Old Habits Die Hard

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Summary

Lance thought he was over it, but old habits die hard, right?

Notes

Whoopsie...

Trigger warnings all around, okay? Protect your mental health.

I totally vent on my poor child, Lance, again. I swear I love him.

Anyways... sorry if it's complete shit...

It's not a one shot this time, so I don't know how this'll go.

Sorry... I'm rambling. Let's go!
Lance never thought it would be him.

He saw it everywhere. People were depressed, suicidal, and hurting themselves. How the hell could anyone do that? Why would they feel like that? It just didn't make sense. Not to Lance. Of course, he never judged people based on these things. How could he? He knew it wasn't their fault. In fact, he was worried about them and would pray for them every night. God, he was glad he wasn't depressed.

But that was when he was 13.

When he turned 14, everything changed. It always popped up more and more. Daring him to think about it. Daring him to try it once. But that was ridiculous. No way. Not for him. There were people who loved Lance. He had a future and talents. He could always go to his friends if things started going south, and he knew that. They cared for him. So, when he got the thoughts, he just put his hands to his ears and shook his head until they were gone. Ignore them, and they'll go away, right?

Fat chance.

Just... once? Why... why not? It couldn't be... that bad... could it? Would anyone actually care if... he were gone? Do they... really care?

No! No, no, no, no. It's never just once. Never ever. People care! They do, really! And he can't leave... he has a future ahead. He's going to be something. He's... going to help people... Oh, who is he kidding? He's useless.

It was the same thing everyday. Wake up, eat breakfast, go to school, get home and think, and sleep. It was sad to Lance. No one seemed to notice his change in attitude. His mom didn't... at all. She always seemed more worried about his siblings. Fine by Lance. He gets it. No, really, he does. It's better if she doesn't waste time on his sorry ass anyways. His siblings definitely didn't notice. They
were too busy tormenting each other and him. Lance guesses he can't blame them since he's at the Garrison now and only comes home during breaks. Even his friends didn't notice, though... maybe they just didn't care.

One winter break, Lance came home to his family. God, he was so excited to see them. He walked in the door with a genuine smile on his face and greeted everyone happily. His mom hugged him and welcomed him home with tears in her eyes, but surely she wasn't really happy to see him. Lance's siblings practically tackled him to the ground and spoke all at once about their lives. Luis had been accepted into college, a first for his family, and was completely overjoyed. Rosita had joined the army and gets to help people nearly everyday. Veronica probably had the biggest news of all: she was pregnant, and it was a boy. All of his siblings had done so much, but where did that leave Lance.

"Wow, you guys have done so much while I was away!" Lance said with the biggest smile he could manage. He hoped it looked genuine despite the growing pain in his chest.

"Hell, yeah, we have!" Luis laughed and threw his arm around Lance's neck. "And I see you're still a disappointment."

Lance's smile dropped for just a moment before returning once again with a laugh.

"Luis! That's terrible!" Veronica shouted back at him, but she was struggling to hold back a laugh, her hands over her mouth.

"It's true, though," Rosita said casually and winked. Lance's smile surely looked strained now as his siblings' facial expressions changed from happy to concerned, slowly. "Are you okay?"

Lance tried to laugh, but it sounded forced, and he couldn't move quick enough to wipe the tear from his cheek before his mom noticed. She had been watching and chuckling along with her children until she saw how affected Lance really was. She swept him off into the kitchen and sat him down at the table, concern on her face.

"Lance, mijo," his mom said, "they said some mean things to you, but you know they're joking, right?" She placed a kiss upon his forehead and looked deep into his eyes. It was odd... she'd never seen Lance look so... "Mijo? Are you alright? You look- Luis! Put that down! Don't you give me that look! ¡Ven aquí, ahorra!" And then she left, the conversation forgotten, and Lance forgotten along with it.
It really was okay. What did it matter anyways?

Just once. Just once. It would be fine. Just once, but oh, God, it felt so good to know that he was finally getting what he deserved. It didn't last. He didn't try hard enough, did he? He really was useless and pathetic. And no one even cared that he was wearing long sleeves even though it was going into summer. Did they even notice? But... it wasn't that bad, was it? The scratches barely lasted a day, and there was no blood. But it wasn't enough. Not enough to make up for his existence. Sure, it was summer. Sure, he'd be wearing short sleeves and going swimming, but he'd be careful. Very careful. If he was caught, then a simple lie (something he'd have to make up for later) would make them forget very quickly. Just a little worse. Just enough to last him a few weeks. But...

Then summer ends, and he goes back to the Garrison. This year is even harder than last year, and the stress is getting to him. He thought 14 was bad, well, shit, 15 is literal hell. He's had an epiphany. No one ever really cared about him. It was always just pity because he's pathetic, and useless, and worthless, and weak, and stupid, and annoying, and so self-centered. God, why is he so sad? He has no right to be. He has no reason. None at all. So, he must be incredibly selfish and ungrateful, and, because of this, he refuses to cry over himself.

It's getting colder again, so long sleeves are justified now. He gets to do it again. And again. And again. And, God, he was right, it definitely didn't stop at just once, but its okay, he knows he deserves it. But soon he realizes that he needs to go further. This isn't enough anymore. It has to be worse. It has to.

And it is. It is so much worse, but Lance loves it. He loves it so much. No, he won't stop, he won't ever stop. Not ever. It hurts and there's blood, but he sure as hell doesn't care. Honestly, he should take it a step further... why not rid everyone of himself permanently? All he is, is a burden anyways. Everyone hates him, and he hates himself too. He wishes he could do it, but he's selfish and weak. Maybe he'll get shot, or run over by a bus, or some other lucky, misfortunate event will occur.

The thoughts spiral and get worse, and worse, and worse, and what is he supposed to do? Why did he have to be born? Why? Him, the fuck up. Him, the mistake. Why? Why him?

It's winter break again, and, despite the chill, his family decides to go swimming. Lance, of course, refuses. They won't find out. Not like this.

"Come on, Lance!" Luis calls from the water. He starts to wave him over but stops when Rosita splashes him straight in the face with the salty water. "You little- oh, you are definitely going to get it now!" He turns and tackles her into the water, and Rosita squeals and continues to splash. Lance is once again forgotten, but it's still okay. They're happier without him anyways.
On Christmas Eve, they go and visit Dad's grave. It's a tradition they've kept for years, but it's different now that Lance can only think of how much he would like to be in a grave. Veronica gently places a bouquet of Dad's favorite flowers in front of the headstone, a tear sliding down her cheek. They all miss him. He really was the greatest dad in the universe. He always encouraged his kids to be brave and strong, no matter what. Which was just another way that Lance disappointed him.

