Ignorance Is Not An Excuse

by BluePlanetTrash

Summary

Lance was born with wings, just like half of the population of Earth. During all of their adventures through the universe not once did Lance feel like he was worth less than any of the other paladins. That is until they land on one such planet that only sees Lance as a pretty trophy to cart around. One of their demands for an alliance is for him to show off his wings in the city perched on the arm of the Black Paladin.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

Despite what the Atleans thought when they first arrived at the Castleship, it was just as likely for a human to have wings as it was for them to be wingless. He was proud that his wings resembled those of a blue macaw, and it turned out to be pretty close to the shade that Blue was. He was happy to constantly show them off at the planets that they visited. So far, all of the planet’s inhabitants had been respectful and politely asked if they could see his wings closer.

That’s one of the reasons why he was excited to head towards a new planet in order to negotiate another alliance for Voltron. They were headed towards a planet called Gotov, and were set in their chair waiting for Allura to activate a wormhole and jump to their position. However, Allura turned to them with a hesitant look on her face.

“Is there something wrong Allura?” Hunk asked in concern. She shook her head slightly and took a deep breath in.
“I have to warn you of the people of Gotov,” she admitted glancing over at Coran who nodded in return.

“Yeah? What about them?” Keith pried leaning forward in his seat.

“The residents of Gotov are very prideful people and think very highly of themselves,” she started.

“That doesn’t sound any different from other planets that we visited,” Pidge stated with a shrug.

“No, they are on a whole other level, they think that they are the most important species in the universe and are most likely going to demean you,”

“Is there any chance that they’ve changed over ten thousand years?” Shiro asked curiously. Allura thought for a second before letting out a heavy sigh.

“I’m not sure, I just want you to be prepared for if it happens,” she cautioned. She waited until they all either nodded or verbally agreed before finally opening the wormhole.

“Anybody got a bad feeling now?” Lance asked.

“Well, yes, now that we know that we’re going to a planet filled with jerks?” Pidge asked sarcastically.

“We can’t treat any differently from any other planet we visit,” Shiro reasoned.

“So why are we going here then?” Keith asked, ignoring what Shiro said.

“They have very ample resources, ones that aren’t available to many other people because of their stubbornness to form alliances with other species, combine that with the extreme dislike of all other species and you get Gotov,” Coran explained cheerfully, clearly trying to lighten the mood.

“Unfortunately, we are arriving during the evening so we will have to spend the night here before we start negotiating the alliance,” Allura sighed as the Castle touched down to the ground.

“Maybe they changed,” Hunk suggested positively as they crowded onto the lift.

“Hopefully,” Allura said, although she clearly doubted her words.

When they arrived at the waiting crowd, they were quickly surrounded by the curious citizens. Most of them were huddled around Shiro and Keith, but many were also grouped around Hunk and Pidge, even less around Allura and Coran. Strangely, none of them came close to Lance, many actually turned their backs on him completely as if they didn’t even want him in their sights. They started leading them towards the city, to presumably the largest building in the centre of the city. Even as they walked, they left Lance in the very back behind everyone else.

As they started up the steps towards the entrance of the building, Lance raced ahead slightly in the crowd and latched his arms firmly around one of Hunk’s arms.

“What’s wrong?” He asked gently, looking down at the paladin.

“I just don’t want to get separated,” he responded meekly. Hunk didn’t say anything else and decided to just give him a kind smile in return.
They were led through a pair of large ornate doors and just as quickly as they came, the crowds were
gone, leaving them in a massive hall. They looked around curiously waiting for any sign of the
leader they were supposed to be meeting. With a loud creak one of the doors down the halls opened
up and a small group of five aliens came out. They held their heads high as if to look down their
noses at the team.

“Greetings, Princess Allura,” one of them said stiffly.

“Greetings,” she said politely in return. She had an obviously strained smile on her face. If the aliens
noticed they didn’t comment on it. On either side of the Alteans, they lined up and waited for their
cue to step forward when she started introducing them.

“Shiro, the paladin of the Black Lion and the head of Voltron,” she said quickly gesturing towards
the man.

“The two arms of Voltron, Keith of the Red Lion, and Pidge of the Green Lion,”

“And the legs of Voltron, Hunk of the Yellow Lion, and Lance of the Blue Lion,” the leader’s eyes
shifted over to look at the two of them and his eyes narrowed slightly at the sight of Lance. He
shuffled his feathers nervously at the gaze and turned his head away to look at Hunk instead.

“You mean it’s not your pet?” The cold voice asked. Lance’s head whipped back over to look at the
alien and saw his finger pointing directly at him. His feathers ruffled in offense and he just barely
kept himself back from spitting angrily at him. That didn’t stop the rest of his team though.

