I Won’t Say A Word (Unless You Make Me)

by rhyaenv

Summary

There are three key secrets Lance is keeping from everyone, and he would much rather fling himself directly into the nearest star than to ever let anyone know what they are.

(Currently on hiatus.)

Notes

Okay, so that was a terrible summary, but I seriously couldn’t think up of something better, lol. Anyways—hi everyone! I’m new to the Voltron fandom (as in, I’ve only been able to watch S1 so far because I live in the middle of nowhere and my internet is so very slow orz), so my writing of the characters will very likely be OOC. ;; But I’ve been reading so many amazing Keith/Lance fics lately that I still really wanted to try and write something for them too!

Originally, I was kinda thinking of keeping this (chapter one) as a oneshot, but jfc, my heart is weak, I can’t—I need happy endings like I need air, lol. So I will be continuing this, but please note that my updates are most likely going to be very slow as I’m currently also working on a hundred other WIP fics atm (jfc, why do I do this to myself... lmao). ;;

Also, please note that this fic isn't betaed, so I apologize now for all the mistakes you're going
to find. Even so, if you guys like this fic, please leave kudos and/or a comment! I’d really appreciate them! ♥
Chapter 1

Okay, so, maybe Lance was keeping a few secrets from everyone.

But Lance couldn’t help it—because knowing just one of them, one could very easily start connecting the dots and end up discovering his other secrets. It sucked that his secrets were somehow all intertwined, but there was nothing Lance could do about that. So if Lance wanted to keep even one secret, by proxy, he had to keep a few more.

The first huge secret was that, while everyone assumed he was a beta, Lance was actually an omega.

Lance wasn’t ashamed to be an omega, honestly, he was proud to be one and loved his dynamic. But when he found out that the Garrison didn’t allow omegas to enroll, he’d been forced to lie about his dynamic in his application forms. And once he was accepted, Lance did his best to fool everyone into thinking he was a beta. Which, amazingly, thanks to the use of heat suppressors and several types of scent neutralizers his family had helped him buy, worked.

After forming Voltron, there had been a time when Lance was terrified that everyone would find out, because he’d been so close to running out of heat suppressors and scent neutralizers, but thankfully, they’d visited a planet where, during a short break, Lance had miraculously managed to find some that were nearly identical to those back home. He’d ended up spending all his money on them, buying more than he clearly needed, because Lance most definitely did not want to be on the verge of running out of supplies again anytime soon.

Yet despite this, whenever it was possible, Lance always went off on his own to nearby markets, lying and saying it was to look for more skincare products, when really Lance was hoping to find and purchase even more supplies to hide his dynamic. Then he’d merely add what he found to his ever growing stock that was safely hidden away in his room and let the relief wash over him when he sat back and looked at everything he had collected.

The next big secret was that, given that he was an omega, Lance was nesting.

Truthfully, Lance had often pondered coming clean and confessing that he was an omega, but once he realized he was starting to nest, he quickly shut down that train of thought and resolved to keep his secret hidden for as long as he possibly could.

Because omegas only nested for one of two reasons. One, an omega already had a bondmate and was going to be spending their heat with said mate. Or, two, when an omega found someone they wanted as their mate before a possible upcoming heat.

And Lance?

Given that he didn’t have a mate, well, that only left one another option.

And that brought up secret number three: Lance was hopelessly, undeniably in love with Keith.

The infuriating, but painfully handsome, mullet-wearing alpha that made Lance want to scream and pull his hair out most of the time, yet who also simultaneously made Lance want to get down on his knees and bare his neck in submission and call out for the alpha to claim him.

The contrasting feelings the alpha brought forth in Lance were both absolutely terrifying and painfully embarrassing, and it made Lance want to just fling himself out into space and towards the nearest possible star so that no one would ever find out. Because, of course, out of all the people in
the universe, it just had to be Keith that made Lance feel things he most definitely did not want to feel.

So the fact that Lance had started nesting for the very first time in his entire life?

Yeah, it all was Keith’s damned fault.

This was how Lance found himself late one night—breathless, with his back against the closed door of his room, while he clutched a black garment close to his chest. His heart was racing furiously, and Lance could his hear his blood rushing in his ears. He still couldn’t believe he’d actually done what he did.

He’d stolen one of Keith’s shirts.

Honestly, Lance hadn’t meant to do it—it just sort of ended up happening that way.

He’d been restless and unable to fall asleep, so he’d decided to make his way to the kitchen to try and find something to take back to his room to snack on. But on his way there, he happened to stumble, unsurprisingly, across Keith training. And, unwilling to walk away, Lance had ended up hiding himself behind the edge of the open door to keep Keith from possibly spotting him, so that the omega could continue watching the alpha as he practiced.

The sight of Keith looking so focused and fighting so hard never failed to make Lance’s heart undergo chronic bouts of arrhythmia, or to bring about the unpleasant fluttering in his stomach. No matter what he said to the alpha’s face, Lance could not deny that the way Keith fought, the way he moved with such finesse and agility, was amazing.

But when Keith stopped and pulled off his shirt and threw it on the floor, the sudden, wholly unexpected sight of Keith’s bare chest had made Lance’s heart flatline. Leaving Lance feeling like he’d just been given a direct blow straight to his gut and chest. And, by some miracle, Lance had mangled to keep himself from crying out in despair. Because even though Lance was still hiding away some distance from Keith, he could still see how Keith was covered in sweat, how his toned arms and chest were glimmering under the lights of the training room.

The sight of it should’ve repulsed Lance, but instead, it only made him feel slightly light headed. Like he was on the verge of falling over and passing out. Or, more truthfully, like he was about to swoon like some damned fictional character in a romance novel.

But then Keith had walked away, and, within seconds, he’d just disappeared.

That’s when it happened.

Lance should’ve been alarmed with Keith’s disappearance, should’ve wondered where the alpha might’ve possibly gone, or maybe even taken that as a sign to just go back to his room, even without his midnight snack. But instead Lance’s eyes were fixed on the black shirt Keith had just left on the floor. And before he’d become aware of it, not two seconds later he’d rushed over to it and picked it up. But the moment awareness washed over him and he realized what exactly he’d just done, he immediately took of running back to his room like the devil was at his heels.

Now that Lance was in the safety of his room, with Keith’s slightly damp shirt still clutched tightly in his hand, he eyed his bed and took notice of the state of his nest. It wasn’t anything grand, really, he mainly had a bunch of pillows and blankets in there, along with a few of his favorite clothes. Because once Lance realized he’d started nesting, he’d purposely rearranged things in his nest so that
it looked more like he was just disorganized and had piles of stuff on his bed. That way, if anyone ever took a peak inside his room, they’d (hopefully) assume all the “clutter” on his bed was there because he was just really unorganized and lazy and, therefore, didn’t even bother to clean his room.

Omegas usually created bigger, slightly neater nests than what he currently had, but that was mainly due to the fact that they also incorporated things from their bondmate, or prospective mate, in them. Oftentimes, with the approval of their omega, an alpha could even add things of their own to the nest as they wished. And, sometimes, omegas that were already mated and had children could also add things that belonged to their children into their nest.

But Lance could do neither of those things—he had no mate and no children.

While (Lance desperately hoped that) Keith didn’t hate him, the alpha still clearly didn’t like him. Sure, Lance could maybe say that they were becoming slightly closer now, perhaps almost friends. Lance could easily agree to that suggestion, but the alpha? Lance was still unsure what exactly the alpha might say, if ever asked. But them possibly, really being friends was still a far cry from them being anything else.

Lance wouldn’t—couldn’t—delude himself into thinking that the perfect alpha would ever feeling anything more for him.

If anything, Lance wondered if Keith was one of those alphas that liked other alphas, because no one could ignore how close Keith was with their leader—with Shiro. It was a fact of the universe, just like ‘the grass on Earth is green’, ‘the sky on Earth is blue’, and ‘Keith and Shiro have a lot of history together that likely started well before Keith even joined the Garrison’—or, basically, ‘the two alphas are as thick as thieves’. Honestly, no matter how much the thought of it pained Lance, he wouldn’t be surprised if Shiro and Keith were more than just the best friends everyone thought them to be.

So this—this one shirt Lance had accidentally stolen?

With a trembling hand, Lance brought the shirt up to a few centimeters below his nose so that he could take a small, hesitant whiff of the alpha’s scent. But the moment he did, he felt his knees grow weak. The deep, musky scent was potent, overwhelming, and it make a strange warmth pool in his stomach.

Lance knew the scent was so strong because Keith had been sweating so much that he’d soaked his shirt. Lance had only ever gotten a few direct whiffs of Keith’s alpha scent. Mainly, when either of them had been injured and had been there to give aid to the other. But other than that? Lance had been forced to face the reality that he could not walk right up to Keith and scent him, that such a thing was merely meant to happen in his thoughts and dreams.

This shirt, however, Lance realized, was a pretty darn good alternative.

As Lance took another whiff, he felt his body finally begin to relax.

