with each panicked breath I took.

Haggar that’s got to be it. That’s what that magical beam did. I mean that’s the only explanation right? I could still feel her hands on my kagune and how cold and disgusting that felt. Even throughout all the pain I’m in right now I could still her violating me, hurting me, touching me, ripping every secret I’ve kept right out of my body. I could still feel the cold hand reaching down my throat and tracing my lips with those sharp nails of hers. But why would she do this what does she want what’s going to happen to me. What if I’m even more ghoul-like now? Is that even a thing?? What if I lose control anytime I come into contact with a human I don’t know what’s happening! I bit my lip with abnormally sharp teeth and felt cold tears mix with the blood painting my face. My lungs pressed against my broken rib painfully as a pathetic sounding sob escaped my lips. I can’t return to the others like this. What would they think of me? What would Keith think of me now… Wait, why do I care what Keith thinks.

Keith.

I stopped breathing all at once. I don’t have time to worry about how I look right now, Keith’s bleeding out somewhere and instead of helping him I’m having a panic attack like the pathetic seventh wheel I know I am. I gripped my right arm and held it close to my chest and breathed in a breath of fresh air, well fresh air mixed with the overwhelming scent of blood but whatever. I need to calm myself right now. I need to find Keith and then deal with the consequences of him knowing I’m a ghoul. If he kills me then at least he’ll be safe and alive, I’m the expendable one anyway his safety is much more important than that of a ghoul.

I inhaled the air deeply to find his scent. Ghoul’s have enhanced scents which really come in handy for situations like these, even if it’s actual purpose is for hunting. Humans had a very distinct and overpowering scent that made it easy to find someone, a humans scent varied depending on the person but they always smelled… delicious. It’s kind of disgusting to think of Keith as delicious. Scratch that it was disgusting to think of anyone as delicious. But anyway back to the point every human had a recognizable scent. Hunk smelled like fresh vanilla cake straight out the oven, Shiro smelled like a berry smoothie, Pidge smelled like slightly burned BBQ, and Keith always smelled weird compared to other humans. While he still smelled like food (a chili dish to be specific) there was this rotten scent as well. It was odd to describe, the rotten smell wasn’t always there but it showed up when he got angry. Right now I could only detect that rotten, oddly metallic, and burned smell.
Still, it was better than nothing so I decided to hobble to the source of that scent. Now that I think about it, it’s pretty weird how humans smell like human food yet human food tastes disgusting to me. I wonder why that is. What’s the point in humans smelling like their food if their food tastes disgusting to me? Human food smells nice despite its terrible taste. I mean I can tell the difference between a human and their food by smell easily enough but the reason how is something I can’t really put into words. I guess I’d describe it as an instinct? I wonder if other predators are like that. Ugh, I don’t like describing myself as a predator. Note to self, don’t use anything along the lines of “predatory” to describe yourself.

I looked around at the planet that I had crash landed on. The area I was in was heavily forested with large purple trees with weird patterns decorating their trunks. It almost looked like a child’s doodles. Wonder if that’s natural or drawn on. The flora that littered this forest were made of deep browns, tans, and oranges with withered flowers. Guess it was Autumn here, or maybe the forest was dying? Or it the plant life looked withered when it actually wasn’t? I don’t know Pidge would probably be able to tell if she was here, Pidge was really smart unlike me. Hey hold on there’s the rotten smell lingering around those trees. It’s not fresh but does that mean Keith was here? Last time I saw him he was struggling to stay awake so that’s doubtful. Better keep my eyes open for anyone else.

Actually now that I’m thinking about I’ve smelled that rotten scent somewhere besides Keith… But where was that? Nothing’s coming to me and I feel like it’s something that should. Though it’s admittedly kind of hard to think when you’re in excruciating pain like I’m in right now. I gripped my broken shoulder and bit down own my lip as another wave of pain passed over me. My arm is so fucked up. I wonder if my healing factor can even do anything to save it at this point. It might be easier to regrow this arm than have it repair itself. And if I did cut it off I’d get a meal out of it. After all the only thing besides humans I can eat are ghouls. Yeah that sounds like a better idea than waiting for it to fix itself, it might not heal back correct anyway. Alright it’s been decided, once Keith is safe I’ll cut it off. And god that can’t come soon enough considering the massive amounts of agony tearing through me right now.

Suddenly I saw a bright red that stood out against the purples and browns of the forest. I raced towards what I know could only be the Red Lion. I stood in front of the powered down lion and surveyed the damage. While she was certainly more banged up then Blue I know she’d survive. After all Red’s a tough girl. I stepped up to her maw and manually opened it with my kagune while giving a quick apology to Red, even if she was powered down she was scary. Really hopes she forgives me for the whole “man-handling” thing. I mean it’s for Keith’s greater good and I know just how much Red loves him. Like Blue is fairly protective of me but Red goes straight into mother-like in her protectiveness of her paladin. She might as well be Keith’s mom. Anyway, I opened her mouth and inside was the cockpit and inside of the cockpit was Keith.

What.