Next to them, a young couple was sitting next to a grave. One of the women was sniffing, letting tears fall down her face, and the other had a face like stone and simply sat, rubbing her hand up and down her partner's back.

"I- I still can't believe she did it. Why? Why would she do it?" The crying woman sobbed. Her face was in her hands, and she was continuously wiping her nose on her sleeve.

The stoney faced woman simply deadpanned: "I don't know why she killed herself. I really don't." She kept staring straight ahead into space like maybe if she didn't see it, it wasn't really there. The two sat for a while before she dragged her sobbing partner away from the small grave.

The two women were loud enough so that all of Lance's family could hear them. All of them had paled at least one shade, and their mom was trembling. It's always sad to hear about these things. And, for Lance, it was extremely awkward.

Their mom looked at each of her children caringly, as if memorizing their features, before speaking. "Promise me you'll never do that to me. Promise me you'll never hurt yourself in any way."

"Of course not, mama!" Veronica said quietly. She was resting her hand gingerly on her swollen stomach. "I couldn't."

"Never." Rosita's voice cracked, and a tear slipped down her cheek. She shook her head and wiped her nose on her sleeve.

"Absolutely not," Luis said with an uncharacteristically large amount of seriousness.

Lance, however, remained quiet... and stared at the ground...

Fuck.
Chapter End Notes

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHhhhhhhhhhh
Cleaning Up

Chapter Summary

Things get worse, but then they get better... for now.

Chapter Notes

More triggers. Sorry! But things are better this chapter. Lance has to talk about his thoughts and actions, so there's that.

Just... be careful, children.

Anyways, on with the story!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Lance?"

He's never heard his mom's voice tremble as much as it was now. He looked down at the ground, refusing to bring his eyes up to his mom and siblings'.

"I... I..." What the hell was he supposed to say? He clasped his hand over his wrist and bit his lips.

"Lance... did you- have you-" His mom took a step towards him, reaching her hands out for him.

"No..." Luis said. "You didn't." Lance still wouldn't look at any of them. "Right?"

"Let's give them a minute." Veronica dragged Rosita and Luis away from them. Luis looked pale and shocked, and Rosita had her hand over her mouth and tears streaming down her cheeks.

Now they were alone. Just Lance and his mom. His face was burning, and he felt slightly nauseous.

"Lance, don't you even think about it." Her face was serious; her voice: steady.
"But..." Now. It had to be now. "I do."

A small gasp originated from his mother's mouth, and Lance felt himself turn even redder.

"Oh, God, you hate me now, don't you? I... I'm sorry... I don't know what I was thinking, and-"

"No! No, I don't hate you! I could never!" Lies. "We... we're going to get you the help you need, Lance, mioj." She smiled at him weakly. "I promise."

It was strange to hear this, to say the least. Almost a year of hiding his feelings, months of hiding his scars, and now... she knew. She knew everything. Could they really help him? Did he even deserve help... he... no. He had to do this. For his mom. There was no use in having her worry about him.

"Do I need to take you to the emergency room now?" His mom questioned. She grabbed Lance's hand and put it in her own. "Is it... Is it that bad?"

Now this was a shock. He didn't want this. He shouldn't have said anything. He should have just lied, quickly and easily. "N-no! Of course not! I'm... I'm fine."

His mom rolled her eyes. "Cut the bullshit, Lance." She must be serious. She never curses. "You're not fine, and I'm going to get you help as soon as I possibly can."

Lance pulled her into a hug, not knowing what else to do. He was shaking all over, and surely still looked pale. It was quiet except for the rustling of trees in the cool wind. His mom hugged him back tightly as if she never wanted to let go, and, truth be told, she didn't.

"Can... Can I see them?" She pulled out from the hug and looked him in the eyes. The eyes that she'd never see the same again.

Reluctantly, Lance nodded and slowly pulled up his left sleeve with shaking hands. There were dark lines scattered along the smooth, tan skin, but none of them looked fresh. He'd been trying to stop. Summer was coming faster than he wanted, and he was sure to get caught with scars like these. Lance's mom nodded her head thoughtfully. It was obvious that she was trying to hold back tears,
and that hurt Lance more than the blade ever could.

"I'm so sorry..." Lance's voice trembled. He was so scared. What did his mom think of him? Jesus, why did he have to be so stupid? This sure turned out to be a huge mess.

Lance's mom looked up at him with wide eyes. "Oh, mijo. It's okay. We're going to get help, but please don't do anything more." She clasped his hand in hers once more. "If you weren't here... I... I'm sure I wouldn't want to live anymore either." This... this is not okay. Lance opened his mouth to say something, desperate to change her mind, but before he could speak, his mom cut him off. "I'd have to, of course. For Luis, Rosita, and Veronica, but you are a star in my life. I can't live without you."

Lies. All of it, obviously. He was only a burden, but he couldn't say this to her face. Never. How was he supposed to react? He didn't know... so he just kept his face emotionless. At this point he'd stopped shaking, but a feeling of nausea lingered in his stomach.

His mom chuckled sadly. "Wow. I'm sitting here trying not to cry, and your face hadn't changed at all since we started talking."

Shit. Emotionless wasn't the right choice either, huh? He laughed a bit. "Sorry, mama. I... don't really know what to do."

"Me neither. We'll figure it out, though. Together." She smiled at him and pulled him into a hug once more. "Don't quit on me."

Winter break passed quickly after that, and everyone seemed to treat him with more... caution. Lance hated every moment of it. He didn't want their fucking pity. He didn't deserve their pity. He knew that, but he couldn't say anything. He wasn't about to worry them even more. His mom got him appointments for a pediatrician, a therapist, and a psychiatrist the very next week. She really meant business... Lance was skipping school all that week so that he could get his shit together. He was incredibly nervous. What would they think of him? Would they be upset with him? He should have just kept his mouth shut, but he's never been very good at that.

"Alright, Lance." His mom got out of the car and shut the door. "You need to be honest with them and tell them what's up, okay, mijo?"

"Sure, mama. I will." And he would, but the knot in his stomach still stayed.
The wait didn't last long. They were called back almost as soon as they signed into the office, which was shocking because doctor's offices have always been slow.

"Lance?" The nurse called for him from the door. Lance looked to his mom, who was filling out paperwork.

She looked at him and squeezed his hand reassuringly. "You go on ahead, mijo. I'll meet you back there."