With that, Lance walked over to his nest and sat down on the edge of his bed. He didn’t hesitate before he moved things a bit around so he could gently place Keith’s shirt at the right edge of his pillow, somewhere near him, but somewhere still slightly hidden. He’d placed a few of his other things on top of it, but he’d made sure that just a tiny bit of the black fabric was poking out. Enough so that he could see it and know it was there, and enough for him to scent it once he was lying down in his bed and moved a bit.

Feeling rather pleased with his work, Lance let out a yawn before he took off his bathrobe and
carefully placed it at the foot of his nest.

Amazingly, despite his struggles only minutes earlier, the moment Lance’s head fell back onto his pillow, he quickly felt himself falling fast asleep, his last conscious thoughts of one black-haired alpha with striking violet eyes.
As Lance slowly made his way towards the dining room, he tried his best to ignore the throbbing knot of anxiety that had nestled its way into his chest. The possibility of Keith bringing attention to his missing shirt before everyone, of asking a mere question like “hey, have any of you guys seen my black V-necked tee?”, terrified Lance. It was such a simple, perhaps even silly thing to stress over, but Lance still worried. Because, for the most part, Lance thought himself a pretty good liar, especially when he really needed to sell a lie, but when he was extremely nervous, Lance struggled to keep his lies from falling apart and exposing the truth to everyone.

And right now? If Lance’s racing heart wasn’t an indicator of just how nervous his was, his trembling, perspiring hands would be a dead giveaway.

“You can do this, Lance,” the omega whispered to himself under his breath, “just walk in there like you always do.”

*You know the drill,* Lance continued in his thoughts, *just say good morning to Coran, give Allura a dazzling grin and wink after you compliment her, greet Pidge and ruffle her hair a bit before you try to punch you in return, pat Hunk’s back and ask him what he made for breakfast, give Keith his customary glare, and politely say hello to Shiro—it’s nothing complicated, Lance, you’ve done this several times before.*

But the moment Lance walked into the dinning area and saw that Keith was already sitting down and eating at the table, he felt his gut churn uncomfortably. Lance swallowed and tried to ignore the surge of unease that welled up deep inside his chest.

Thankfully, Hunk was there too, as was Pidge, though she seemed to have finished eating already because her gaze was fixed on the screen of a laptop she was typing away on.

“Good morning, guys!” Lance said with a wide grin as he walked up to the table and took his seat between Hunk and Keith.

Hunk immediately turned to look at Lance with a smile, “Hey, good morning, Lance!”

Both Pidge and Keith only looked up at him for a second before looking away and mumbling at nearly the same time, “Hey.”

Lance was tempted to roll his eyes at their usual unenthusiastic reply, but he held himself back.
Instead, Lance gave the area one last look before he asked, “Where’s everyone else?”

“I don’t know,” Hunk replied as he gently pushed a bowl of food in front of Lance, and then handed Lance a spoon, “I didn’t see any of them when I came here a while ago to make us some breakfast.”

“Thanks, Hunk,” Lance said quietly with a smile as he grabbed the spoon and began to eat.

“Shiro and Allura are probably somewhere discussing Voltron-related things again,” Pidge shrugged her shoulders, “and I think Coran might be with them too. My best guess is that they’re all up in the Control Room.”

Lance merely nodded his head as he continued eating.

When Keith spoke up moments later, Lance did his best not to stiffen in alarm, “Hey, has anyone seen a black T-shirt in the training deck? I was training there last night and took it off so I could go get a towel, but when I came back it was gone.”

There was silence for a few seconds, and Lance did his best to look composed as he ate, though he could feel his heartbeat gradually begin to pick up speed.

“Maybe Allura’s mice took it?” Pidge suggested without even looking up from her laptop.

“Yeah, man,” Hunk nodded and then stuffed his mouth with another spoonful of the food, “you should definitely go ask Allura and see if she can ask the mice for ya.”

Keith sounded confused yet exasperated as he asked, “But why would they take my shirt?”

“Beats me, man,” was Hunk’s nonchalant reply.

“I’m not sure how different Allura’s mice are from the mice back home, but I think I recall reading somewhere that the mice back on Earth collect stuff when they’re nesting,” Pidge added, her gaze still fixed on the screen of her computer.

But the moment Lance heard the word ‘nesting’ fall from Pidge’s lips, he felt himself go absolutely still, his grip on the spoon in his right hand tightening.

“Hey, Lance, buddy,” Hunk’s gentle voice to his left started Lance slightly, “you feeling alright?”

When Lance turned to look at Hunk, the beta’s brows were pulled together in concern. Lance wished he could slap himself then, but instead he forced himself to grin and reply, “Yeah, of course! Just feeling a bit down that Allura isn’t here to grace us with her beautiful presence this morning.”

As Hunk smiled and rolled his eyes, Lance heard Pidge scoff in the background, “I should’ve known.”

“So, Keith…” Lance began carefully as he turned to face the alpha, though his heart was racing, Lance prayed that what he was about to say wouldn’t give away what he was hiding, “I can’t believe you lost your own shirt like that. Man, how lame is that?”

The words sounded weak to Lance’s own ears, but it was too late to take them back. He mentally cringed and prayed that Keith wouldn’t notice.

Thankfully, not a second later, Lance felt his body relax when Keith narrowed his eyes at Lance and somewhat loudly declared, “I didn’t lose my shirt! I left it in one spot and when I checked it again seconds later it was gone, so I’m positive it was taken!”
Lance resisted the urge to swallow nervously.

“Of course,” Lance said as sarcastically as he could, “then I guess you better hope Allura’s mice haven’t torn up your shirt so they can use it for their nest.” The omega wanted to pat himself on the back for not stumbling over the last word. “Though, even if they do—sorry, Keith, but that’s what happens when you’re irresponsible and leave your stuff unattended.”

“You know what? Forget it, I’m not that hungry anymore,” Keith said as he suddenly got up, “I’m gonna go look for Shiro.”

The alpha walked off and Lance felt his own heart lurch and fall in guilt, shame, and despair.

It might come to a surprise to his friends, but Lance truly didn’t like arguing with the alpha. Things had been different before Voltron, because Lance’s crush had been more of reluctant admiration for Keith, for an alpha who repeatedly proved to be an incredibly talented cadet in their school. But after finding Shiro and forming Voltron, once Lance actually got to be around and get to know Keith, those feelings clearly changed—a distant crush morphing into something much more intense and complex. Before, Lance hadn’t minded bickering with Keith all that much, it was almost amusing to see the alpha get so riled up with just a few simple words, but once Lance’s feelings started to grow, the omega began to want something else, something more.

Rather than trading barbs and furious words with the alpha, Lance yearned for the impossible from Keith—tender smiles meant solely for him, words of praise, gentle, comforting whispers, light kisses against his lips and skin, soft gazes of affection directed at only him. Yet Lance immediately realized that Keith would never give him any of those things, that Keith would never want to.

Truthfully, Lance figured that, outside of Voltron, it would’ve been near impossible for Keith to actually want to be friends with Lance—much less anything more—or to even accept the omega as his friend if Lance had dared to befriend him first instead. But now, thanks to the workings of the universe, they’d been forced together—they all had—to become the Paladins of Voltron and fight against the Galra. It was because of that that they were all now interacting, because they lived in a flying castle with only seven people on-board—they literally had no one else to interact with, just each other.

The fact that Keith seemed to get along perfectly well with everyone else also hurt more than Lance would ever admit. It seemed like Lance was the odd one out, yet again. Keith hung out with Pidge often, discussed who-knows-what with Allura here and there, and even chatted frequently with Hunk and Coran at times.

But Lance? Keith always left right away when they were alone. It was clear the alpha didn’t want to spend any time alone with Lance, much less do something—anything—together with him. Lance had tried to ask the alpha before, but after so many refusals, Lance eventually gave up trying, knowing his heart couldn’t handle any more rejections.

Lance hated it, but their quarreling was easy. It was a definite way to make Keith respond and interact with him. If Lance said one thing to annoy Keith, the alpha was bound to answer, if only out of spite. Arguing wasn’t fun, and very often Lance immediately regretted antagonizing Keith, especially when he ended up hurting the alpha somehow, but it seemed that was the only time Keith would willingly pay attention to him. But the times when Lance spoke up and Keith threw harsh words at him, the omega couldn’t help but hide his desire to cower away, or to wish he could just stop and never open his mouth again.

Lance wanted to protect his heart, to keep it safe, but with each vexing interaction between himself and Keith, no matter what happened, it only served to break his heart more and more. Yet even so,
Lance couldn’t find it in himself to stop just yet. Lance hated to admit it, but despite everything, he still craved the alpha’s attention. Almost needed it like he needed air, and Lance didn’t like to think about why that was, how he was absolutely sure it was related to how he’d started nesting because of the headstrong alpha.

Yet, right now, as Lance heard Keith’s footsteps fade away until they were completely gone, the omega was filled with crushing regret. He hadn’t said anything overtly cruel to the alpha, but somehow, he’d still messed up because Keith had gotten so upset that he just got up and left.