In the Red Paladin’s armor, though helmetless, was an injured Galra. He was throw awkwardly on the floor in a puddle of his own blood, a mix of red and purple. It looks like he was in the middle of patching himself up when he passed out. A partially used med-kit was at his side and some lose bandages covered his chest, looks he had removed the chest plate to treat himself seeing as said chest-plate laid to his right. Large furry ears grew from the sides of his head, they looked to be the weird mix between a bat’s and a cat’s ears. Purple fur only covered the side of his face leaving a human looking center. There seemed to be two lines of purple fur that originated from his temple passing over his eyes that separated fur and skin. Sharp fangs poked out from his upper lip, not that I’m one to talk. But the most recognizable trait of this Galra was his hauntingly familiar mullet. This Galra was Keith. Keith was Galra.
Keith was Galra the whole time and he kept it a secret. I wasn’t the only monster on this team. I could cry with both relief and shock. That’s where I’ve smelled that rotten stench before. When facing off against Galra! Now that I was closer I could smell that human scent buried deep underneath all the rotten and inedible musk. Haggar must have done this, Keith was hit by that magic bolt as well after all. This brought upon me another shocking revolution. I’m not in danger of eating Keith. I could get as close as I wanted with one of my teammates without having to worry about being too drawn in by their scent. Again, I could cry with both relief and shock. But I don’t have time for that seeing as good old fluff-ball is over there sitting in a puddle of his own blood.

I hastily sat down next to him and starting wrapping his chest, admittedly difficult using only one hand though my kagune helped out. I hope he was smart enough to clean and dress the wound before bandaging it. If he didn’t my already poor wrapping job here will become even more pointless. A quick sniff at the chest revealed that yes, Keith did indeed have enough brains to properly clean his wound. I wonder how badly he was injured in his fight with Zarkon, once I’ve finished wrapping this I’ve got to properly look him over. One last sharp tub at the bandage to insure it’s security before I tied the bandage down. Do you tie bandages to close them? I mean how else would you keep it tied down? Fuck I don’t know I’m not a doctor I just hope I’m not killing him.

I tugged the rest of his armor off to get a proper look at the rest of him. A few spots on the undersuit were painted red with blood but I had the feeling that was due to his chest wound, not separate wounds. But I checked underneath each bloodstain anyway just to be sure. It was hard to tell due to the thick purple fur that now covered half of Keith but I could feel the mass of bruises that covered him head to toe. I don’t know how to treat bruises, I mean do they even need to be treated? I guess not. Either way, Keith will just have to deal with them for now. I checked his hands next since it was so easy to remove the gloves of the undersuit.

His right hand was fine for the most part, a few small cuts I covered with what I like to call “space neosporin” but his left hand was totally broken. Or maybe fractured? God, I wish I had Poco teach me more about medicine when I was home. She always wanted to be a doctor before her accident. And I’d always play patient to her doctor even if ghouls didn’t need medical treatment. I mean it’s my duty as the older twin (by five minutes) to encourage my little (again, by five minutes) sister. Right, Keith’s dying need to focus no time to ramble right now. I’ve been saying that a lot lately, I wonder when it will be time to ramble. Anyway! Broken or fractured I’m just gonna wrap it up and hope for the best.

I finished my examination of the patient and found only a few more minor wounds. I made sure to clean and dress them all since that was the only thing I know about medicine. At the very least he doesn’t look like he’s gonna die anymore, though I should probably move him away from his blood puddle. It was both disgusting and unsanitary. I carefully lifted Keith by extending my kagune and laying it flat under him before lifting up. God this must look awkward, the things I do for you, Keith. Either way, I carefully laid him down on the other side of the cockpit face down so I check his back for wounds.

A quick look over revealed a gash on the back of his right thigh, it doesn’t look deep but it might still be bleeding. I extended my kagune to grab the med-kit on the other side of the room and brought it over here. I grabbed one of the cleaning rags and drenched it in some kind of space disinfectant that I couldn’t read the name of. Thankfully Coran had shown us all what was inside the med-kits and their purposes, otherwise I might have been rubbing anti-burn cream on a broken hand. Once properly wet I pressed the rag against his wound. He flinched even when unconscious. You know I always heard this stuff hurts but I’ve never felt it myself, no point in giving medicine
to someone who can regrow limbs after all. Speaking of which I wonder how long it would take my arm to come back since I’ve never lost a full limb before. I heard a well fed ghoul could regrow a limb in only a day. Considering I’m the opposite of well fed it’ll probably take much longer than.

Once I was sure that Keith’s cut was clean I removed the cloth and started bandaging his thigh. The action was still awkward due to one of my arms hanging limply at my side rather than helping but I’m managing. I had my kagune wrap around his ankle and hold his leg in the air while I worked on it. While I certainly don’t enjoy being a ghoul having a prehensile tail does have its perks. This whole process would have certainly been much more difficult without it. Hell, I would have never escaped earlier if it wasn’t for my tail. Ugh on second thought I don’t want to have any positive thoughts about being a ghoul. No matter how natural moving my kagune around felt. Even if I haven’t used it years it still came naturally to me. How does that phrase go? “Like riding a bike” Yeah that sounds about right.

I finished bandaging his thigh and sat back with a sigh of relief. He was safe and I could finally get to work on myself. Probably should have done that sooner, I’m sure ghoul or not having a dead limb still attached isn’t too healthy for you. I rested my hand on my gut and carefully traced the sides of the large puncture wound. It seemed to be healing well enough, should be completely closed tomorrow when I get some food in me. I grabbed the knife Keith keeps strapped to him at all times, he’s a real weirdo when it comes to weapons but hey comes in handy when you need to chop a limb off.