Lance nodded and followed the nurse back to the area where people get their height, weight, and blood pressure measured. The office was almost completely empty and it was extremely offputting but slightly relieving. He slipped off his shoes so that the nurse could quickly take his height and weight, but then his worst fears happened.

"Okay, Lance!" The nurse said cheerfully. "I'm going to your blood pressure now. Can you take off your jacket for me?"

Shit, shit, shit! "Uh... you need my left arm?" Smooth.

"Yes, I do, if that's alright." She prepared the blood pressure meter and patted the chair beside the table.

"Yeah... sure..." Lance sat in the chair and gently slid his jacket off, his scars fully exposed.

The woman took one look at his arm and... took his blood pressure. It was almost as if she couldn't see the marks at all. She pumped up the little band and slowly let the air out. Then, she recorded a number on her paper and smiled.

"Alright! I'll take you to your room, and the doctor will be with you shortly."

Lance slipped his jacket back on and grabbed his shoes from beneath the chair. He was surprised and relieved at the nurse's reaction, or lack thereof.
When they arrived in the room, Lance's mom was already there. She looked up at him and smiled. Lance took a seat next to her, and they waited patiently for the doctor to come.

Suddenly, the door opened, revealing a small, happy looking man. He walked over and sat down in the rolling chair that was positioned by the examining table.

"Hey, guys!" He said with a smile. "And what brings you here today?"

And there it was. The question that Lance had been dreading. "I..." He started, but wasn't sure what to say. "Well, I've been having... thoughts."

The doctor nodded, and asked: "What kind of thoughts?"

Lance groaned internally. This was so much harder than he thought it was going to be. "Thoughts of... death."

"Okay, anything else?"

"I... I..." Lance bit his lip, avoiding eye contact with the doctor.

"Go on, Lance. Tell him," his mom urged.

"Trust me, Lance. You're not going to tell me anything I haven't already heard."

Lance sighed and took a deep breath. "I've been... hurting myself..."

"Okay, like cutting?"

A pause. "Yes."

The man nodded. "Can I see?"
Why is it always that question? Lance pulled his sleeve up and the man examined the marks carefully.

"Alright. Those don't look that deep. They should heal very well." He smiles at Lance and his mom, and they smile back, but Lance doesn't want them to heal... He doesn't deserve for them to heal. He needed the scars. If the scars went away... then what proof did he have that something was wrong with him? Wow... He really is fucked up. "But... you do know that this is not a healthy way of coping with your emotions, so you really should stop, if possible."

Lance nodded. He knows this. He did all along. He just didn't care. "Yeah, I know."

"Good. Very good." The doctor now turns to Lance's mom. "You have an appointment with a psychiatrist on Thursday, correct?"

"Yes, we do."

"Sweet! Well, I wish you the best of luck. Hang in there, Lance. It will get better. Never hesitate to call someone when you're feeling this way." The doctor gets up from his chair and shakes both of their hands. They both thank him as they walk out the door and back to the car. Lance still feels incredibly awkward, but it feels good to at least think he has some support.

The next day, Lance had to go to a therapist. They were almost late since his mom couldn't find the building, but they just barely made it on time.

"Welcome! My name is Dr. Reed." A young women with her hair in a messy bun greeted them outside of her office. "Let's get started, shall we? Do you want your mom to come in with us? Or do you want her to stay out here?"

Lance was still pretty nervous and despite how friendly and welcoming this woman was, that fact didn't change. "She can come in for now."

At first they just discussed what was going to be happening during counseling, what changes they wanted to make to his life style, and how they were going to do that. It was just all of the mandatory things that needed to be covered, but then...
“So, how do you feel when you cut?”

And Lance just freezes. It only lasts for a moment however, because then he's laughing nervously. "Hey, uh, mama? Do you think you could leave? Sorry..."

She nods and smiles. "I'll be waiting outside, mijo." The door shuts quietly behind her, and Dr. Reed's eyes are on Lance again.

"Well, I... I feel... like I deserve it." Lance looks down at the floor. His fingers are twitching in his lap.

"And why do you think that?"

"Because... I'm awful." The response was short, but it contained so much emotion.

"What other things do you think about yourself?"

Oh, God. "That I'm worthless, pathetic, weak, and useless."

"Wow. Those are pretty mean things, huh?"

Lance nods slowly, still refusing to make eye contact. They might be mean, but he believes every single one of them to be true. There's not exactly a plethora of evidence against it.

"Do you want to stop thinking these things?"

"That'd be really nice, yeah."

The rest of the session remains much the same. Dr. Reed asks questions and Lance (awkwardly) answers them. Near the end of the session, however, she offers a piece of advice:
"Try to think of yourself honestly. Don't be too hard on yourself, okay?"

Yeah, it's cheesy, and Lance isn't sure if he really likes her all that much, but he'll try anything so his mom doesn't have to worry about him anymore.

Thursday comes and it's day three of Awkward Feeling Sharing Time With Lance. They talk about the same things that they did at the other places, but this time, his mom has to be in the room. That definitely made things more uncomfortable.

"What did you use to cut yourself with?"

He has to answer this? In front of his mom? "Uh... I guess mostly a blade."

"Anything else?" Her voice is oddly calming, but Lance still feels like he might be sick.

"I mean... I guess I used scissors a couple of times..." There's shame laced in his voice. Now his mom knows. Shit.

"Okay," she turns to Lance's mom. "I think it would be best if you guys removed anything that could be used just to help take away that temptation."

"That sounds like a good idea," Lance's mom agrees. "What do you think, Lance."

Wow. Now he couldn't even be trusted around sharp objects. How pathetic. "Fine."

His mom leaves after that, and he goes through all of his symptoms with the doctor. It's strange and nerve-racking, but it's not as bad as it was on the first day at the pediatrician's office. They talk about his sleep schedule, how he eats, whether or not he can focus in school, and all of the other important topics.

The final diagnosis? Depression. Surprise, surprise.

To Lance it actually is sort of shocking, though. The things he was feeling actually meant
something? Odd. He could have sworn he was just an ungrateful, self-centered piece of shit.

The doctor prescribes an antidepressant, and Lance starts on it the very next day. Both he and his mom are eager to get him fixed (or at least better). Within a few weeks, he's already feeling more stable. Not a lot, but it's a start. He goes to see his therapist a few times within that time span, too. He's not sure if she's actually helping much, but it's too early to tell. Another couple of weeks later, and he's feeling even better. He still feels like a piece of shit, yes, and still has horrible thoughts but not nearly as often as he used to. He goes back to school and finds himself happier around his friends again like he used to be. It's looking like things are definitely changing for the better.