But what made Lance’s heart ache even more, was that Keith admitted he was leaving to go to Shiro. If Keith had just gotten up and left without saying a word, Lance was sure he wouldn’t be feeling as terrible as he was now. But the thought that Keith was upset and was going to their leader—that he was seeking the other alpha—made Lance feel like Keith had just reached right into his chest and yanked his heart right out before storming away.

Suddenly, Lance didn’t feel so hungry anymore either.

“Well,” Lance began after a while as gently placed the spoon back on the table next to his bowl of unfinished food and got up, “I’ll see you guys later, I’m gonna head back to my room now. Gotta brush my teeth and make sure to re-moisturize this stunningly handsome face of mine so I can maintain my radiant, flawless skin that I know all of you are envious of.”

Pidge rolled her eyes but gave a slight wave, “See ya.”

Hunk looked at Lance’s bowl and frowned before looking back at Lance, “Dude, but you didn’t even finish your breakfast. Did it taste funny, or something? Do you want me to make you something else instead?”

“No, it was great!” Lance immediately replied. “Hunk, you know I always love the food you make! I just—I guess I wasn’t that hungry today.”

Hunk relaxed but Lance noticed there were still hints of concern lingering in his friend’s features. “Alright. Well, if you get hungry later on, just tell me and I’ll cook you up something, yeah?”

“Of course, thanks, Hunk!”

As Lance turned around and walked out of the dining room, he tried not to think about how he’d seen Pidge looking at him right before he left, how her brows had been pulled together as she stared at him with narrowed, suspicious eyes, as if she could tell something was up, as if she knew Lance had been lying before.

Lance swallowed nervously and tried his best not to look like he was in a rush to get back to his room, even though he desperately was.

Once the door closed behind him, Lance gave a shuddering exhale before he closed the distance between himself and his bed. He gently crawled into his nest, letting the familiar scents comfort him. Once he lay back onto his bed, he hesitated before he reached up and grabbed the black garment he’d taken last night. Lance curled up on his side, bringing Keith’s shirt up to his nose so he could scent the fabric.

Keith’s scent was still fresh, and for a second, Lance closed his eyes and let himself dream of a world where Keith would go to him when he was upset, where Keith would smile at the thought of being near Lance, where Keith wanted to spend time alone with Lance, where Keith returned Lance’s
feelings, where Keith yearned to make Lance his omega, where Keith dared to bite and claim Lance as his mate, where Lance’s nest was full of Keith’s things that the alpha himself had placed there, where Keith was lying right beside Lance in their nest with his arms wrapped around the omega to comfort him.

Though his eyes were closed shut, Lance was unable to stop his tears from falling.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

I just want to say that this chapter is dedicated to the lovely anonymous person who was kind enough to buy me a coffee some time ago. You absolutely made my day, and if you’re reading this right now, thank you so much! ♥

Also, thank you guys for your comments on the previous chapter! I know I took forever to update this fic, but even so, I love hearing back from you all—your kind comments always make me feel so happy, and they're what really motivate me to continue writing! So please, if you like this new chapter, please let me know in a comment down below! ♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Three days had passed since The Breakfast Incident, as Lance had taken to calling it in his mind. Thankfully, despite the lingering awkwardness, that Lance knew was there mostly on his part, things between him and Keith soon returned to normal—or, as normal as things could ever be between them. Keith would say things, Lance would return those words with his own witty remarks, they’d argue, someone would eventually cut in and stop them, and the cycle continued.

Knowing that what his heart truly wanted was impossible, and that a true friendship (one where both parties willingly acknowledged they were friends and weren’t afraid or ashamed to say so) between him and Keith might take a few more decades, at the very least, Lance knew this was as good as things were ever going to be between him and the fiery alpha. And Lance gladly took it—he continued acting as he normally would and things resumed as they usually did.

Today happened to be one of the days where Allura scheduled a training session for all of them in the evening, about two hours before the time they had dinner so they had enough time to change and clean themselves prior to eating.

After Lance had changed his clothes and was slowly making his way towards the training deck, his mind thought back to something he’d recalled and begun to think about since the day right after he’d incorporated Keith’s black shirt into his nest.

Back when he’d still been living with his family, Lance had tried learning how to knit after his abuela had gifted him a beautifully-knitted scarf. But despite his valiant efforts, and after seeking help from his abuela, Lance had still been unable to grasp the hang of it. It was days after, while Lance sulked over his failure, that his mother suggested crochet as an alternative. And, amazingly, after looking up numerous tutorials online and constantly asking his mom for help, he’d managed to pick it up.

Though his siblings had jokingly teased him for it at first, Lance still greatly enjoyed his new hobby. There were many things Lance learned to crochet, but some of his favorite things to create had ended up being things for his baby nieces and nephews, like tiny booties and gloves and small beanies. One of the best feelings, Lance quickly discovered, was giving someone something he’d made and watching them smile at him in awe and thanks.
Now, however, Lance wished he could crochet again, not because it would give him something productive to do during his free time, or because it would mean he could surprise his friends with gifts here, but mainly so that he could make a few things to add to his nest, because despite his best efforts, and despite the fact that he did have one thing from Keith in there, his nest still felt rather incomplete.

It was just as Lance was considering looking for yarn the next time they went out to buy supplies, and he mindlessly turned left into another hallway, that something seemed to catch his attention and pull him out of his thoughts. He came to an abrupt halt when he noticed something white lying on the floor in the middle of the hallway. Hesitantly, Lance walked right up to the object only to see that it was only a simple white T-shirt. Furrows appeared between Lance’s brows as he eyed the object warily.

“Uh, hello?” Lance looked up and turned to glance around. “Is anyone else here?” The thick silence after he spoke helped confirm that he was indeed the only person there.

“Okay…” Lance muttered to himself with a slight frown as he cautiously bent down to pick up the shirt, “this is pretty weird.”

As Lance began to eye the shirt and ponder who it might belong to and why the shirt was just randomly left in the middle of a hallway, a faint yet familiar scent reached his nose, and before Lance could think about it, his thoughts came to a stop as he brought the shirt up so he could take in the scent that was still lingering on the fabric. His heart seemed to give a treacherous lurch when he realized that this shirt belonged to Keith.

His body began to tremble slightly as he fought back every instinct that suddenly began ordering him to take the shirt to his nest immediately. His grip on the shirt tightened as he slowly brought it down and away from his nose.

“Hello?” Lance was thankful his voice didn’t waver as he spoke. “Anyone?”

When no reply came in several seconds later, Lance bit his bottom lip. Lance knew that the right thing to do at that moment would be to go to Keith’s room and return the shirt, maybe after making a small joke about Keith being so irresponsible and messy to keep things normal. Though, given Keith’s response last time during The Breakfast Incident, Lance was still wary of saying something that’d truly upset the alpha, so he figured it’d be best if he discarded the idea of making any kind of joke then.

But the thought of returning the shirt to the alpha was drowned out by all the other blaring thoughts in his head that begged Lance to take the shirt and leave, to hide the shirt along with the other he had so that he could have more items from Keith to better incorporate the alpha’s alluring, yet calming scent into his nest.

Though Lance knew he was alone in the hallway, he couldn’t help but take one last look around to make sure no else was around. Despite the fact that Lance spotted no one in his line of sight, the feeling that he was somehow being watched still lingered in the back of his mind. Lance swallowed nervously before he took a deep breath, turned around, and quickly began to make his way back to his room.

As soon as the door closed behind him, Lance let out a breath of air. He took a few steps so that he was standing right next to his bed. He eyed the items in his nest for a while before he finally came to a decision. His hands reached for the small, crumpled blanket he had at the head of his bed, just
above where his pillow was, and lifted it just enough so that he could place the new shirt discreetly under it. No one but Lance would know it was there, that it would now rest safely above his head when he slept at night.

With a proud smile on his face, Lance looked down at his nest. Sure, his nest was messy and made mostly of his own things, but knowing that he had items that belonged to Keith in there made his heart swell with pride and joy. It was a silly thing to feel so happy about, Lance knew, but seeing as Lance knew he’d never be able to call the alpha his, being able to have not one but two items of Keith’s in his nest was more than he could have ever hoped for.

Letting out a pleased puff of air, Lance nodded his head in approval before he walked out of his room and made his way back over to the training deck in a rush so that he wouldn’t be late and arouse suspicion.

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Unfortunately, whatever balance he and Keith had retained after The Breakfast Incident was suddenly thrown right out the window the following day after Lance had found the white shirt, and it left Lance floundering.

Immediately after Lance took a step into the dining room, he could just tell, could sense the change in the space around them, could feel the way the thick, charged air in the room seemed to crackle with static in warning. By the time Lance sat down at the table and began eating, he already knew—something was up with Keith.

Despite what everyone likely thought, given their comments and innocuous jokes, Lance wasn’t an idiot. He might not be close to Keith (not like Shiro is, his mind often mocked, though Lance was sure the words were also lanced with anguish), but he had been around the guy for quite some time now, and given the nature of his feelings for the alpha, Lance was dreadfully embarrassed to admit just how much he really looked at Keith. But, given all those hopefully subtle glances he managed to steal, Lance did manage to pick up a thing or two about the alpha.