“Of course he’s not a pet, he looks just like us!” Keith spat, glaring at the leader who didn’t look at
all perturbed by it.

“He’s wearing paladin armour, do you think we just hand that out to whoever wants it?” Pidge
growled.

“Guys,” Shiro warned quietly before looking back at the leader. “No, Lance is not a pet, he’s a
paladin of Voltron like the rest of us,” he stated calmly. The leader showed no interest and turned
waving his hand lazily at them.

“No matter, the servants will show you to your rooms for the night, we’ll begin negotiations
tomorrow morning,”

“Great,” Allura said tightly clenching her hand into a fist. As he said, servants came forward and
began ushering them down the halls. They stopped at one door and opened it for them. Inside was
what looked like the inside of a barracks for soldiers. As soon as they heard the doors close behind
them, they whipped around to face Allura.

“Please tell me we’re leaving,” Hunk begged.

“Yeah! We can’t form an alliance with people that think Lance is a pet!” Pidge gestured angrily
towards Lance.

“They’re right! If they can’t even see Lance as one of us, then should we really depend on them for
help?” Keith asked, his arms crossing in front of him.

“Coran? How vital are the resources on this planet?” Allura asked turning to him. He hummed and
pulled up his holoreader and examined the charts.

“Well, there are many different power sources here as well as ample food and water supplies,” his
eyes then narrowed and he clenched his jaw. “We can visit other planets for those though,”

“How long would it take to get the equivalent that we could get from here?” Shiro asked. Their eyes moved to Shiro’s in shocked surprise.

“Perhaps a couple of pheobs?” Coran sighed.

“We have no choice than,” Shiro said to the disbelief of the others.

“Do you even care?” Hunk demanded. Shiro’s eyes widened in surprise and he stepped back slightly.

“Of course I care, look I don’t like it any more than you do and I know what it’s like to be treated like some sort of trophy,” they flinched back at that, not used to Shiro being so blunt about his time in captivity.

“But with the time we can save by negotiating for these resources here, we can save many more planets and people,”

“He’s right you guys, I can handle it,” Lance said with a smile.

“It’s not fair though,” Pidge mumbled, wringing her hands together. Lance smiled softly and ruffled her hair playfully.

“It’s not like I’ll have to get used to the treatment, I know other planets love seeing my wings and know that I’m a paladin of Voltron,” He comforted her.

“We’re paladins of Voltron, we have to sacrifice at least once in a while,” he laughed patting her hard on the back. He glanced around to see everyone looking at him with worry.

“Seriously guys, it’ll be fine,” he insisted throwing his arms up dramatically.

“We trust you, Lance, despite what I said before if you do start to feel uncomfortable please let us know,” he requested. Lance nodded with a small smile.

“What’s the worst that could happen?”

“Oh God, he jinxed it,” Pidge whispered dramatically.

Pidge was absolutely right. He must have jinxed it. There was no way he was hearing what he thought he was hearing.

“Excuse me, could you repeat that?” He asked in disbelief. The leader turned to him a look of annoyance on his face before turning back to Allura.

“As I was saying, many of my people have shown a keen interest in the blue one and one of our requests is that It’s wings be shown off by the Black Paladin,” he said with a faux smile. Their jaws dropped open in shock and they stared at him with wide eyes. Before they could say anything, Lance stood up.

“We agree with these terms,” he said quickly.

“Excellent,” he said clapping his hands making two servants step forward. “Make the wings more
“Now when you take it around the city, it will be perched on your arm, wings facing outwards so my people will more easily see them,” he stated blandly, turning to face Shiro. He sat up straighter in his seat, his hands clenching into fists under the table.

“Lance is too big for that,” he argued quietly. He was really regretting his decision from last night now. He didn’t think that they would go this far. Lance was clearly a human just like them and just because he had wings, he was being treated like something to show off?

“You’ll work it out somehow, you know what will happen if you don’t,” he said flippantly as if it really didn’t matter. He squeezed his eyes shut and clenched his jaw before taking in a deep calming breath and blowing it out his nose.

“Okay,” he rasped out to the nod of the leader as he went back to conversing with Allura. He glanced over at the rest of them, noticing that Pidge and Keith had open hostility on their faces as they watched the proceedings around them. Allura and Coran’s faces were schooled and completely blank as they talked back and forth with the leader and his advisors. When Shiro glanced at Hunk, a violent shiver went down his back. He had a smile on his face as usual but he could feel the murderous anger and annoyance rolling off of him.