Two years pass at the Garrison and he's feeling pretty damn good. He's been clean since his mom found out (shockingly) and couldn't be more proud of himself. He's even made a few really good friends. This one guy, Hunk, is pretty much like the human form of a teddy bear. Pidge, however... they're more like a demon trapped in a human teenager's body. Don't get him wrong, he loves them, but... they can be pretty scary sometimes. There was also this other guy, Keith, with his stupid mullet, but he left. Lance heard he got expelled, but what for, he doesn't know.

Two years. Two whole years... things are looking up for Lance McClain.

But good things never last.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down! My boy Lance is getting better, but how's it going to be once he nyooms off into space? Not so good, I imagine...

I hope it wasn't trash!

Byeeeeeeee
Chapter Summary

Space! Lance thinks it's pretty damn cool. Come on!! It's space! And a giant, sentient, robot lion chose him to be its pilot. But... things go to shit pretty quickly when his depression hits again, and hard.

Chapter Notes

Oof. More triggers and shit. You guys should know by now that this whole story is full of them. :/

In which the pain ensues...

Lance wouldn't call his mindset "good", but it's definitely better. His medicine and therapy has worked wonders. He's far from cured, but he'll take any improvement that he can get. As his depression improved, so did his daily life. He got better grades more easily and was able to maintain some awesome relationships. Hunk was basically the best person ever. It was almost as if they had known each other for years. His growing relationship with Pidge was also really nice, and Hunk probably appreciated having someone in the group that could understand all of the tech mumbo-jumbo that he was so interested in. Lance tried to understand, he really did, but a lot of it was simply beyond his level.

Lance would have never guessed that he could ever feel this good ever again.

"Lance! You're going to run into something!" A desperate Pidge cried out. They were holding onto their chair so tightly that their knuckles were almost completely white. Hunk had jumped up from his seat and puked in some unknown section of the ship that did God knows what.

Lance flashed a smug smile at them. "Don't you worry about that. They call me the tailor because of how I thread the-"

"Look out!"

The ship crashed straight into some sort of space debri, and a message popped up on the window
screen reading: "simulation failed". That must be at least the third time that they've failed it.

As they exited the ship, an angry voice could be heard.

"And that's the perfect example of what not to do," it said. The voice belonged to their instructor, and today he seemed to be in an even worse mood than usual, if possible. There was definitely a lecture coming.

Before he could start going off on Hunk and Pidge, however, Lance decided that he would simply draw all of the aggression towards him. It was the least he could do to thank his friends for putting up with him everyday.

"Sorry, sir... that was my fault," he said quietly. Iverson turned quickly towards him, his face contorted into a scowl. Oh, boy. There was a storm coming.

"Damn right it was!" He took a step towards Lance and yelled in his face. "What the hell were you doing out there?" Before Lance even had a chance to answer, Iverson was talking again. "Don't forget that you're only here because the person at the top of the class dropped out! I sure hope that you don't intend to follow in his footsteps."

Ouch. Now that hurt a little bit. Was he really so pathetic- no. He's been better lately, he's not about to let that be ruined now.

"N-no, sir," Lance stuttered out. He hoped that his face didn't show how the comment really made him feel.

After the three failures were dismissed from class, they discussed what happened. Pidge seemed a bit upset with the events that had occurred.

"What the fuck, Lance?" She said, anger tickling in her voice. "Why did you say that? It wasn't all your fault!"

At this, Lance simply shrugged. "Well, it definitely wasn't either of you guys' faults. It doesn't really matter, though. I don't care what he says!" At this last statement, Lance flashed a confident grin that was only half fake.
Pidge groaned and punched his shoulder. "You are the worst." They let out a laugh so genuine that Lance couldn't help but to smile too. This is what he lived for: making other people happy.

Lance looked over to Hunk, who still looked slightly green. He was leaned against the wall and looked incredibly uncomfortable. Lance walked over and patted him softly on the back, giving him a sympathetic look.

Hunk looked up at his friend's concerned face and smiled weakly, giving a shaky thumbs up. "I'm good."

That night, after all of the faculty had finished patrolling the halls, the group agreed to sneak up to the roof together. They definitely deserved a break, and this is just what the doctor ordered: stargazing on the rooftop at 3 am.

Pidge had brought their computer with them, of course, but Hunk and Lance came empty handed. Sometimes, Lance actually believes that their computer is somehow attached to them.

They made some light conversation for about ten minutes before something extraordinary occurred: a humongous, bright object zoomed across the the sky and landed right on the Garrison's campus. None of them had any idea of what it was, but a slight twinge of anxiety and excitement pulled at their thoughts.

"Woah..." Hunk said quietly, staring at the rising pillar of smoke in the near distance. "What was that?"

"I have no idea." Pidge said. They closed their laptop and pulled out their convenient binoculars because obviously that's something that you just carry around. "Let's find out."

Pidge looked around for a moment. "I can't see anything!" They said with frustration.

"Let me try!" Lance said, taking the binoculars from Pidge without waiting for them to respond. He looked through them carefully, but wasn't able to see anything of the crash either. However, he was able to spot a flash of movement off to the side and saw the back of a mullet. He groaned.
"What?" Hunk asked with concern, squinting into the distance. "What do you see?"

"It's Keith! I'd recognize that mullet anywhere." Lance put down the binoculars and started to leave the roof.

"Where are you going?" Pidge asked.

"There is no way that I'm letting him see that before me." Lance moved his hand in a motion that implied that they should follow. "Come on!"

And that was it. That was what started it all. They could have just ran back to their rooms and hid, hoping that the Garrison staff would never find out that they had not been there in the first place... but they didn't. Maybe they should have...

They tried to discreetly approach the area. There were already Garrison officers surrounding what looked like a crashed space ship.

"Aliens?" Hunk suggested, and Pidge gave him an extremely disappointed look. He shrugged and said, "Just throwing out suggestions."

Distant yelling could be heard from inside a tent, and Lance spotted Keith on the outside of the tent. The boy entered it and soft thuds could be heard.

"Let's go." Lance whispered and started making his way towards the tent.

Once they entered the tent, Lance could see Keith helping a man off a table. Wait... was that... Shiro? Shiro as in his childhood hero who went missing years ago? No way that he was going to let Keith steal his thunder. He was going to rescue his hero, not Keith. And he said just as much.

"Nope. No way. Absolutely not." Lance walked over and put his arm around Shiro, helping to support the barely conscious man. "I'm going to rescue Shiro, not you."

The boy looked Lance up and down. "And who are you?"
Honestly, Lance was kind of shocked. Was he really that forgettable? "Uh, the name's Lance."