So Lance immediately took notice of the way Keith was glancing at him out of the corner of his eyes, significantly more than he normally did, during breakfast. It was very odd, and while Lance’s inner omega preened himself on finally capturing the alpha’s attention, Lance himself could sense that something about it was completely off, and it greatly unsettled him. Lance knew there was no denying that he did crave the alpha’s attention, but the way Keith was staring at him only made the hairs on the back of Lance’s neck stand on end—this was not the kind of attention he wanted to obtain from the alpha.

To make matters even more alarming, the staring continued right through lunch and even dinner. The alpha never said anything out of the ordinary, and even acted as he normally did when interacting with everyone else, but the glances Keith kept stealing at him were frying Lance’s nerves.

Keith never looked at Lance like that—the alpha would usually just ignore him or avoid looking at him unless it was necessary, or when they were arguing and Lance was purposely trying to attain his attention. The constant staring was highly unusual behavior and every bit of Lance’s rational mind told him that Keith was up to something, and given the nature of their relationship, Lance figured that something bad was bound to happen between them as a result. To have the alpha suddenly watching him with such a steady, calculating gaze, while heeding those words of caution, made Lance’s heart
tremble in apprehension and left him feeling increasingly anxious as the day progressed.

While a part of Lance was tempted to merely walk up to Keith and ask him what his problem was, to just get it all over with, Lance was also terrified of confronting Keith, not because he was an omega and Keith an alpha, but because, even if Keith himself didn’t know it, the alpha had power over him. Just a few biting words from the alpha and the omega knew his heart would be shattered, and that was something Lance desperately did not want to happen, not when his heart was weak and trying to accept the fact that Keith would never see Lance as anything more than some annoying, useless beta guy that didn’t know when to shut up. So Lance did the next best thing—he forced himself to ignore the alpha’s looks and pretend like absolutely nothing was wrong.

And, surprisingly, it worked—or, rather, yet again, nothing happened. The day ended just like every other day. There’d been no confrontation. Nothing, just—absolutely nothing. Keith never approached Lance, never voiced anything that might hint as to why he was starting at Lance so much. They’d all gone their separate ways after dinner and Lance hadn’t seen the black-haired alpha since.

Though Lance couldn’t ignore the relief he felt at that, at the same time, he’d ended up going to bed that night feeling even more uneasy than before. So much so that despite pulling out both of Keith’s shirts and scenting them, the dwindling, but still faintly present scent on them did nothing to calm him. The frustration of being unable to relax enough to fall asleep eventually drove Lance to get up and make his way towards the kitchen in hopes of getting a small snack, something he often did when he was unable to sleep.

Given the late hour, the hallways were quiet, but Lance didn’t mind. He rather liked the silence then, as it seemed to calm his nerves slightly. So as he continued walking, his feet already knowing where to go without much thought, Lance let himself dream of Earth, of home, of seeing his family, of what his mom might say if he confessed that he was in love with Keith, that he’d imprinted on an alpha who would never return his feelings. He imaged she’d give him that kind smile she often did, where the corners of her eyes crinkled in the soft way they did when she looked at him with such love in her eyes that never failed to make Lance feel so warm and happy.

“Ay, mijo,” he imagined she’d say in a gentle voice as she reached out to embrace him, “if that boy doesn’t see and realize what a sweet, lovely, beautiful person you are, that your heart is full of genuine kindness and immense love, then, lo siento, but that boy will need to get his eyes checked, and, personally, I would also like to have a word or two with him to smack some sense into him.”

The words sounded so much like something his mom would say that Lance’s heart clenched in longing, to see her, to see his entire family once more. Even if just to tell them goodbye, to hug them one last time.

When he finally entered the kitchen, Lance shook the thoughts from his head and focused on finding something decent, but light to eat, and when he did, he got something to drink as well before he took a seat and began eating. Nearly fifteen minutes later, after Lance had eaten and cleaned the cup he’d used, he began to make his way back to his room.

This time, though he’d just finished eating, his mind still decidedly thought about all the foods from back home that he missed, like quesadillas, enchiladas, arroz con pollo, and freshly-made tortillas de harina. But most of all, he missed the way his mom made them—he missed the way everyone would sit around the dining table and eat and talk while they enjoyed the dishes their mom had prepared for them. He missed the way his little siblings would usually argue while eating, how his parents would roll their eyes at their antics, how someone would always manage to sneak food from the table to their dogs before later getting caught by their mom.
As Lance recalled those vivid memories, the corners of his lips were involuntarily pulled up into a fond smile. But his train of thought was abruptly interrupted when he heard a faint noise break the silence around him, breaking his smile.

That’s when his eyes spotted it.

Just a few meters in front of him, lying on the floor against the wall to the right, was a red piece of cloth.

“What the heck…?” Lance muttered under his breath as he eyed the item warily.

Then, after a moment of hesitation, Lance walked up to the red item and picked it up. He didn’t even need to bring it up to his nose before the familiar scent wafted up and confirmed what the distant voice in the back of his head had already hold him.

It was Keith’s shirt.

But as soon as the realization hit Lance, a sharp wave of déjà vu had washed over him. He’d been here before, in this very same situation, just yesterday, when he’d found Keith’s white shirt. Now it was happening again? So soon and in the middle of the night?

Immediately, Lance’s body went rigid with fear as he felt the hairs on the back of his neck and on his arms stand on end.

Oh, no…this can’t be happening! Lance thought to himself frantically as his hands unconsciously gripped the shirt in this hands even tighter, I’ve seen enough horror movies to know when something’s not right, when someone’s being played with! God, if you’re out there, if you can hear me…please, I can handle fighting against the Galra Empire to save the universe, but ghosts are where I draw the line!

Everything felt off now—wrong. But Lance couldn’t help but remain frozen there as he turned his head to the back and then forwards, his eyes frantically looking around the plainly empty hallway for any possible sign that someone (or, Lance’s mind shakily added—something) was there. Much to his dismay, it was obvious that he was alone.

“Hello?” Lance forced himself to say. “Is anyone here?”

There came no reply.

“Keith?” the omega added in a quiet, wavering voice. “Are you there? You, uh…” he swallowed and tried to smile but it felt painfully unnatural on his face, “you left your shirt here.”

Again, only the silence of the hallway answered.

“Right, okay,” Lance tried to ignore the way his heart was hammering away inside his chest, “well, then—”

A sharp, single sound sudden pierced the silence, coming from somewhere behind Lance, making the omega shut his mouth and pull the shirt in his hands right up to his chest. He merely stood there for a few seconds without moving, until he finally managed to muster up enough courage to turn his head to look behind him. But when he saw that no one was there, that the hallway was still completely empty, the silence around him suddenly became stifling, the air becoming painfully thick, almost as if it was trying to asphyxiate him.

Lance’s mind screamed at him to run, to get the hell out of there right now.
Without hesitation, Lance listened to the panic-stricken suggestion and took off.

The door clicked shut just as Lance quickly jumped into bed, his left hand still clutching the red shirt tightly against his chest as his right hand grabbed the blanket at the foot of his bed and pulled it over him.

_It’s alright, Lance_, the omega tried to reassure himself as he tried to quiet his panicky heart and ease his rapid, slightly labored breathing, _it’s probably not a ghost, just think about this logically for a second. You’re not on Earth anymore—you’re out in the middle of nowhere, in freaking space for crying out loud! There’s no way a ghost somehow followed you here and is just now haunting you!_

But as soon as it occurred to Lance that this might be some sort of _alien_ ghost, or maybe a ghost of someone from Altea, Lance pulled the new shirt he’d found right up to his nose and took a deep breath. Keith’s scent on the material was pristine, strong, and it was enough to calm Lance’s nerves, to ease his racing heart and relax his strung out body.

That night, when Lance finally managed to fall asleep, he did so with Keith’s shirt clutched right under his nose, with the soft fabric pressing gently against the skin of his lower face in a comforting hold.

Chapter End Notes

_In this fic's universe, _**imprinting**_ is the specific term used when an omega starts nesting because they’ve found someone they want to bond with. Also, if you guys ever have any questions about this ‘verse and whatnot, please feel free to ask me here or on my _tumblr_!_
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Just wanna give a huge shoutout to Sabrina, who was kind enough to buy me a coffee a week ago—thank you so much, Sabrina, you absolutely made my week (and gave me the much needed motivational boost I needed to finish up and post this chapter), so this chapter's dedicated to you! (*ﾉﾞ*)

And—at last, here’s the chapter a lot of you all have been waiting for! I can only hope that you guys like it. orz;; Please leave me a comment down below if you do—I love hearing back from all of you! ♥

Nearly a week later, Lance couldn’t help but wonder if he might very well be going crazy.

For all intents and purposes, his life was going by as it usually did. Things were, thankfully, still normal between him and Keith, he often hung out with Hunk, Pidge, or Coran as he usually did, they all trained every other day, they’d gone on two separate missions, he flirted with some of the beautiful alien girls they happened to meet during said missions, they all ate breakfast and dinner together, he made funny jokes here and there that no one laughed at. Everything was as it usually was.