“Sorry pal but I’ll be needing this more than you” He did not respond, big surprise. Whatever I’m sure he’s fine with it I mean I’ll clean it afterward. I eyed the med-kit wearily. Might as well bandage it once the job’s finished I guess, I’ve lost enough blood today. I grabbed a roll of bandages and set off into the forest. I mean I know she’s the RED Lion but she’s already got enough red painting her cockpit as it is.

Once outside I headed towards the sound of a nearby stream. It was a short enough walk away so I could still hear what’s happening with Red but far enough way so I couldn’t see her. Hopefully, they’ll be alright while I do the dirty deed of lobbing off an arm. And then eating it so I don’t starve to death. God, I’m really gross aren’t I? Well, shitty situations call for shitty alternatives and being a ghoul’s as shitty as it can get. Besides, self-cannibalism is better than regular cannibalism. I’d eat myself more if it didn’t take so long to regenerate, a regular and well-fed ghoul would be able to heal within a few hours but it takes days for me. It becomes too noticeable so I haven’t done it in awhile, which is why I’m so hungry nowadays. Hell even if I self-cannibalized on a regular basis I’d still be hungry. Just not as hungry, I know at some point I need to get some real food in me. Even if it’s both impossible, considering I’m in deep space, and unappealing.

I sat down by the stream and took the roll of bandages. I tied a strand of it around my shoulder tightly, cutting off blood flow. Screaming might attract attention neither Keith or I need right now so… I grabbed a nearby stick and shoved it in my mouth. Ugh, this tastes disgusting. Here’s to the hope that I don’t die by random poisonous stick after facing Zarkon himself. That’d be a pretty lame way to go.

I readied both the knife and myself. I took a deep breathe in through my nose before plunging the sharp blade into my shoulder. I bit down on the stick to prevent a scream of agony, I could hear it cracking under the strength of my jaw. Dude I can rip apart human flesh why did I think that a stick would survive my teeth. It completely snapped into multiple pieces in my mouth. I kept gritting my teeth anyway. Oh god, I didn’t think about this at all how do you cut off a limb. I gripped the knife harshly and pulled it out of the flesh of my shoulder before diving it back in once again. FUCK! MMMNnng yep still hurt just as much as the first time. Just like pulling off a bandage come on Lance you can do this. I starting rapidly stabbing myself in the shoulder ignoring the pain to the best of my ability. God
damn it why hasn’t it come off yet! I hooked the knife at the top of my shoulder and dragged it down. I’ve got to be halfway through by now right?? I plunged the knife deep into my now exposed shoulder socket and like a crowbar started trying to pry the arm off. I heard the arm disconnect from my collarbone with a sickeningly loud snap. One last sharp tug sideways and the arm fell off leaving behind an unevenly cut open shoulder.

I dropped the knife and laid my head down on the forest floor. I just kept there breathing heavily for what felt like hours. Sweat, blood, tears, and drool all poured from my face and onto the tan grass. Pain racked what remained of my shoulder which coupled with the phantom pains of losing an arm. Said arm laid to my right spraying blood but not as much as expected. Guess that was due to how rotten the limb is. With my head still on the forest floor I blindly reached around for the roll of bandages. My fingers knocked ungracefully against it and I picked it up. Using my teeth I tore a piece of it off the roll and started bandaging my shoulder. Damn if my wrapping job with Keith was bad I’d hate to see this. Doctors all over the world are probably cringing right now, from both my shitty bandaging job and the fact I just amputated my own arm without sedatives. I wonder if Altean sedatives would work on me since human ones never did. Probably should have tried them out anyway.

I’m so tired right now. Just need to eat and head back to Keith, then I can finally pass out. Hopefully, Keith doesn’t kill me in my sleep when he comes to, that’d be a great way to repay to the person who had just saved your life. I slowly lifted my head off the ground and looked over to my arm. Ghoul or not that entire process was a nightmare. I’ve never had to amputate a limb to eat before, I’d always just bite off some arm flesh or maybe some toes since those were easy enough to hide with long sleeves and shoes. Ghoul flesh doesn’t taste disgusting per say, but it’s nothing special. It always tasted bland and cold. It was almost flavorless. Or at least that’s what I taste like maybe other ghouls are different. I kind of don’t want to find out.

Well, might as well get this over with. I reached for the arm but hesitated when I saw just how disgusting it was. Purple and black rotten skin with yellow patches of puss leaking out from various wounds. It was completely crushed and mangled to the point where you couldn’t even tell where the two forearms connected. I could feel bile rising in my throat. I really didn’t want to eat this but I also would like to not starve to death. I let out a shaky breathe and grabbed my severed arm by what remained of the wrist. I placed it on my lap and wiped the puss off with the sleeve of my undersuit. Without allowing myself a second thought I picked my old arm up once again and bit deep into it.

The flesh and skin came off bone almost too easily. It was dry and flaky in my mouth. The taste was overwhelming compared to the usual taste of ghoul flesh, it was too foul to properly put into words. I swallowed it before completely chewing it. I didn’t want to taste this any longer than necessary. I could feel it come back up immediately after the swallow. I gulped it down once again before it could re-enter my mouth. It went down this time. I paused in my “dinner” to heavily gag. I took more rapid bites and swallowed the moment flesh hit my tongue. Hopefully the broken skin was soft enough to not choke me. I almost threw up a few more times but I managed to keep everything down. I hit a wet spot on flesh. The metallic-tasting blood poured down my throat as I continued eating at an extremely brisk speed. Soon I reached bony yet brittle fingers that crunched and snapped underneath my teeth. Small bone fragments that felt like toothpicks stuck between my teeth and gums. A trail of blood, slobber, and a little bit of puss dripped down my jaw. I refrained from licking my lips clean. A sudden wave of nausea hit me like a train. My meal threatened to exit me once again. I looked down at my arm that was now mostly bones.