"Who?" Well, that answers that question.

"You know! Lance and Keith: neck and neck?" Yes, it's true. Lance had sort of made up a little bit of a rivalry with the boy. It was a good motivator for him when it was a bad day. Besides, with Iverson constantly reminding him that he'll never be as good as Keith... well, that may have had something to do with it.

There was a shout from outside of the tent, and Keith sighed.

"You know what? Whatever. I don't care. Just help me." He started moving towards the exit quickly, and Lance just followed his lead with Pidge and Hunk close behind.

They made it to a hover bike and hopped on. Keith started it up, and they started flying away, but the Garrison was not about to let that happen. They quickly had multiple ships behind them, and they definitely weren't moving fast enough to outrun them.

"Go faster!" Lance cried out. They were getting closer by the second, and Lance definitely didn't want to get caught.

"Well, we could go faster if we got rid of some unnecessary weight." Keith responded, hunched over with an intense expression on his face.

"Oh, good idea!" Lance looked around the hover bike and realized there was nothing on it except for them. Wait. "Oh, okay. I see what you meant by that."

Suddenly Keith was shouting. "Big guy, lean left!" And, not knowing what else to do, Hunk did it. Of course, then they all saw that they were heading straight towards a cliff.

"You're not going to-" Pidge started, but Keith cut them off.
"Yep."

They drove right off the cliff, and everything seemed to slow down. Is this really how they were going to die? Oh, well. It would probably be better- no. No.

Well, of course, life wasn't done with him yet, and they miraculously survived. Keith had graciously (not at all because it was forced) let them stay at his house over night. No one slept much, though.

The next morning, there was much to be discussed. Honestly, Lance wasn't completely sure of whether any of last night's events had actually occurred. That is, until he woke up in his "rival's" house. He yawned and got up from the floor. He got maybe half an hour of sleep total. Everyone else was already up and gathered together talking.

"Oh, fuck," he started. "That actually happened?"

"Hey, Lance," Hunk greeted. "How'd you sleep?"

Lance gave him a sideways glance. "Great. Just great."

At this, Hunk suppressed a laugh by putting his hand over his mouth. "Yeah, me too."

Shiro walked over and stuck out his hand towards Lance. "You're Lance, right?"

"Yep! That's me!" He said cheerily. He started to stick out his hand but noticed that the hand he was about to shake wasn't actually a hand. It looked like it was some sort of complex prosthetic. After just a moment of hesitation, Lance grabbed the other's hand and shook it with a smile. "Nice to meet you."

Keith cleared his throat and spoke. "Anyways, as I was saying. I've been feeling this weird energy from out in the desert, and I think it might have something to do with whatever took Shiro." Well, that seemed a bit farfetched, but then again... here was a guy who'd gone missing years ago and returned with dope-ass anime hair and a fucking robot arm, so.... yeah.

"Okay, let's go then." Shiro said, and made for the door. "It's not safe here, anyways. The Garrison
Once again, they could have said no. Lance could have ran away and hid until he was sure he was safe, but he didn't. He felt strangely like he was meant to do this. He had to go with this group to whatever obscure location they needed to go to.

Eventually, they found themselves in the a cave, and the cave drawings... glowed? All Lance had done was brush a hand across one of them.

"Woah," he said quietly, staring in awe at the sight of the semi-circular cave being bathed in an ocean blue light.

Once they ventured even deeper into the cave, Lance saw something that was more shocking than everything else combined. There, right in front of them, was a gigantic robotic lion. It had a soft blue light emanating from it like the cave drawings and appeared to even have some sort of forcefield surrounding it.

"I found it a little while ago," Keith said and put his hand against the barrier. "But I don't know how to get its forcefield down."

Lance scoffed and jokingly said, "Have you tried knocking?" And gave a few light taps on the shiny matter.

Apparently, that was exactly what it needed because as soon as Lance knocked, the barrier came crashing down and the lion roared to life. Stooping down and opening its mouth to invite them in.

Next thing Lance knew, they were flying out of the cave (by crashing through the wall), and he was desperately trying to avoid hitting things because oh, God this was nothing like the simulator and he wasn't even good at that and-

"You are a terrible pilot!" Pidge screeched and grabbed on to Lance's head, effectively blinding him.

"Well, it'd be a whole lot easier if you moved your hands!" He shouted back, but realized that he sort of knew where he was going even though he couldn't see.
They spiralled upwards as everyone screamed, and Hunk got sick multiple times. After a chaotic ride, it seemed to get smoother after they somehow ended up in space. It was so much more beautiful than Lance ever anticipated it would be.

Suddenly, a large, swirly-looking circle object appeared, and oh, boy, did Lance want to go in it. It was almost like a little voice was talking to him in his head.

*Go, Lance. Go. You must help you and your friends fulfill your destinies.*

What was that? It was vivid, so there was no way that he was imagining it. Maybe it was...

"Guys, I think my lion's telling me to go into that circle thingy." He had already started to accelerate towards it. At this point, it didn't matter what the others said. He was going in.

"Are you sure?" Pidge asked quickly. They were now clinging onto Hunk, who had vomit stains on his shirt, for support. "It looks like a wormhole. I mean, this thing could be trying to kill us."

"Yeah," Keith agreed. He looked like he didn't care about their current situation, but Lance could tell he was terrified on the inside. "This seems like a bad idea."

Lance shrugged and continued. "Potentially, yes, it could be trying to kill us, but I trust it."

And, with that, they flew right through and into an unknown place. Lance's vision was left blurry and distorted for just a moment, but once it cleared up, he could see that they were hurtling straight for the ground.

"Oh, shit!" He screamed and tried to slow down, ineffectively. They ended up crashing down right in front of some sort of castle looking building.

After a moment of everyone calming down from that one hell of a ride, Keith looked over at last and sarcastically said: "Nice landing."

Geez... He tried his best. But... that's not good enough. "I'd like to see you try to land a giant robot lion!" He shouted back. He threw his hands up in the air and exited the lion. There was no way he
was going to let them see the tears in his eyes.

They decided to enter the castle, of course, and eventually ended up in a room with two pod like things and a whole slew of other items that Lance had no idea of what they were. As they were looking around in awe, Lance decided that it would be a great idea to touch a random button on one of the pods.

There was a hissing noise and suddenly, someone was falling. On instinct Lance ran forward and caught them.

"Woah! Are you okay?" He asked, but, boy was he shocked when he looked down and saw a beautiful girl with white hair and pointy ears. Way out of his league, and he knew it, but he couldn't help the blush that spread across his face.