But since La Noche de Horror (and Lance very much did prefer to refer to it as such, seeing as saying it mere English—The Night of Horror—didn’t sound as daunting and grave as it did when said in Spanish), Lance was absolutely sure the castle (or, even more frightening—he) was being haunted by an extraterrestrial ghost. One might think that, as this being a new experience for him (being around a ghost, especially an alien one, and out in space to boot), it might be interesting, maybe even fun, but no, Lance recalled all those tales his abuelos and tíos and tías had shared at family gatherings over the years as he grew up. He also recalled the stories of lechuzas, of La Llorona, of duendes, of malicious spirits that lurked in the shadows and yearned to possess a human body.

Everything he recalled hearing about the paranormal while growing up seemed to condense to a single point: do not mess with the supernatural, or they will very likely try to fuck you and your life up.

It was, undeniably, a lesson installed into Lance’s head at a very young, one that, even at his current age, very much still stuck with him.

So the thought that there was some sort of unknown, supernatural entity in this castle, following him, terrified Lance, so much so that he’d taken to praying at night, something he hadn’t done since that first week when everyone had come together to form Voltron.

But what greatly puzzled Lance, was what the ghost was doing.

At first, Keith had admitted to losing his shirt, and Lance had known he’d been the one to take it. But the second and the third shirt? Keith never admitted to losing those. Perhaps the alpha didn’t even know they were missing, that Lance had found them and had taken them. Yet now, there were two
more shirts tucked away in Lance’s nest.

He’d found each of them just like he’d done with the two previous shirts, when he was wondering about in the hallways, alone, right when everyone else was nowhere near him. Each time he’d called out, asking if anyone was near, despite the feeling that likely no one was, and like before, there’d been no answer.

Lance was sure the ghost was doing this. Whoever they were, they were stealing Keith’s shirts and placing them right where Lance would appear and eventually come to find them.

What was even more surprising was that each shirt appeared to have been recently used. The scent on each had been concentrated, potent, and completely intoxicating, almost as if Keith had just taken off each shirt after wearing it for a day or so before they were unceremoniously abducted by the ghost and then presented to Lance like a gift.

So as much as Lance was terrified the he himself was being followed and haunted by an extraterrestrial ghost in the enclosed Castle of Lions, he couldn’t ignore how oddly flattered he felt that the ghost was doing something like this for him. Though, the thought that the ghost was likely doing all this to begin with because they were somehow aware of Lance’s feelings for Keith, and the fact that he was nesting and wanted items belonging to the alpha, did unsettle the omega quite a bit.

But, still, it was thanks to the ghost that Lance now had five of Keith’s shirts in his nest.

The latest two additions being a simple navy blue tee, and a black one with white, bold upper-case letters that read “I BELIEVE” under a white UFO on the front. When he’d found the latter T-shirt, Lance had been unable to suppress the smile and small laugh that slipped past his lips. Though he’d never actually seen Keith wearing that particular shirt with his own two eyes, part of him wished he had.

Truthfully, Lance couldn’t help but wonder if the alpha had more graphic tees like that black one with the UFO on it, ones that mentioned cryptids or extraterrestrials or such. Because now, Lance couldn’t help but imagine Keith wearing a shirt with the silhouette of Bigfoot on the front with the words “HE’S OUT THERE” under them. If Keith did own a shirt like that, now, Lance wouldn’t even be remotely surprised.

So everything did seem to be going as it usually would in Lance’s life, excluding the strange addition of an alien ghost haunting him, one that only seemed to be targeting him with its acts of kindness, seeing as no one else was experiencing anything out of the ordinary.

Lance had dared to actually bring up the matter one day during breakfast, after he’d found that navy blue shirt the previous night, asking if anyone else was experiencing anything strange on the ship lately, and everyone had merely looked at him oddly in response. Lance had immediately come up with a silly joke to divert their attention afterwards, but their similar, perplexed reactions to his question had been enough. Whoever this ghost was, they were very likely only interacting with him.

But given what the ghost was actually doing, during the nights when he’d gotten those two new shirts, Lance had taken to whispering a quiet ‘thank you’ into the silence of his room before he went to bed, hoping the ghost might hear him and know he was grateful for what he was doing for Lance, even if the omega still felt slightly uneasy with the entire situation. Because having those five shirts in his nest made Lance feel more secure, comfortable, relaxed—it made Lance sleep easier, so much so that he’d wake up each morning feeling lively and well rested and ready to face whatever the day brought.

As nervous as the possibility made Lance feel, he sometimes wished he could meet the ghost in
person, to thank them, and to see if he could do anything to help them in return. Yet no matter how many times Lance called out to the ghost when he was alone, they never appeared or gave any indication that they were there at all.

• • •

Today had been another day where they had all trained together.

Afterwards, feeling warm from exertion and uncomfortable with the way his clothes were clinging to his sweating skin, Lance quickly made his way towards his room to take a shower. But when he turned the corner into the hallway leading towards his room, something immediately caught his attention. Right there, lying on the floor near the wall to his right, was a small, black object.

Lance didn’t even have to take a step further to know what it was. It was one of Keith’s black gloves, the ones the alpha very rarely ever took off. Yet somehow, this glove wasn’t on Keith’s hand, instead, here it was, less than a yard away from Lance, lying conspicuously on the floor in an empty hallway.

“Keith!” Lance immediately called out as he began to look around. “Dude, one of your gloves is right here! Where the heck are you?”

Spotting no one around like before, and hearing no reply from Keith, or anyone else, Lance’s heart gave a start.

Had the ghost done this too? Had the ghost decided that Keith’s shirts weren’t enough? Had they decided something else might be better to take?

Yet this wasn’t something Lance was prepared to deal with. The shirts he’d taken were never brought up by Keith as missing, but this glove, if Lance took it, Keith was surely going to notice its absence. The thought of taking something that was quite likely very important to the alpha only made Lance’s stomach roil uncomfortably.

Those five shirts are enough, Lance thought to himself as he walked up to the glove and gingerly picked it up, I’ll return this to Keith right after I take a shower, because I feel way too gross right now, and I’m pretty sure I reek.

With a small, slightly satisfied smile on his face, Lance nodded his head in agreement with his decision as he carefully held the glove in his hand and continued to look at it in wonder.

A sudden noise from behind started Lance, making his grip on the glove tighten a second before he instantly shoved both his hands into his pant’s pockets.

When Lance turned around, he was shocked to see that Keith was walking right up to him with an inscrutable look on his face that only made Lance’s stomach clench in unease. The alpha still wore the same clothes he’d used during their training, but there was a white towel wrapped around his neck.

“Uh— Hey, Keith,” Lance attempted to give the alpha a smooth grin, “what’s up?”

“I lost one of my gloves on the way to my room,” Keith began in a steady voice, though his eyes narrowed slightly as they watched Lance, “have you seen it?”
If Lance could hazard a guess right then and there, it seemed rather like Keith was *suspicious* of him, almost as if the alpha was silently accusing him of having taken the glove.

Lance immediately thought back to The Breakfast Incident and felt his pulse quicken in apprehension. Suddenly, though Lance knew it was physically impossible, it seemed as if Keith’s glove began to burn inside his pocket, as if the glove’s light weight grew heavy until Lance felt like he was carrying a ball of leaden lead in his pocket instead. If felt as if at any moment his pant’s pocket might tear and the glove would tumble out, exposing the truth to Keith.

“A glove?” Lance swallowed. “I, uh—”

*Tell him, Lance,* a distant voice inside Lance’s head firmly ordered, *just open your mouth right now and tell him you found his missing glove.*

But all Lance could really think about then was the way he’d stuffed Keith’s glove in his pocket only moments before, how it might look to the alpha if he were to pull it out of his pocket before handing it over, how culpable Lance would be in Keith’s eyes because of something he’d done in panic.

“Actually, I—” Over the crescendoing rush of blood in his ears, Lance could distantly feel his body begin to tremble, could feel the way his heartbeat was quickening in apprehension.

*Run, Lance!* a different voice in his head ordered. *Don’t just stand there, stupid, you’ll only look even more suspicious—turn around and run!*

“I need to go take a shower!” was what tumbled off Lance’s lips in a rush instead. “I’ll see you at dinner!”

With that, Lance quickly turned around and fled.

“Goddammit, Lance,” the omega berated himself the second after he was safely locked away inside his room, “all you had to do was tell Keith you found his glove, take the thing out of your pocket, and hand it over to him!”

Lance stopped to take a breath of air and pull out the glove from said pocket.

*Keith might not’ve even cared that you pulled it out of your pocket before handing it over to him,* a quiet voice in his head suggested, *he probably would’ve just been glad to get it back.*

As he stared down at it, the guilt and dejection Lance felt was clear in the way his features twisted, in the way his voice broke as he said, “Now, if Keith finds out, if I think of returning it to him, he’s going to think I’m a liar, a thief.” With a pause, Lance took in a deep, wavering breath of air before letting it back out, “But that doesn’t matter. I’m still going to return this to him after dinner.”