I wiped my mouth clean of it mix of disgusting fluids that coated it. It was over. I breathed a sigh of relief. Ugh, the taste’s still on my tongue, hopefully, Blue has back up toothpaste in storage. Then again it would be Altean toothpaste which could be poisonous to me for all I know. Or
maybe they don’t even brush their teeth? Ha, imagine that a race of super-intelligent space aliens that have achieved advanced cryostasis but not basic dental hygiene. Though Allura and Coran’s teeth looked well taken care of. Maybe they don’t even need to clean their teeth? Oh, right I’m rambling again. Need to stay on track, return to Keith and then pass out. Sounds like a fine plan.

I tossed what remained of my limb into the stream before getting to my feet and turning around. Soon enough I could see Red still collapsed on the forest floor surrounded by broken down trees from her crash landing. Her mouth was still open so I stepped inside to her cockpit. But Keith was nowhere to be found. I gulped in fear. Either something had come along and eaten him or he was walking around before his injuries could heal. Both scenarios involved erasing all of the hard work I had put in earlier. Considering I didn’t hear anything while I was… “busy” he was probably just walking around. Or he was eaten by something super quiet and likely to kill me next. I bit my lip and tried to calm myself. The latter’s completely impossible… right?

Something sharp was pressed against my neck from behind.

“OH GOD DON’T KILL ME!!” I screamed in a completely heroic and manly manner.

“Lance??”

Chapter End Notes

Me while writing lance being forced to eat his own arm: I wonder if I’ve taken this too far

Anyway, feel free to follow me on tumblr where I post dumb voltron memes at https://tddashie.tumblr.com/
Red & Black, Indigo & Yellow

Chapter Summary

Something sharp was pressed against my neck from behind.

“Oh GOD DON’T KILL ME!!” I screamed in a completely heroic and manly manner.

“Lance??”

Chapter Notes

Hey guys sorry for the really late chapter I've had family over so there wasn't really anything I could do about it.

Either way, feel free to follow me on tumblr at: https://tddashie.tumblr.com/

See the end of the chapter for more notes

All of the breath in my body left all at once. I could feel my heart rise to my throat. Keith was without a doubt the one holding me at sword-point. I mean I can feel him pressed against my back. And I’d recognize those abs anywhere. I knew this was unavoidable. It was only a matter of time but I didn’t expect it to come so soon. I’m going to die today by Keith’s hands. Or should I say sword? Hell, I don’t know how he’s gonna react. He might throw away his blade and then beat me to death. I mean it’s not likely but anything’s possible I guess. The real question is what I’d prefer. Definitely sword, it’d be faster and less painful. I mean I’d prefer to live but that is becoming less and less likely as the day goes on. I wonder if I don’t die right now how could this day get worse? Somehow I don’t think that could happen but I’ve been surprised before.

“LANCE!?”

Oh shit right, Keith’s talking to me.

“Y-yeah.” My adam's apple pressed awkwardly against the sharp blade when I spoke. “Yeah, it’s me.”

I felt Keith stiffen behind me. Speaking of which could he possibly back up a little? I really don’t want to feel him basically grinding on me in my final moments. Then again I once heard this phrase that was something along the lines of “The weak don’t get to choose how they die”. I’ve thought about that phrase a lot during my time in space. A weakling like me doesn’t get to die surrounded by my family like I’ve always wanted. Since becoming the Blue Paladin I’ve thought that I’d die on the battlefield. A battlefield millions of light-years away from everyone I’ve ever cared about. Instead, I’m gonna have to die uncomfortably close to Keith’s dick. Who would have guessed?

“Prove it.” He growled.
“You’re a dick.”

The sword pressed against my throat slowly moved away.

“Okay, it’s you.”

Once free I quickly stepped away from him and turned around. Keith had a firm grip on the handle of his sword but kept it lowered. His stance was clearly defensive but not aggressive. His bandaged hand was pressed tightly against his chest. It was clear that he was in pain, I just hope that he didn’t reopen his wounds. I mean I hope that he didn’t erase all of the hard work I put into taking care of him. I don’t care about his well being at all. Nope, not in the slightest he could drop dead for all I care. Anyway, this situation was, by all means, a surprise. Yeah, he knows that it’s me but he also knows that I’m a ghoul so why am I not dead? I avoided looking him in the eye.

“What happened?” To my surprise, he didn’t sound angry. He just sounded confused and… frail. This was wrong. Keith didn’t do frail. Keith’s an awesome pilot that does crazy stuff like fly through asteroid belts on the regular. He’s easily the best fighter out of all of us and Shiro’s right-hand man. Both figuratively and literally seeing as he forms Voltron’s right arm. He has been nothing but confident in both his skills and his decisions since we all became paladins. Seeing him this unsure was worrying. And those new drooping ears sure didn’t help the situation. Honestly, with that heartbroken face and those ears, I’d even go to say he looked cute. Like a cute little puppy dog, you had just kicked. Though to be fair the fact that he’s covered head-to-toe in blood and holding a deadly weapon sure negate that puppy dog effect.