Thankfully they weren’t left without the blue paladin for long and the doors opened again. At first, there were smiles on their face before they quickly faded again. The servants laid Lance’s armour on the table in between Coran and Allura before returning to their places in the corners.

His armour was replaced by a loose, white, open-backed shirt that allowed his blue wings to be fully visible against his back. He wore a simple pair of black pants underneath and didn’t have any shoes on. What really got their blood boiling, was the dark collar and chain that was attached around his neck.

“What are his shoes?” Shiro asked harshly, whipping his head to face the leader. He tried to ignore the chain for now. He couldn’t let himself get too worked up at this point, all he wanted to do was get through this with Lance and get off of this planet.

“It won’t be necessary if it doesn’t touch the ground,” he shrugged uncaringly. Lance looked up in confusion.

“If I don’t touch the ground? How am I supposed to go out then?” He asked. Shiro let out a long sigh, rubbing his face tiredly.

“They want you to perch on my arm and for me to take you around,” he explained. Lance’s wings visibly drooped as his eyes bounced between Shiro and the leader.

“Won’t I be too heavy?”

“I don’t know, but let’s try it,” Shiro grumbled, striding over to stand in front of Lance. He kneeled in front of him and held out his Galra arm.

“Are you sure?” he asked nervously. Shiro gave him a small smile.

“I won’t let you fall,” he promised. Lance grimaced but carefully stepped up onto Shiro’s arm. He rested a hand on his shoulder before pulling the other foot and carefully crouched.

‘All right, moment of truth,’
With a silent countdown in his head, Shiro lifted Lance off of the ground. He looked at Lance in surprise when it barely took any effort to get off the ground.

“Hollow bones Shiro,” Lance reminded him with a quiet laugh.

“Oh, right,” Shiro blushed, rubbing the back of his head. “Well, let’s get this over with,”

Lance nodded and looked over at the table. At his look, Pidge, Hunk, and Keith stood up intending to join the two of them in the city.

“Where do you think you’re going,” the leader hissed. They watched him in confusion and Keith gestured over at the two of them in annoyance.

“You are not required there, the Black Paladin can handle it alone,” Keith, Pidge, and Hunk looked over at Allura helplessly but she was looking at Lance and Shiro for any sign of desperation.

“We’re fine guys, we’ll be back soon,” Lance assured them. He nudged Shiro slightly on the shoulder with his hand and tilted his head towards the door. Shiro obeyed and started towards the hallway, Lance waving goodbye over his shoulder. As they walked over the threshold, Lance’s hands moved to wrap around Shiro’s neck for stability.

“Let’s get this shit show over with,” Lance huffed. Already he could feel his knees protesting at the position and struggled not to hunch over completely.

“First things first,” Shiro grimaced before he held up the chain from the collar up to Lance’s eye level. “This needs to go,”

“I couldn’t agree more,” Lance smirked and undid the buckle, letting it drop to the floor. Shiro mindlessly kicked it away, letting it land somewhere in the bushes nearby. With that, they started towards the streets.

They weren’t prepared for how horrible Lance would be treated. It wasn’t like they cursed and spat at him, but the way their eyes glazed over him like he wasn’t a living being was even worse. They went up to Shiro, all smiles and praise to talk to him then went to him as some sort of an afterthought.

Not one of them had even spoken a word to him, only to Shiro. He struggled not to flinch when someone would touch his wings; like they didn’t need Lance’s consent in order to touch him. It was even worse when they would ask Shiro for permission to touch his wings. As if he was only Shiro’s pet. Every time it happened, Shiro would respond with an angry growl,

“They’re not my wings, ask Lance for permission,”

Even though Shiro’s voice was loud and clear, they would blankly stare at him for a moment before reaching a hand out to feel the feathers anyway. He wanted to lash out and push them away with his wings, but he didn’t want to ruin their chance at an alliance. He didn’t know how much longer he could take this though. He felt the need to scrub his feathers every time someone felt the need to invade his personal space.

Looking at Shiro’s face, he could tell that he was feeling similarly. His jaw had been clenched shut for the better part of the time they had been out and he could just barely see a vein starting to bulge from his neck.
Thankfully as they turned onto the next street they saw the Centre Hall in the distance.

“One more street,” Shiro sighed in relief. He raised his human hand up and high-fived Lance, both with dead eyes as they started towards the waiting crowd.

Unsurprisingly, it was just like all the other stops they made that day. Unwanted touches, unrecognized as a paladin of Voltron, and unseen as an intelligent creature. He tried not to let it get to him since it was obvious that these aliens were as ignorant as they came. But still, he was just as important to the universe as any of the other paladins and to see him as an object just because he was slightly different, (not different at all on Earth) was unacceptable.