Mind grimly set, Lance gently placed the glove on top of his bed, giving it one last look before he turned to get some cleans clothes and a towel before making his way into the bathroom to finally take a much-needed hot shower.

“Your training today was splendid!” Allura exclaimed with a pleased, proud smile while everyone ate. “I applaud you all for your hard work!”

“I have to agree with Allura,” Shiro added a small smile as he looked around the table, “all of you
have been working so hard during our scheduled trainings, and I’m very proud of the progress you all have been making so far.” There was a slight pause before the alpha turned his gaze to look at Lance and added, “Especially you, Lance, your moves today were rather impressive, and the accuracy of your shooting seems to be getting even better.”

Lance stilled and felt his face flush at the compliments from Shiro.

Given the fact that Shiro hardly ever complimented Lance, for him to do so now, and in front of everyone, though Lance wished he could deny it, greatly pleased him. Though Lance often found himself envious (I think the word you're looking for, Lance, a voice in the back of his mind chimed in, is jealous) of Shiro, like mostly everyone else, the omega still couldn't help but also respect and admire the older alpha. The resulting wave of bubbling delight and bursting pride that welled up inside of Lance’s chest in response to the alpha's praise was hard to ignore.

“Oh, uh,” Lance looked up from his plate and noticed that everyone’s gaze seemed to be locked on him, he swallowed and tried to ignore how warm his face felt as he looked back at Shiro and gave the alpha a shy smile, “thanks, Shiro.”

Lance then averted his gaze to look back down at his plate, but not before he caught the glare Keith was sending him from the corner of his eye.

Distantly, Lance wondered if Keith was glaring at him because Shiro hadn’t complimented him, because their leader had chosen to compliment Lance instead. But it didn't make sense to Lance, seeing as Shiro complimented Keith the most out of all of them.

Is Keith...jealous? Lance wondered.

But immediately, the thought made Lance’s heart sink, because if Keith was jealous, that could only mean he was jealous of Lance. The thought alone only served to remind Lance of just how close Shiro and Keith were, of the strong relationship the two had, that no matter what Lance did, he himself would never have such a relationship with Keith. So it pained the omega to see and realize just how close the two alphas were, if Lance being given a small, simple compliment from Shiro was enough to upset Keith to the point that the younger alpha wasn’t even attempting to hide his displeasure.

Lance stared at his food, the voices around his fading as he forcing himself to take small bites here and there, though the food now tasted stale.

“Hey, Lance,” a quiet voice to his left snapped Lance out of the odd trance that had taken hold of him, “you okay?”

The concerned look on Hunk’s face only made Lance feel worse. His friend was clearly concerned, and though Lance wished he could just tell Hunk everything, the thought of confessing to Hunk that he was currently pining hopeless away for the alpha sitting to his right made his heart clench.

“Hey, Lance,” a quiet voice to his left snapped Lance out of the odd trance that had taken hold of him, “you okay?”

The concerned look on Hunk’s face only made Lance feel worse. His friend was clearly concerned, and though Lance wished he could just tell Hunk everything, the thought of confessing to Hunk that he was currently pining hopeless away for the alpha sitting to his right made his heart clench.

“Yeah, I’m just feeling really tired from today’s training,” Lance placed down his spoon next to his plate and gave the beta a feeble smile, though the guilt of lying to his best friend nestled itself painfully in his chest, “I think I’m just gonna head back to my room and take a quick nap.”

Hunk frowned, but nodded his head as he replied in a soft voice, “Alright, buddy. I’ll check up on you later, if that’s okay?” When Lance only nodded, Hunk finally gave a small smile. “Then, I’ll see ya, Lance. Have a good nap!”

“Thanks, Hunk,” Lance pushed back his chair and got up.
Taking one last glance around the room, Lance noticed how Pidge was watching him, her eyes narrowed suspiciously at him, as if she was trying to stare directly into his soul to figure out what Lance was doing, and why. It unnerved Lance slightly, but when the omega caught the way Keith was staring at him, Pidge’s gaze couldn’t even be remotely compared to the glare the alpha was directing at him.

There was such anger in Keith’s dark eyes that Lance felt his chest constrict in fear, because this anger was clearly directed at him. Lance had no idea what he’d done to upset Keith this time, given that he hadn’t even said anything at all to the alpha during dinner. Was Keith still mad about earlier—when Lance just took off and ran away instead of giving him a clear answer to the question he’d asked the omega about his missing glove? Or was the alpha still irked over the way Shiro had chosen to openly compliment Lance a few moments ago?

No matter how Lance looked at it, he knew he was screwed.

When he returned Keith’s glove later, the omega just knew he was going to be in trouble with the alpha.

Letting out a tiny, shuddering breath of air, Lance turned around and made his way back to his room. He was going to need some time alone in his room to steel himself for what he was about to do.

But several moments later, just as Lance was about to walk up to the door to his room, a hand whipped out and grasped his shoulder and stopped him, startling Lance enough to make him utter a loud, panicked yelp. To the omega’s horror, when he twisted himself around to see who it was, he found himself nearly face to face with Keith.

“Oh, Keith,” Lance hopelessly tried to will his heart to stay calm as he took a few steps back to put some space between them, “s-sorry, you just surprised me. Uh— What’re you doing here?”

“I know it’s you,” the alpha said in a low voice as his eyes narrowed.

“I…” Lance attempted to swallow past the lump in the back of his throat. “I have no idea what you’re talking about, Now…” Lance stood up straight and tried his best to look steadily back at the alpha, “if you’ll excuse me, I have something I need to—”

“I know you’re the one stealing my clothes!” Keith barked out, his loud voice making Lance flinch. The omega felt his blood go cold at the declaration, his heart coming to a standstill just as his own thoughts seemed to fade out into a deafening silence.

“Wh— What?” Lance finally managed to say a few seconds later, before he gave a nervous laugh as his right hand reached up to scratch the back of his neck. “Keith, dude, you can’t seriously think I’d take your stuff, I mean, why would I even want to—”

“Don’t lie to me!” Keith bit out. “I saw you, okay? After I realized my first shirt was missing, I began to leave them out, to see what, or who, was taking them. I was watching, Lance, and I saw you take them. And, you know, at first I thought you might do the right thing and return my stuff, but now,” the alpha sneered, his features twisting into a bitter scowl, ”I know better. So I’m willing to bet you’re the one that stole my missing glove too.”

The words registered in Lance’s mind, but even so, the omega found he had no idea what to say, what to do. Lance merely stood there, looking at the alpha as he listened to the rapid pulsing thundering in his ears.

“Why’ve you been taking my stuff, Lance? Did you think it was funny?” the alpha growled out
when the omega didn't answer. “Was this some kind of sick joke to you? Or were you trying to get back at me for something, huh, Lance? Come on, tell me!”

Once Keith finished speaking and he registered the questions and the final command the alpha had thrown at him, Lance felt something inside himself snap.

“Shut up!” the omega snarled. “If you want them back so much, just wait here!”

Before Keith could do or say anything else, Lance quickly turned around and walked into this room as soon as the doors opened. It wasn’t until the doors then closed behind him that Lance trudged up to his bed. As he eyed his nest, whatever anger had taken hold of him moments ago seemed to vanish, instead it was replaced by overwhelming anguish.

This nest had become everything to Lance. Yet, now, he had to tear it apart. Sure it would still technically be considered a nest after he removed Keith’s shirts, but it would only house his own things, nothing from the alpha he’d imprinted on. It would be an incomplete, hollow nest, and nests like that oftentimes hurt their omega instead of aiding and soothing them as they were meant to do.

Taking in a deep, shaky breath of air, Lance reached out with trembling hands and began pulling Keith’s shirts from his nest, carefully piling them over the inside of his left elbow. Once he was done with that, he carefully grabbed Keith’s glove from on top of his pillow with his left hand.

As Lance looked at his nest then, though it looked just as it did before, the knowledge that it was now stripped of Keith’s belongings made his heart constrict.

*This was how it was always going to be, Lance, a forlorn voice popped up in his head, you knew things were never going to work out—they never could. It’s honestly a miracle you were able to keep those shirts in your nest for as long as you did.*

Feeling a slight burning in his eyes, Lance shut them and counted to ten in his mind before he took another deep inhale, turned around, and walked up to the door.

When it opened, Keith was still standing there, in the same spot as before. But Lance didn’t even dare look up at Keith’s face as he grabbed the shirts with his right hand and shoved them onto the alpha’s chest. “Here are your shirts—as you already know, there’s five of them here,” Lance said in a quiet, defeated voice, “and here’s your glove.” This time, the omega slowly reached out to grab one of Keith’s hands, forcing the alpha’s hand open so that he could cautiously place the glove inside.

“Now,” Lance gently cleared his throat after he took a step back, “if you don’t mind, since I’ve given you everything of yours back, I’d appreciate it if you could just leave me alone.”

Like before, Lance didn’t bother waiting for Keith to reply, instead he merely turned around and walked back into his room. Once the door closed behind him again, Lance made sure to lock it so that no one would be able to come inside.