I should probably answer him but… how? What exactly do I tell him? That I was born a monster but I’ve tried my whole life to be human? What does he even want to hear?! Fuck it I’ll just shrug that’ll probably work.

I bit my lip and gave him a half-hearted shrug. Well more like half-shouldered shrug since one of mine is completely unmovable due to excruciating pain. Keith’s grip on his weapon loosened and his lips tightened. He glared at me though it was lacking any actual anger, instead, he looked concerned? It’s kind of hard to tell with his new Galra-like eyes. At least he’s still got his pupils, I’ve only seen completely yellow eyes from other Galra. Pfft, I just came up with a funny pun, he “galred” at me. ‘Cus he’s Galra and he just glared at me. Haha, classic Lance. Right, serious conversation time Keith’s talking again.

“Lance that’s not an answer, what happened?!”

I didn’t want to admit it. Saying the truth out loud would make this all too real. I’ll just keep avoiding the question for as long as I can.

“Alright alright calm down, we rescued Allura and you got injured while fighting Zarkon” I mumbled ‘big surprise’ under my breath “Then both of us were hit by some weird magical beam courtesy of Haggar. And then while we were warping away something went wrong with the wormhole and all of us were separated. After having a pretty rough landing myself I found you looking all Galra-like and patched you up, and now we’re here.”

“Oh no, please god no this conversation doesn’t need to get any more awkward. Please spare me one moment of peace. He’s got to know right? I mean how do you just not know that about yourself. I mean I would have never guessed but… Keith has to already know he’s Galra right?? Please don’t make me explain to Keith that he’s Galra. How am I this unlucky why is it always me in shitty situations like this? Might as well bite the bullet already, who knows maybe the universe will give me a break today and not force me to explain to my teammate that he’s a monster. Keith
is strong, stronger than I could ever be, but anyone would break down when they realize that they’re part of the species that we’re supposed to be fighting.

“That I found you looking all Galra-like?”

“Y-You’re joking right?” It sounded like even he didn’t believe what he was saying. Guess that confirms that theory. Keith didn’t know he was Galra and now I’m the bringer of existentially bad news. Man, this whole situation just sucks.

Then Keith caught sight of his hand. He dropped his weapon in shock and brought his hands to his face. His furry, purple, and clawed hands. The hands of a monster. He dropped to his knees and just kept staring at his hands blankly. His face was devoid of emotion. He just kept inspecting his hands. Like he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. His pupils were shrunk to inhuman sizes and his breathing panicked. Despite his fragile state he still refused to cry. Even in his toughest moments, he stayed stoic. I think he’s having a panic attack. How do I help him? I’ve helped Poco out of her panic attacks but Keith and she are completely different people. And I’m not that close with Keith I don’t know how to help him. I wish Shiro was here. Shiro was Keith’s adopted brother if I’m remembering what they told me correctly. Shiro would know just what to do. But I’ve got to try anyway.

“Hey, Keith budd-“ I was cut off by him suddenly and violently scratching his hands apart. As if he could tear the fur right off of him. His new claws were doing serious damage to his already messed up hands. Purple blood started flowing from the new and deep wounds he had created. The sight of his blood only seemed to worsen his mood. He started scratching with even more force behind the movements. I had to stop him.

“HEY HEY WHOA!!” I screamed while I took him by the hand. He tensed up at the action as if I was hurting him. I loosened my grip in fear that I squeezed his already messed up hand too tightly. Ghouls are scarily strong, strong enough to accidentally break bones when all I want to do is help. The moment my grip loosened he broke away from my hold and went to grab at his hair. But his hand brushed past his new ears. His lips tightened. He started clawing at his ears leaving deep gashes in the vulnerable flesh. I grabbed his hands without care for how strong my grip was. I held his broken hand in mine and the other with my kagune. I pinned his hands to the ground.

“Keith! KEITH!”

Now that he wasn’t ripping apart his ears I could see the damage. Both his ears and his hands were torn open showing just how sharp his new claws were. A large chunk of flesh was missing from his right ear. I could probably find it if I looked down. Keith was struggling under my grip but I kept him restrained. I was trying my hardest to not use too much force but with every second of struggling it seemed like it was my only option. After all, Ghouls are strong, but Galra can easily keep up with them when it comes to strength. I tightened my grip and called out to him again.

“Keith you gotta calm down!”

He wasn’t listening to me and I wouldn’t be able to hold him forever. I did the only thing I could think of. I smashed our foreheads together violently. He stopped struggling.

“Keith look at me.” I said seriously while making no room for protest. My temple was in a lot of pain, I ignored it.

He looked up and our eyes met. One pair a sharp and ugly red against pitch black. The other a deep indigo highlighted by an acidic yellow. Neither were human yet both would give anything to be.

“Repeat after me, alright?” I said before his attention could switch away from me. He slowly
nodded while biting his lip. Poco always calmed down when I used this technique. Hopefully, Keith will react well to it as well.

“My name is Keith Kogane.”

“My name is Keith Kogane.” He repeated.

“I’m the pilot of the Red Lion.”

“I’m the pilot of the Red Lion.”

“A member of Voltron, defenders of the universe.”

“A member of Voltron, defenders of the universe.”

“I have a stupid mullet.”