"Where..." she started in the most heavenly voice, and looked around, confused. "Where am I? Who are you?"

Lance gave her the best smile he had and said, "The name's Lance, and you're right here in my arms."

She scoffed and looked up at him. Then, her faced changed from disgust to shock. "Your ears! They're... hideous."

Abort mission! Repeat: abort mission! His ears? "Hideous" he can understand, but why just his ears? Well, his initial assumption had been correct: this beautiful alien was completely out of his league.

"Coran? Coran?" She looked around and spotted the other pod. She pressed a button on it, and a middle aged man with completely orange hair and the most ridiculous moustache that Lance had ever seen stepped out. "Coran! What happened?"

The man, who Lance assumed was named Coran, looked at her and didn't seem to truly understand what was going on.

"Princess? He said questioningly. She was a princess? What the- where the-"
"What the fuck is going on?" Pidge finished his thought out loud for him.

Coran looked over at them as if just noticing that they were in the room. A look of confusion and concern swept over his face and he quickly tapped a few buttons on the pod and gasped.

"Princess, we've been asleep for..." He hesitated, biting his lip. "Ten thousand years."

The princess took a large step backwards and paled. "Ten thousand years? But that means..." She stumbled, and Lance was afraid he was going to have to catch her again. However, she righted herself, and turned towards Lance and the others. "Well, I suppose I should introduce myself. My name is Princess Allura, and I've got a lot of explaining to do."

Long story, short... this super mean since dude, Zarkon, destroyed their planet, Altea (so now they're the only two left), in revenge and in search for the most powerful weapon in the universe, Voltron, which was made up of five robotic, sentient lions that they were now supposed to pilot. So... makes sense, right?

Obviously, they need the lions to form the Voltron thing, so that's what they're doing now. And it's pretty chaotic. Shiro and Pidge went together to get the green lion, Keith went to get the red lion, and Hunk and Lance went to get the yellow lion. Once they all had theirs, Shiro would get his: the black lion. It's hard to say how Lance and Hunk's part of the mission is going, however, because there's shooting and purple aliens that Lance vaguely remembers being told that they're called Galra. Everything seems to be going at least okay, though- oh, God. Did Hunk just get killed?

"Hunk?" Lance screamed, tears already starting to form in his eyes.

There was a moment of silence before Lance saw a giant yellow lion burst through a mountain, driving in only a way that Hunk could, and, God, Lance was so relieved. He had one job: keep the Galra off of Hunk so that he could get his lion, and he almost messed that up. He almost got Hunk killed. He- no. He tried his best to- but he's not good enough and never will be. One job. That's all he had, and he managed to fuck that up. You really couldn't trust him with anything. How pathetic. What a weakling he is...

Shit! No, no, no, no no no no. He didn't have his medicine. He was stuck in space... And he didn't have his medicine. Oh, God, no. No. No. No. And he couldn't tell the others, of course... they have their own problems. They're stuck in space now too. He'd... he'd be fine... right? He'd been better over the last two years. He could handle it now. Right...
Apparently, in order to form Voltron, the team needs to have a "bond". So now they're doing this mind meld thing while wearing this device that projects their thoughts, and that really sucks because there is so much that Lance hasn't even told Hunk and he really doesn't want any of them to know. Of course, the more he tries not to think about it... the harder it is. Just think of family. Just think of family. Just think of family.

"Focus on your lions, paladins!" Allura calls. That's what the pilots of Voltron are called, supposedly. "Your lion, come on."

And Lance is trying to think about his lion, he really is, but he's so afraid that he'll reveal something the second he stops thinking about his family. But... He has to. He's got this. Three... two... one...


"Why aren't you thinking about your lion?" An angry voice rings out. It's Keith, Lance can tell. He opens his eyes and half expects to see everyone staring at him, but instead sees them looking at Pidge. Honestly, it's a relief when a fight breaks out, and Pidge storms out of the room. His relief makes him selfish and terrible, though... doesn't it?

"I suppose we'll stop for the day..." Allura awkwardly suggests, and everyone else nods.

The next few days are hell. The days are full of physical bonding activities which hurt, by the way. Keith is really bad at directing people through mazes. Or maybe Lance is just stupid... yeah, that seems more likely. Lance is getting worse. He's getting so much worse, very, very quickly. He's thinking about things that he thought he had left behind two years ago, but it's so tempting. His mom wouldn't even know... no. He shouldn't. It's been two years. He can't crack now.

Before the end of the week, they still haven't been able to form Voltron, and they have to fight a fucking monster. God, Lance is exhausted. Why now?

By the end of the battle, they figure it how to form Voltron (pretty conveniently, but no questions are asked from Lance), and any place in Lance's body that wasn't hurting from training before, sure does now.

They'd taken some pretty hard hits while they were fighting, most of which had been Lance's fault, probably. Everyone already seemed to be experts on flying their lions, and Lance, despite having had his lion the longest, still had no idea what he was doing.
Once they arrived back in the hangars, Allura ran up to talk to them and gushed about how amazing they were. Pidge’s strategy was impeccable. Keith’s flying? She’d never seen anything like it. Shiro was an incredible leader, and Hunk was very coordinated. Lance? Lance was forgotten.

"And how did I do, Princess?" Lance asked. He forced a smile and winked at her, hoping to come off as casually flirty instead of desperately needing affirmation.

She flinched a bit. "Uh... well... you were..." God, she couldn't even think of anything. Nothing at all. Was he really that useless? Of course, but...

"You were pretty fucking annoying," Keith mumbled and Pidge held back a laugh.

Lance heard, though. Keith was right. He’d talked way too much during the battle. He just hoped that he still looked like he was smiling so no one would worry. Something was coming, though. Lance could feel it. He faked a yawn and made up some lie about going to take a nap and ran back to the room that Allura had so graciously supplied him. He took off his armor and showered, changing into his long sleeved shirt and jacket that he normally wore. He then sat on his bed and fiddled with his Bayard. Allura had given one to each of them (except for Shiro, but his arm could kill people anyways), explaining that they would take whatever form was most appropriate for its user. Lance’s had taken the form of a gun. Odd... but cool. Everyone else got cool weapons too, though, so it didn't really matter.

As Lance sat thinking with his eyes closed, he felt the Bayard transform into another shape. He opened his eyes to see a form that he was all too familiar with. He had no idea that just thinking about it would-

Weak. Worthless. Pathetic. Useless. The only thing he's good at doing is being annoying. So, so annoying and loud. And, God, he's selfish and terrible, so he deserves it.

But... it's been two years...

Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it.