“You good?” Shiro asked quietly, turning his head slightly to look at Lance’s face. He sighed at the question, his wings drooping towards the ground.

“Yeah, I just want to get this over with,” he admitted. Shiro looked at him with remorseful eyes.

“I know, I do too,” he agreed glumly. Another alien came forward, taking away Shiro’s attention and he turned to them. Lance sighed and gazed down the street to see the Centre’s stairs. It seemed so close, yet so far away. Hopefully, by the time they got back, the others would have the alliance figured out and they could go right to the Castle. Then maybe he could ask Hunk to make him something special, he wanted to forget about this entire day. It would be nice if they could relax and watch a movie too.

Suddenly, he was knocked out of his musings by a sharp pain in his right wing. In a flash he whipped his wing out, slamming whoever was behind him to the ground. A loud angry screech tore from his mouth, and his wings flared up dangerously. He hopped down from Shiro’s arm, not acknowledging the pain from straightening his knees and glared down at the alien that had one of his feathers clutched in his hand.

Before he could do anything, the alien was up again. Their face was red with anger and they stomped towards Lance, their fist raised as if to strike him.

“What the hell is going on?” Shiro’s voice growled from over Lance’s shoulder. He looked up to see him glaring at the alien.

“This creature attacked me! That’s what happened!” The alien yelled at Shiro, angrily gesturing to Lance, his bright blue feather still trapped in his hand. When Shiro’s eyes locked on Lance’s feather, his eyes narrowed dangerously.

“Is that Lance’s feather? Why do you have it?” He hissed. As if the alien didn’t hear the hatred in Shiro’s voice, they puffed out their chest in indignation.

“I wanted it, of course, It’s just a pet, It has no use but to give what It can, It has no business attacking people wh-,” the alien was cut off by a devastating punch to the jaw from Shiro’s Galra arm. The alien toppled to the side, instantly knocked out by the blow.

Lance looked up at him in shock and saw that his face had gone completely red in anger and there were veins bulging from his forehead and neck. His eyes were dark with rage and spoke of pure murder. He bent down and snatched the feather from his limp fingers and silently handed it to Lance before he started marching down the street towards the Centre.

Although he knew that Shiro’s anger wasn’t directed towards him, it was still scary to see him like that. It was much different than his anger towards Slav. This wasn’t annoyance or fed up anger. This was pure hatred.
Shiro stormed straight up the stairs, scaring away any of the lingering staff and burst through the doors of the meeting room. They slammed loudly against the walls, instantly gaining everyone’s attention. Before they could get any words out, Shiro had the leader by the collar of his clothes and was dragging him until they were nose and nose.

“This alliance is off,” he growled. He threw him to the floor and walked back to Lance’s side. The leader looked at him in shock and turned to see the rest of the team getting up from their seats with a shrug intending to leave alongside them.

“Wait!” He cried out desperately. “You can have whatever resources you want, just say that you’ll protect us,” Shiro turned to look at him with glowering eyes.

“Why should we protect you when you couldn’t even give a paladin of Voltron, a living being just like you, some common decency?”

“He is just so different,” he stuttered out defensively after a few moments.

“So Lance is a he to you now? Not an it?” Pidge hissed accusingly.

“You’re different to us, we still came here to help you,” Keith sneered, gazing down at the leader with contempt. He flopped onto the floor, begging at Allura’s feet to form an alliance.

“Do what you want Allura, I’m taking Lance back to the ship,” Shiro scoffed gazing down at the leader. He took Lance’s armour from Hunk and quietly led Lance out of the room. As they started down the stairs, they saw some of the group watching them with judging expressions.

“Don’t even look at them Lance, they’re not worth it,” he said as they passed by them. He ignored the offended gasps that came from their mouths at his words.

“I’m sorry that I pushed us to stay,” he said eventually. Surprisingly, Lance let out a small laugh.

“None of this is your fault, Shiro,” he argued. “They used their ignorance as an excuse to do whatever they wanted,”

“I still should have said something sooner. They collared you Lance,” he tried.

“Look, Shiro, this is just one planet out of the innumerable out there, you can’t expect to protect me on each one,” he reasoned with a comforting smile. “There are always going to be people out there that think that I am less than them but that doesn’t mean I believe it. I know that you guys don’t believe it, I know who I am,”

Shiro grinned slightly. Lance was too kind for this universe. If the people of Gotov couldn’t see that, then they didn’t deserve to get anything from him.

End Notes

Come visit me at my Tumblr too!: https://blueplanettrash.tumblr.com/

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