Seeing as his bed looked unbearably empty and uninviting now, Lance merely leaned back against the door, letting himself slide down until he was sitting on the cold floor.

As Lance let himself process everything that’d happened, he quickly came to realize that the ghost he’d been so afraid of, the one that he’d also been so grateful towards, didn’t even exist—that they were never really real, that those shirts had never been gifts for him—instead, it'd been Keith all along, everything had had been a trap, and Lance, like a fool, had fallen for them each and every time. But that realization didn’t hurt as much as the vitriol the alpha had thrown at him. While Lance
recalled Keith's harsh comments, he didn’t attempt to stop the tears that fell from his eyes as he felt his heart break.

Several moments later, when he heard someone knocking on the door, even after he realized it was Hunk calling out to him, Lance didn’t dare open the door. Though guilt welled up in his chest, knowing his voice might give him away, Lance gave no response and waited until eventually Hunk gave up and left. If only just for tonight, Lance wanted to be alone, to let himself fall apart in the safety of his now dreary room. Come tomorrow morning, Lance would slip on the mask he usually wore, he’d grin and make his usually jokes around everyone, but for tonight, Lance would let his broken heart lament the loss of something they both knew could never be theirs.

Chapter End Notes

Also, if you guys really wanna get a heads-up about my (very sporadic... orz) posting "schedule", to know when I might be updating this fic and such, please check out my tumblr! I tend to post on there if something comes up, like if I'm going on a writing hiatus, or if I'm getting close to finishing up a chapter and whatnot.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Truthfully, I can’t believe this fic has officially reached (and gone over) 1,000 kudos!!! I was (and still am, tbh, lol) completely shocked by this! So I want to say: thank you so very much, everyone, for all your support—for leaving me kudos and such lovely comments! You guys are the absolute best!! (^_^) ♥♥♥

For the very first time since they initially formed Voltron, Lance actually found himself happy to have been woken up quite early by the ship’s blaring alarm and Allura’s announcement that they were to meet in the Control Room to discuss the next mission they were going to go on.

Honestly, Lance didn’t even care that he had no time to do his morning skincare routine, especially when considering the fact that he’d skipped his entire nighttime routine last night as well. Thanks to everything that’d been happening since that first day he’d taken Keith’s shirt, his skincare regime, as a whole, had suffered due to his neglect. Yet now, given what had happened yesterday, Lance couldn’t find it in himself to care, not when he felt as if he had a throbbing, gaping and continuously-bleeding wound right where his heart was.

All Lance cared about, as he rushed to the restroom to brush his teeth and then quickly change into his paladin uniform before leaving, was that this new mission could serve as a desperately needed distraction, that he might be able to do some good for a change. That having a purpose, something to focus on, to fight for, might help fill the throbbing void that was still growing inside of him, to replace the aching hurt that made his heart constrict every so often. Lance wanted to forget, to help, to do something good that might help him feel some inkling of joy once more.

After he left his room and quickly made his way to the Control Room, Lance couldn’t help but pause momentarily right before he reached the room’s entrance. As he stood there, staring at the closed door, Lance took in a large breath of air and steeled himself for what was to come.

Just don’t look at him, Lance, the omega thought to himself. It’s just one thing you gotta do—no matter what, do not look at him. Easy-peasy, right?

Of course, another voice in the back of Lance’s mind retorted with a sneer, if you so much as look at Keith right now, I’m pretty sure everyone’s gonna get front-row seats to some pretty humiliating waterworks. You wouldn’t want to lose face like that before everyone and ruin your image, now would you, Lance?

Though Lance knew it was pointless, he shook his head in an effort to dispel the negative thoughts that were creeping their way back into his thoughts as he closed his eyes and attempted to empty his mind. Then, after he took in a few more steadying breaths of air, he stood up straight, pulled his lips up into a casual smile, and finally forced himself to walk into the Control Room. Yet the second the doors slid open and he took a step inside, before he could even attempt to stop himself from doing so, his eyes immediately found Keith.

Coran, Allura, Shiro, and Keith were gathered in the center of the room, all of them standing while Allura seemed to be discussing something with Shiro. Coran appeared to be in deep thought as he listened to them. Keith, on the other hand, was standing right beside Shiro, with his back to the door.
For a brief moment, relief washed over Lance, seeing as he’d just avoided the possibility of Keith meeting his transient glance the second he walked into the room.

But the relief was short-lived, because as his inner omega registered the sight of the two alphas standing so close together, a quivering twinge flared deep in his chest.

Truthfully, it wasn’t an unusual sight, the two alphas standing so close together during meetings and such—but given everything that’d happened yesterday, the way Keith had spoken to him last night, and the accusations he’d thrown at Lance before the omega had fled and shut the door in his face, the sight of them being so close right now was a stark reminder that while Keith seemed to dislike Lance, he clearly respected and deeply cared for Shiro. And that only served to send a sharp pang through the omega’s aching heart.

Averting his gaze from the two alphas, Lance quickly walked over to the group and made his way to Allura’s side with a wide grin on his face. “Well, hello there, Princess. As usual, you’re looking absolutely lovely today.”

“Hello, Lance,” Allura replied politely, and when Lance fixed his gaze on her, he took in her courteous, but warm smile.

“Lance, my boy,” Coran began, and when Lance turned his attention towards him instead, he found the Altean’s face fixed into a worried expression, “is everything alright? It might be my eyes tricking me, but you’re looking a bit peaky today.”

Feeling everyone’s gazes turn to stare at him after Coran’s words, Lance felt his heart give a fearful, anxious lurch at the sudden attention. But, thankfully, he was still able to keep his features fixed in an easy smile as he replied in a nonchalant tone, “I’m fine, Coran. I probably just look a bit peaky right now because my beauty sleep was prematurely interrupted, and because I wasn’t able to go through with my morning skincare routine. But, hey, sacrifices must be made for the greater good, right?”

Thankfully, before anyone could dare ask the omega anything further, the door slid open again and Hunk and Pidge came rushing in, both uttering apologies for being late. The moment the two betas joined everyone else in the center, Shiro quickly began to speak.

Still determined not to look at Keith, Lance fixed his gaze on the stars outside the ship. But as the omega listened to Shiro, Allura, and Coran discuss the mission details, Lance swore he could feel someone starting at him. The disconcerting feeling grew until the omega’s heartbeat picked up slightly and he felt the hairs of the back of his neck stand on end. Yet even so, Lance didn’t turn around, didn’t dare to find out who exactly was watching him. Instead, he continued to stare thoughtfully outside the Control Room’s windows as he tried to ignore the stifling unease he was experiencing and focus on what was being said.

Apparently, the Castle had picked up a distress signal from a planet, called Niamnä, in nearby star system. When Allura answered the call, she’d immediately called for Coran and Shiro to join her. In the transmission, Ölvann, one of Niamnä’s Royal Advisory Council members, had informed them of their planet’s situation. The Galra had kidnapped not just their planet’s king and queen, but also all of the royal family’s princes and princesses. The brief attack and resulting kidnapping had sent Niamnä’s people into a panicked frenzy. And to make matters even worse, their interim ruler was King Yärek’s younger brother, Yddr.

The Council had not elected him as their interim monarch, but seeing as he was the King’s sole brother by blood, they could not refute his temporary claim to the throne. But, to everyone’s horror, Yddr immediately took control of the Royal Guards and began to employ them to enforce his own rules, all without the Council’s approval. With the Royal Guards at his side, and under his power,
Yddr became nearly unstoppable.

Some in the Council had attempted to stop him, by confronting him and hoping to speak some sense into him with their words, but in response, Yddr merely ordered the Royal Guards to arrest those who’d dared speak against him, and to lock the remaining Royal Advisory Council members in their chamber hall. They’d been placed on lockdown, with no feasible way to escape the building. Their communication devices had also been deactivated, forbidding them from contacting anyone outside and calling for assistance, but thankfully, Hären, one of the younger Council members, had studied electrical engineering prior to being elected into the Council. It was thanks to him that the Council was able to send out a brief transmission into space in an effort to find outside help.

“We assured Ölvann that Voltron will come to their aid,” Allura added after they were all briefed, “but given that the last thing Ölvann was able to tell us, before they had to end their transmission, was that it would be best if we did not land on Niammä for fear of alerting Yddr and the Royal Guards.”

“Taking that into consideration,” Shiro began, “we’ve decided that it might be best for us to save the royal family first. Once we accomplish that, we can head on over to Niammä to rescue the Royal Advisory Council and stop Yddr.”

“It will give us the upper hand,” Coran informed them all as he thoughtfully stroked his chin, “right now, if I’m understanding things correctly, Yddr can only rule as the interim monarch because the king and his family are gone. But if King Yärek were to come back, Yddr would be forced to step back so that King Yärek can take up the mantel as King of Niammä once more.”