And when Lance looks down at his wrist and feels his heartbeat speed up...
He realizes what he's done.

Chapter End Notes

Blargggggggg this story is killing me, but, like, in a good way?? Does that make sense???

Anyways... I hope you guys liked it!

Criticism is always welcome, but, once again, my soul is fragile so please don't crush it.
Chapter Summary

Who knew that things would ever get this bad? Lance sure didn't, yet here he is.

Chapter Notes

I don't know if I still need to say this, but, just in case... trigger warnings.

I guess we should start now.

Sorry? I guess??

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shit. Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit.

Two years. He'd been clean for two years.

But he fucked up. Oh, God, he fucked up so badly. His mom was going to be so disappointed in-

But she'd never know. No, no, she'd never know. No one would. So... it didn't even matter. It didn't matter at all.

He deserved it. Every. Single. One. He deserved it because he is selfish, and weak, and pathetic, and so goddamn annoying. He's useless, and worthless, and stupid, and such a fucking burden. Lance remembered all of his feelings from years ago. They weren't good. None of them. And they were back.

It's funny, no, hysterical how quickly Lance returned to the state that he had been in two years ago.

But if it was so fucking funny... then why couldn't Lance laugh? Why could he only find tears on his cheeks and blood on his wrist?
Suddenly, there was a knock on his door, and he was snapped out of his thoughts. Oh, fuck. He had to clean up before they-

"Lance?" It was Hunk. He sounded nervous. "Uh... can I come in?"

Lance placed his Bayard, which was now back in it's original form, on his bed and quickly pulled his jacket sleeve down. The contact of the fabric burned, and he flinched. With one final wipe at his eyes with his sleeve, Lance got up and opened the door.

"Hey, Hunk!" He said with a forced smile. "What's up?" Lance was trying desperately to stop his hands from shaking, but to no avail. He resorted to stuffing his hands in his pockets and hoping that Hunk didn't notice.

Of course, though, Hunk did notice.

"I was just coming to see if you were alright." Hunk said. He was obviously trying not to stare at Lance's red eyes and shaking hands. "Is something wrong?"

Lance had done something very bad, and now he had to hide it.

"What? No," Lance responded with enthusiasm. "Nothing's wrong." He smiled, or tried to. "I'm fine."

Hunk placed his hand on Lance's shoulder. "You know you can talk to me about anything, right?"

Lance looked down slightly. He couldn't. He shouldn't. He won't. "Yeah, buddy. I know."

Lance's performance definitely wasn't convincing, but it was at least good enough to get Hunk to go away. So he sat. Alone. In the dark.

The next week was also eventful. It was full of intense training, which Lance obviously failed, and they even had to save a planet from the Galra. It was some sort of quintessence (or spirit?) planet that would allow its inhabitants to communicate through it. They had to obliterate the Galra very gently as to not destroy the planet completely in the process. Eventually, there was a giant monster that they
had to beat, and that did not go well.

Apparently, they were supposed to somehow defeat it without damaging the planet, but it's kind of hard to fight something if you can't trust the ground that you're standing on. However, they managed to subdue it for long enough to heal the planet which then enveloped the monster in a giant crystal? Honestly... he couldn't make this shit up if he tried.

Praise and thanks were passed around after the battle. All of the words directed towards Lance were obviously superficial, though. He could have done more, talked less, reacted faster. He didn't deserve their praise. He didn't deserve their thanks. However, Lance smiled and shook so many aliens' hands like the rest of his team. Like he was supposed to. They seemed so genuinely happy that it almost hurt. God, he knew that he didn't deserve happiness, but did the universe really have to rub all of this in his face every fucking day? He knew he was weak, but now the battles proved it. He knew he was pathetic, but now his rapidly advancing friends proved it. He knew he was useless, but now his true worthlessness was shown when compared to his friends. Hell, he calls them friends, but surely even they only pity him. Why else would they keep him around?

"Hey, Lance?" Keith's voice breaks Lance out of his progressively worsening thoughts.

He slowly turns to look at the boy before he snaps back into reality with a smile. "Yeah?"

Upon seeing Lance's smile, Keith seems to visibly relax. "Uh... we're headed back to the castle. You coming?"

Lance nods vigorously, he's ready to leave this planet. "Sure! Let's go."

Once they arrived back at the castle and took off into space again, Hunk waving from the window, Lance slipped off towards his room. He wasn't feeling so great, but he knew what would make him feel better.

He quickly walked in and shut the door, making sure to lock it so no one would barge in while he was... well...

One. Two

Three. Four.
Eventually, he lost count, but it didn't matter. It was no big deal, really.

He was just cleaning up when he heard a knock on the door. Perfect timing, actually.

"Yeah?" Lance called from in his room, trying to keep his voice steady.

"You coming to dinner, Lance?" It was Pidge. He could tell that Hunk had sent them based off of the annoyed tone of their voice.

Lance thought... was he going to dinner? It'd be a waste of food if a useless piece of shit like him ate it, but if he didn't, then the rest of the universe might be put in danger. However, he was useless to the team anyways, so perhaps it would be better if the food was saved for them instead. Yeah... that made sense.

"No..." He tried to sound cheery, but it was a bit lackluster. "I'm not really hungry."

A pause. "Okay..." Pidge sounded uncertain, though. "Hey, are you-" They stopped, considering... "Never mind."

Lance could hear their footsteps going away, and he was strangely proud of himself. God, he was hungry, though...

The next day, Allura insisted upon doing another mind meld despite Lance's protests.

"Oh, come on, Lance! It'll be great for the team dynamic!" Allura practically shouted. She was all in.

Unfortunately for her, Lance was all in for his side too. "Yeah, no. These mind melds are stupid, and I'm tired!" A terrible excuse, yes, but not a complete lie.

"But you slept all day once we got back from the Balmera!" Allura retorted, and everyone else nodded. Somehow she'd convinced everyone else go be on her side already. Typical.
Truth is, Lance barely slept at all because he was too busy thinking. He didn't even know how long he'd sat there, thinking. He didn't deserve sleep anyways, though. So it was fine.

"But... I..." Okay, so... He was kind of backed into a corner. He didn't have any other excuses. He looked at Allura pleadingly. "Do I have to do this?"

Allura nodded, not hearing or simply ignoring the desperation in Lance's voice. "Of course you do."

Shiro now stepped up and gave him a reassuring smile. "She's right, Lance. It really will be good for the team dynamic."

No, it wouldn't. Oh, God, it really wouldn't. But what could he say? There was nothing to say.