“I have a stump- LANCE!” Damn, he almost fell for it.

“And I’m not a monster.” He hesitated to repeat after me. “Keith please.”

“And I’m not a monster.” He said at long last but it sounded dishonest. He wasn’t fighting me anymore. Instead, he was just sitting there looking lost and confused. It was pitiful to see such an incredible person at his weakest. If there’s a God out there he sure is a bastard, forcing such wonderful people to hurt themselves like this. Forcing them to be something that they never wanted to be. It’s funny that it took me this long to see his but Keith reminds me a lot of Poco. Both are undeserving of their situations. I wasn’t able to help Poco but I refuse to let Keith go down the same path. I would do anything to save him from himself.

“Could you let go of me?” He said in a tired tone.

“Only if you promise not to hurt yourself again.” He nodded softly. I reluctantly let go of him. He didn’t hurt himself but he didn’t move either. He just kept looking down at the floor. I extended my kagune to grab the med-kit lying on the other side of the cockpit. I slid it over to where we were sitting. I took a piece of cloth and soaked it in disinfectant. I softly took one of Keith’s hands and starting patching him up again. He didn’t protest.

Damn these are some serious scratches. Both of his hands were borderline mangled and drenched in purple blood. I pressed the cloth against his hand, he flinched but kept silent. I wonder if I should have cleaned the blood off first. Man, I really wish Poco taught me more about medical stuff. Once I figured that his wounds were clean I took another cloth and started wiping the blood off. Would be better if I had some water. Wait, I’m pretty sure Coran said that Altean bandages were waterproof during his med-kit explanation. That means I could clean myself off in the river without having to re-bandage anything. I would love to clean up after Keith’s better. Like seriously I’m sure being coated in blood isn’t good for my complexion. Once his hand was deemed clean enough I started wrapping it up.

I took his other hand and winced once I saw how bad it was. This was the hand that already broken, to begin with, so that was a good start. Keith really didn’t go easy on himself. For the most part, it looked like his other hand, deep gashes but nothing too serious. But there was one gash that was deep enough to reveal bone. I started patching this one up a lot quicker than I did the other hand. I pressed the disinfectant cloth into the wound and Keith jerked back in pain. I saw him bite down on his tongue to prevent a scream. I kept the cloth on regardless. I took another cloth from the med-kit and started cleaning up his hand.
“Haggar did this to us didn’t she.” I paused in my cleaning and looked up at him. I really wasn’t expecting Keith to speak up first.

“Yeah, she did.” I answered before continuing my rather poor patch-up job.

“We can’t return to the others like this.” I hummed an agreement.

“There’s got to be a way for us to fix this.” He continued.

“Maybe another druid could help?” I suggested.

“Maybe.” He mumbled while inspecting his bandaged hand with a weary expression. Guess he doesn’t trust in my ability to patch him up. Though to be fair I don’t either. I don’t have a clue to what I’m doing.

“Allura never mentioned that druid magic could do something as radical as a species change.” He said mostly to himself. Wait, what?

“Could you repeat that?” I paused in the cleaning of his wounds. There was no way what I think is happening is happening. The universe would never be so kind to me.

“I said that I didn’t know druid magic could change someone into something else?” He answered with a confused expression. Probably wondering why I would ask him to repeat that.

Oh my god, I can’t believe that something this good is happening to me. All of my good karma is coming together to create this one great act. Keith doesn’t realize that neither of us are human, he thinks this is completely due to druid magic. I have a chance to keep my secret. He doesn’t think I’m a monster. He still thinks I’m human. I can’t let him realize the truth I can’t let him know that I’m a disgusting freak. I can’t let him realize the truth I can’t let him know that I’m a disgusting freak. I can’t let him realize the truth I can’t let him know that I’m a disgusting freak.

“Lance what happened to your arm!?”

“Hm? Oh, I had a bit of a rough landing, I’ll manage.” I waved his concern off.

“I’ll manage!? Lance, you lost an arm!”

I shifted out of his grip and returning to bandaging his hand up. If I act casual he won’t think it’s a big deal.

“It’ll grow back.” I said with a shrug.

That seemed to calm him down a bit though he still looked concerned for me. Though his concern was quickly replaced by discomfort.

“Oh, right.” He said awkwardly. He fidgeted slightly in his seat and avoided looking me in the eyes. Guess he doesn’t like being reminded of my “ghoulness”. Can’t really blame the guy, no one should be completely comfortable with a man-eating monster. Just goes to show how I need to do
everything I can to keep the truth from him. Better switch the topic before things get even more uncomfortable. I’ll just start bickering with him like we always do, that’ll get rid of this serious mood.

“Took you awhile to notice, though.” I said slyly. “Guess you’re slower than I first thought.”

“I had other things to worry about.” He growled while his cheeks flushed a strange lilac color. Huh, I guess Galra do blush purple.

“Oh? So you’re admitting that you care more about yourself than me?” I said, though my words were lacking any real anger. Keith seemed to pick up on the fact that I was just playing.

“That’s not what I meant and you know it.” He grumbled just as I finished bandaging his hand.

Now how do I treat his ears? Guess I’ll just wing it. I reached up and cupped his chin. He leaned into my touch, guess that means he’s letting me work on his ears. I moved his face to the side so I could get a better view of his wounds. His left ear had a few cuts on it but his right ear was missing a whole chunk of flesh. I gently dabbed the disinfectant on his cuts. He tensed at the action but stayed still enough for me to properly work on him.