“Coran searched the neighboring star systems, and we believe he managed to find the Galra ship that’s likely keeping the royal family. Strangely enough,” Shiro said with a slight frown, “we pinpointed the ship’s location in the outskirt’s of the same star system Niammä is in. From what we saw in our scans, it seems like the ship’s orbiting their system’s final planet, given that the ship isn’t really going anywhere. Rather, they appear to be using the planet’s natural gravity to keep themselves safely in orbit. Bearing that in mind, here’s what I’m thinking we should do…”

As Shiro continued speaking, detailing the plan he, Allura, and Coran had come up with, Lance revealed in the blissed silence in his mind as he listened in.

Soon after they’d finished discussing what they were going to do, Allura opened a wormhole to bring the Castle into the star system that Niammä and the Galra ship were in. Once they arrived, Allura was quick to hide the Castle behind a large satellite orbiting the second to last planet in the star system. From there, it was merely a matter of everyone getting into their Lions and slowly making their way towards the ship to sneak in inside without alerting the Galra of their presence.

“You know, I’m kinda a bit worried here,” Hunk began soon after they’d let the Castle in their Lions, “these guys are royalty, right? So, uh—I mean, is there a specific way we should greet them? Address them? Things we should avoid saying or doing? Because, I don’t know about you guys, but I really don’t want to accidentally offend them and start a war, or something. I mean, we don’t even know their names!”

“We know King Yärek’s name,” Pidge was quick to correct. “As for the rest of his family, I think we should just stick to calling them Princess, Prince, and Queen. Or, maybe ‘Your Majesty’ for the Queen? Either way, I don’t think you have to worry so much about how to act around them, Hunk. Just be nice and don’t say or do anything purposely offensive, and we should be good.” There was a brief pause before Pidge added, “Well, hopefully.”

“And how many children do they even have?” Hunk asked in a quiet, yet slightly fraught voice. “I
mean, how will we know we’ve rescued all of them when we don’t even know if King Yärek has
two children, or, like…ten?”

“Unfortunately, Ölvann wasn’t able to tell us anything else,” Shiro popped in to explain, “he had to
end the transmission after he told us about Niannä’s situation because the Royal Guards were about
to enter the council chamber to check in on them. We don’t have the time to just sit around and hope
they’ll contact us again, so we’ll just have to find out once we’re inside the Galra ship and find
them.”

“We’ll just ask them before we leave,” Pidge clarified, “to make sure we have everyone, and if
anyone’s missing, then we’ll just go and look for them too.” There was a slight pause then, before
the beta directed her next words at Lance, catching the omega off guard, “Hey, Lance, you haven’t
said anything since we met up at the Control Room. No offense, dude, but you being this quiet’s
kinda unsettling. So, come on, what’s up?”

“Oh, you know, Pidge,” Lance’s mind rushed to come up with a decent, believable response, “I’ve
just been wondering what Niannä’s queen might look like, or those princesses. Man, I still can’t
believe there might be more than one of them. You think they’ll be just as beautiful as Allura?
Because if they are…can you imagine it? Being surrounded by so many beautiful princess? That’s
like a dream come true for me.”

Though Lance knew they couldn’t see him, he still forced his lips up into a grin as he gave a dreamy
sigh, “With us going in there to rescue them, it’s like we’re knights in shining armor, riding our trusty
steeds as we make our way to save the lovely princesses of a troubled kingdom from the clutches of
evil!” The omega paused for a second before continuing in as proud a tone as he could manage,
“Honestly, I wouldn’t be too surprised if those princesses took one look at me and my dashingly
handsome good looks and fell madly in love with me at first sight.”

“Wow,” the exaggerated sarcasm in Pidge’s voice immediately let Lance know she’d fallen right into
his trap, “I should’ve known. Of course your priority’s going to be on something as stupid as—”

“Guys,” Shiro’s sudden, stern voice quickly cut Pidge off, and Lance immediately froze in his seat
and felt the faux smile from his face fall, “we can joke around after the mission’s over, alright?”

“Of course,” was Pidge’s instant reply, “sorry, Shiro.”

“I’m sorry too,” added Hunk, his voice a near whisper.

“Yeah, same here,” Lance swallowed, instantly feeling guilty and embarrassed, “sorry, Shiro.”

There was a sigh before Shiro replied, “It’s alright, guys. Just— For now, please focus on the
mission, okay?”

There were affirmative replies from Pidge and Hunk, but after that, as the silence from before
resumed, it suddenly occurred to Lance that he had yet to hear Keith say anything. The young alpha
had voiced a few words back during their mission briefing at the Castle, but since then, Lance was
sure he’d yet to hear Keith speak again.

Despite the traces of anger and hurt that lingered inside of the omega, due to their confrontation last
night, a small surge of worry bloomed inside of Lance’s chest. Yet even so, Lance didn’t dare ask
Keith if he was alright in that moment, not when it meant doing so before everyone. Even if they
were somewhere alone, where it was just the two of them, Lance knew he still wouldn’t dare ask.
Because there was this nerve-racking fear lurking in Lance’s thoughts, warning him that the alpha
would merely brush his question away, would dismiss him and his concern with a simple, stern ‘I’m
fine, Lance’, or, perhaps, a suspicious, sharp ‘why do you even care?’

Given their current relationship, Lance knew Keith had absolutely no reason to trust him like that. Sure they had to trust one another, to some extent, given that they were two of Voltron’s paladins, but Lance knew that trust probably didn’t extend to anything outside of that, especially since they weren’t genuine friends yet. So even if the alpha did believe his sincerity and concern, should Lance ask Keith if he was okay, if something was wrong or bothering him, everything pointed to the alpha lying and saying he was fine, even if it was a blatant lie. All because Lance knew Keith didn’t trust him enough to tell him the truth, to confide in him in the way close friends normally would.

The omega couldn’t help but wonder if Keith genuinely trusted anyone to that extent. If Keith felt he could be open with anyone like that in their team. While he couldn’t know for sure if Keith trusted any of them to that extent or not, Lance was absolutely sure there was one person in their team that the alpha trusted wholeheartedly and without a doubt. Frankly, Lance felt it was virtually impossible for anyone to not know, given how each day the signs were right there, pointing to one undeniable truth.

Shiro.

It was, and would likely always be, Shiro.

Their leader was just someone that actually meant something completely different—something more, Lance couldn’t help but add bitterly in his mind—to Keith.

So yes, if ever asked, Lance was more than willing to bet all his skincare products, along with his comfortable, fluffy bathroom robe and slippers, that if there was one person in the entire universe that Keith genuinely did trust, it was their alpha leader, the Paladin of the Black Lion.

And Lance couldn’t lie and say he didn’t understand why, because, in a way, he did. Shiro was just the kind of person you couldn’t help but look up to, to admire, to like, to be amazed by, to intrinsically trust. Something about his presence just exuded a king, protective aura that made you feel safe around him. Truthfully, Shiro very much appeared to be the type of person you’d feel comfortable confessing all your troubles to because he seemed mature, wise, and like he’d comfort you as best as he could and wouldn’t make fun of you if you broke down into tears before him.

That was just the kind of person Shiro was.

But the fact that Shiro had some unknown past with Keith, one that Lance (and likely everyone else in the Castle) had no knowledge of, and that their relationship even now was something so incredibly close and compatible, Lance hated how a simple thought like that made his gut roil in desperate frustration and petty jealousy. Hated how some days there were times were the jealousy inside of the omega became so unbearably overwhelming that he couldn’t even stand to look at Shiro, much less talk to or be near him.

On days like that, Lance always made sure to avoid Shiro as best as he could, for fear of his control slipping and leading him to do something terrible that would hurt the amicable relationships between them. But when avoidance was impossible, such as when they had trainings together, or a mission to work on, then Lance would force himself to act as naturally as he possibly could around the alpha.

Yet each time the omega returned to the safety of his room after a day like that, the jealousy would die away until it was replaced by crushing guilt, shame, and sorrow. Truthfully, Lance hated feeling like that towards Shiro, towards a person he liked and looked up to and greatly admired, but his inner omega still saw the older alpha as competition, as someone that could steal their alpha away. And no matter how much Lance tried to push those feelings away, to ignore them—to convince his inner
omega that there was no competition at all because it was painfully clear who Keith would choose in a heartbeat, not to mention the fact that no matter how his inner omega felt, Keith was not, and would never be their alpha—they persisted.

“Okay everyone, the Galra’s ship is coming up.” As Shiro’s abrupt voice pulled Lance out of his thoughts, the omega was thankful no one could see him in that instant because his face flamed in embarrassment for letting himself get so lost in his thoughts while they were on a mission. Especially since he’d been thinking about Shiro only seconds before the alpha had spoken up. “You all know what to do—let’s put our plan into action.”

It was after Lance closed his eyes, taking in a deep, steadying breath of air as he forced all other thoughts away, that he felt a gentle, comforting push in his mind from Blue. Almost as if she’d sensed his distress and was attempting to console him. The thought alone brought a sincere smile to Lance’s face, and the omega couldn’t help think, *Thanks, Blue.*

Feeling slightly better than before, Lance stood up straight in his chair as he directed his gaze forwards, towards the Galra ship they were gradually nearing. He could worry about everything again later. Right now, it was time for him to focus entirely on the mission—they had a royal family to rescue.

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