“Man, you really owe me for this.”

“I feel like you should owe me.” He eyed his bandages with a raised eyebrow and a grimace.

“Excuse me! You don’t get to complain to the person who just saved your life.” I stopped cleaning his wounds so I could put my hand on my chest in an over-dramatic offense. He let out a huff of air in a mix of amusement and annoyance.

“You don’t have to do this you know. I’m perfectly capable of taking care of myself.”

“Oh please like you could do this any better.”

“It’d be a challenge not to.”

“A challenge huh?” I eyed him with a raised eyebrow and a sly smirk. I planted the still wet cloth in his hand and he winced at the sudden pressure on his injured hands. But he didn’t let that wince show for long. In fact, a normal person wouldn’t have even spotted it. But I’d like to consider myself a pretty observant person. And I know that Keith can never back down from a challenge, no matter how pointless it was. Though to be fair I’m just as bad. Actually, I’m even worse considering I’m the one starting these challenges most of the time. But it’s not like I’d admit that to Keith, I’d never admit a lot of things to Keith.

“Prove it.” I said with a cat-like smile as I sat back criss-cross apple sauce and planted my chin on my hand, elbow resting on my thigh. I could feel my kagune wave lazily behind me. Keith rolled his eyes at my tendency to make everything into a competition. Whatever, he can roll his eyes all he wants but he’s still the one that agrees to my challenges. At least this will give me a chance to relax while Keith does all the work. Besides, Keith would be much better at this than me. Not that I’d ever admit that out loud. He’s just so naturally gifted at everything, well everything besides talking, but of course, he would be just as talented in medicine. Though that’s not too much of a compliment considering I’ve been doing all of this with only one hand.

Keith set to work immediately leaving no room for messing around. He took some of the patches used for smaller wounds and set to covering all of his cuts. I would have figured the regular bandages would have been better but now that I’m thinking about it I’m not exactly sure how you would wrap his ears without covering his eyes as well. I eyed his wounds warily. Most of them
would probably scar. I figured they’d look kind of like tiger stripes once fully healed. The lines thinning and thickening in an intricate pattern that covered most of his ears. I wonder if it’s possible for Ghoul’s to get scars. I’d love to have a cool scar like Keith will. Girls love badass looking scars. Something noticeable like on my face but not big or messy enough to be considered ugly. Something like a cut on my eyebrow. Keith is gonna get so much attention from those sweet looking scars. Though, I guess his ears would look a whole lot less cool once Human again.

Once his ears were properly bandaged he started ripping off all of his other bandages and re-wrapping his wounds. My expression soured but I kept quiet. Those bandages were just barely clinging to his form before. As much as I’d hate to admit it he really does need proper care. And even with damaged hands, he could deliver that much better than I ever could. Man, why is Keith so badass? He’s super injured and just had a panic attack but he isn’t letting him phase him at all. He’s even dressing his own wounds while I just sit back and watch. What did he do to become so great at everything? Why is he so much better than me in every way? I mean he’s a better pilot and a better fighter, plus he’s Shiro’s favorite. When all of us were still on Earth Shiro was my hero and I always dreamed of getting his attention. And now that we’re all soldiers against our will I still lack his recognition. I mean I’m always trying my hardest but that’s always going to be nothing compared to Keith.

“Lance?” Oh looks like he finished redressing his wounds. And now he’s looking at me all concerned like. Damn, my expression must have given away my depressing thoughts. I can’t let this get to me, not in front of Keith. He doesn’t need another reason to see me as weak. I just have to stay strong until both of us are human-looking again.

“What’s up?” I hastily put on my signature smile and met his gaze. The moment our eyes connected he looked away from my face. My eyes must really freak him out and I can’t really blame the guy. I mean he must have been raised on scary stories about ghouls just like all other humans. Back on Earth ghouls lived hidden not out of personal choice but due to fear of death. All known ghouls were hunted and killed like wild animals. Even the “peaceful” ghouls that didn’t kill, like my family and I. It’s almost funny how humans were raised to fear ghouls yet ghouls were raised to fear humans even more.

“Never mind.” He muttered awkwardly. Keith has never been good at emotions. He dealt with swords and ships not talking and emoting. I guess a sincere looking smile is enough to ward off suspicion for now. Better change the subject before he could push me further.

“Hey, you’re one of those weirdos that prepare for the apocalypse right?”

“The term is survivalists but yes I am.” He looked sour at my comment about his weirdness. And I stand by my statement about him and his weird hobbies. Like seriously who spends their free time on stuff like cryptid hunting, conspiracy theories, and survival scenarios? He could be doing much more useful things in his spare time like actually taking care of that thing attached to his head he calls a mullet. I don’t think his hair has ever actually seen a shampoo bottle in his entire life. I mean that’s what I do in my free time, skin and hair care is no joke.

“So have you decked Red out with anything useful? Specifically a change of clothes and some towels?”

“Yes?” He said, clearly confused to why I was asking for such things.

“Because we, my now furry friend, are going for a dip.”

“A what?”
“We’re gonna go wash off.”

“Oh, yeah that’d be nice.” He said with a grimace as he looked down at his bloody and torn undersuit.

“So lead the way?” I got up to my feet and offered my hand to Keith. He took it and I pulled him to his feet. I looked down at him with a small smirk. Keith might be better to me than everything, receives Shiro's affection, and isn’t a bloodthirsty monster but at the very least I’m a good deal taller than him. Keith took off to the other side of the cockpit and crouched down to a large metal box that had been attached to the floor. Looks like he had Red’s cockpit modified just like I modified Blue’s. Nothing big but just a few additions that we felt were necessary. Pidge and Hunk probably helped him just like they helped me since those two were in charge of mechanical stuff.

The box was locked and Keith took the padlock in his hand. A holographic screen with a keyboard filled with Altean symbols projected from the lock. So it’s an Altean padlock then, I haven’t seen one before. The Altean language is complete nonsense to me in both spoken and written form. But I guess that’s to be expected from an alien language. Keith started typing in an over complicated password that really should have ended at the fifteenth symbol. But no instead it kept going until I had lost count of how many symbols long it was. How does Keith even remember this code? Why did he make it so long? Oh wait I know the answer to that question and it’s because he’s a paranoid weirdo.

Finally, the lock clicked open and the holographic screen dissipated. Keith opened the lid of the box and inside was everything you’d expect and so much more. To the left were a collection of knives bundled together by a piece of red cloth, four folded up ponchos which of course were all red, several boxes of matches, a catalytic heater and some bottled gas fuel, and finally a folded up red sleeping bag. To the right were four Altean first aid kits like the ones we had in our lions, three canteens all full of water, a water filter, a mass of canned foods which ranged from “Canned Corn” to “Canned Narsfluf Meat”, a large net, some kind of super advanced space radio, six red flares, a notepad and a box of pencils, and a compass. And underneath all of that were a collection of sharp weapons which included a Swiss Army Knife, a hatchet, a machete, and a pair of bladed brass knuckles?? What would you ever need bladed brass knuckles for?! Holy shit man, what else is in here? That half broken pencil I lost in third grade!? My little sister’s misplaced teddy bear!? My long gone self-esteem!?

“My god Keith how did you even fit everything in here!?”

“Practice.” He said with a stone cold expression while looking me dead in the eye.

“Wha- you know what never mind, just get me a set of clothes and a towel.” I don’t think I’ve ever felt this defeated before.

“Alright.” He said before unpacking some of his supplies to reveal a second layer of bullshit hidden underneath the first layer. In this new layer I could see six sets of Keith’s usual outfit, a load of folded up towels and blankets, a portable stove, a bow saw, a set of armor, several red glow sticks, a few candles, a bunch of trash bags, and a parachute. Why would he even need a parachute? What is wrong with this box. I, a man-eating monster, and Keith, a furry purple alien cat-human hybrid, pilot giant mechanical lions and were hit by a magic lightning bolt cast by a space druid. And yet somehow a single metal box manages to be the strangest thing to ever happen to me. I’m pretty sure it is physically impossible to fit all of this shit into a single room and yet somehow he fit it all in a box.

“Why do you even need all of this...”
“It’s good to be prepared.” He said with a shrug and an innocent look on his face as if he didn’t break the laws of reality to pack this box.

“Look, man, there’s being prepared and then there’s whatever the hell this is!”

“What’s wrong with it?”

“Keith! Look at everything in here! What is RIGHT about is!?”

“Lance.”

“No I’m being serious here I’m sure some law of nature was broken today!”

“Lance stop.”

“If I had taken every object in my house and stuffed it all into a box, which I should mention isn’t POSSIBLE, it still wouldn’t be anywhere close to how much shit you’ve got here!!”

“Lance you’re being over dramatic.”

“I am not being over dramatic.” I said dramatically with a hand on my chest “What do you even plan to do with bladed brass knuckles and a parachute!? I could maybe understand the rest of it but what would you ever use a pair of bladed brass knuckles and a parachute for!?”

“I just wanted to be prepared.”

“FOR WHAT!?!?”

“Everything.”

I wasn’t going to win this. I let out a deep and tired sigh as I rubbed my template. How did he even get all this stuff? Did he ask Allura or Coran for some Altean versions of regular Earth survival gear? Did he bring all of this from Earth!? No, I would have noticed I was the one that flew everyone off of Earth. There was no way he could have hidden this box while we were flying to Arus. I don’t even understand what half of this stuff would be used for. Keith is weird.

“Whatever, let’s just clean up already.”

Chapter End Notes

Fic up for adoption!

I'm sorry everyone but I've just lost complete interest in Voltron as a whole due to a bunch of factors. Because of this, I find that I can't complete this work. However, if anyone would be interested in adopting this fanfic just hit me up at using my tumblr account "TDDashie". Again I'd like to apologize for my lack of interest in this fanfic, but thank you all so much for all the support and love that this got. Goodbye for now but, if everything goes as I'd like it to, then someone else may pick this 'fic back up. So don't lose complete hope in never seeing this again C:
Hello again everyone! The first chapter has been written by our new writer langsty-mc-langstface and posted here: http://archiveofourown.org/works/11347731/chapters/25394322. While their writing style is very different from mine I hope that you'll still find their work satisfactory. You can also find more of their work on their tumblr here: https://langsty-mc-langstface.tumblr.com/ This will probably farewell from me now, as this fic here will no longer update unless I have an important announcement. But, while my time writing this was short I enjoyed it while it lasted and every bit of praise you gave me meant everything to me. I'm very thankful to every one of you, goodbye.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!