"Fine." His voice was cold and emotionless, but his heart was pounding. They'd find out. They'd find out. They find out, and be so ashamed of him.

But he'd just think happy thoughts, so it'd be fine.

He placed the device on his head and sat on the floor. Everyone else followed suit. Allura had decided to participate this time too, so she sat down next to Shiro, trying not to smile with joy at the situation, and called for Coran to switch the devices on. Everyone's thoughts were projected in front of them as Coran flipped a switch. Pidge thought of their brother, which they had all now learned about. Hunk thought of his moms and how much he missed them. Keith thought of some sort of mysterious dagger, but that image passed quickly. Shiro thought of the Galra and Zarkon. And Allura thought of her old home and father. But Lance...

It was fine. Just think


Happy Thoughts.

HAPPY THOUGHTS.
hAppY thOUGhts.

HaPPy ThOuGHTs.

happY tHOughTs.

happy thoughts.

"Lance?"

It wasn't fine.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter down. Sorry it's short!

Is this fic actually any good? I feel like it's complete shit.

It's okay to honestly admit that it sucks, you know.

Anyways... I hope you enjoyed! :)

Chapter Summary

There are some... conversations... that are had.

Chapter Notes

Sorry my writing's been... well, shitty.

It's been a bad couple of days, but this is how I sort of vent.

Anyways, here's another chapter, I guess.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Lance?"

No. No, no, no. This wasn't supposed to happen. Maybe... they didn't see anything.

Happy thoughts. Happy thoughts.

"Yeah?" Lance said. He opened his eyes and turned his head towards the group.

Hunk spoke up. He twiddled his fingers in his lap. "Are you alright?" The rest of the group had their eyes on Lance.

On instinct, a smile creeped onto Lance's face. "Yeah, buddy! Of course. Why?"

"Well..." Hunk started, but he but his lip and looked to the others.

Allura sighed softly, but readily took the situation over. "You seem to be thinking about your family." So they really didn't see it? "However," Of course. "We keep seeing little... flashes of things, and it's obvious that, whatever it is, you're trying to hide it. Why?"
Lance scoffed, but didn't sound quite so confident when he spoke again. Think of an excuse. Something... anything. "What are you even talking about, Allura? I'm literally only thinking about my family."

"Lance!" Keith shouted, throwing his hands in the air. "Stop lying. That's obviously not true."

Lance is shocked for a moment, and it's all that he can do to not start crying. His wrist burns, but he tries to ignore it. He'll just pretend. Easy. It doesn't work. "I... I'm not lying..."

"Yes, you are." No, no, no, no. They can't know. They'd hate him forever and leave him to rot. He might deserve it, but he can at least pretend that he's worth something. Anything.

"Well, what about you, huh, Keith?" Lance says, desperately trying to get the conversation off of him. "What was that dagger thing earlier?"

At this, Keith turns bright red and looks away. "Nothing... It was nothing." He recovers surprisingly quick, however. "That's not what we're talking about now, though."

"Yeah. That's a conversation for later." Shiro says. He gives Keith a concerned look, but then turns back towards Lance. "We need to know what's up with you."

Lance is beginning to panic now. Shit, shit, shit. "Look, I said it was nothing, alright?"

"Why won't you talk to us?" Keith shouts again. He doesn't look mad, though. He looks... worried.

"Because you really don't want to know about my stupid problems!" Fine. Keith wants honesty? Lance will give him honesty.

"Yes, I do!" Keith retorts. "Why would I ask if I didn't want to know?"

"Because you pity me." Everyone seems a bit shocked when he says this.
Keith utters a soft "what?", and Lance sighs.

"Yeah, I know you do. It's fine, though. I don't need your pity. I don't even want it." He looks carefully at everyone's faces. They all have their eyebrows furrowed with slight frowns. "If you want me to leave Voltron, then just tell me. I get it. I'll go."

"Lance, why would we want that?" Pidge asks. Their voice is quiet, as if they were trying not to scare off a deer.

Oh, God. Were they really going to go into this now? He rolls his eyes slightly. Do they really need to get him to say all of this? "It's obvious you don't need me, but it's fine. Really."

"No." Hunk was speaking now. "It's- That's not true."

Lance snorts. It's really funny. No, really. It is. "God, and you call me a liar."

"Lance?" Allura starts apprehensively. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm. Done. With. Your. Pity." He grips his wrist tighter and tries not to flinch at the well needed sting. "I don't need it. I don't want it. I don't deserve it."

At this, Lance can hear them let out a small gasp. This was not how he wanted today, or any day for that matter, to go.

"Lance..."

"Don't." He takes a step back, realizing the weight of the things that he's said. Now they'll never forgive him. "Just don't." He runs back to his room again, and locks the door.

End it. End it. End it. End it. End it.

But he's terrified. He can't. Every thought is a what if.
What if they really do like him?

Stupid.

What if the universe needs him?

Useless.

What if his family misses him?

Annoying.

Fat chance.

He can't end it. He's terrified. But he can do the next best thing.

Fix it. He has to fix it. Pretend more than ever before. Make up for the things that he said. Give himself the pain and sorrow he deserves. Never forget the truth about himself. Stupid, useless, annoying. Loud, worthless, pathetic. Weak, selfish, disappointment.

Mistake.


A knock sounds on his door. It's fast and hard. "Lance?" He hears Hunk.

"Are you okay in there?" Pidge.
"Please talk to us." Shiro.

"We want to help." Allura.

"We care about you." Keith.

Don't believe the liars. They want to hurt others. Don't believe them. Don't believe them. Don't believe them.

"Liars! You're all liars!" Lance shouts. "You couldn't care about me if you tried!"

Lance hears a quite murmur of, "Pidge, open the door." Geez, he knows he's acting hysterical (on purpose. He thought it'd drive them away. It did not.), but this is ridiculous.

Wait. If they're going to come in... and he still hasn't cleaned up... then... oh no.

Scrambling, he stuffs his blade in his jacket pocket which he then hastily throws on. He tries not to smear blood on the sleeve but he's unsuccessful. Fine, okay. He'll just shelter his arm from them. In a completely unsuspicious way, of course. Now he just has to think up an excuse... uh... shit. Oh! He was... crying... and was embarrassed. Not good, no, but better than the truth.

The door opens and Lance tries his best to play the right part. He'd positioned himself on the ground, sitting against the wall. His eyes were puffy and red. He wasn't going to completely lie. He had been crying, but that wasn't why he had run to his room. He sniffed a few times in order to sell the act.

Everyone was looking at Lance with concern. Hunk, taking a few steps towards Lance and embracing him, mumbled softly into his ear.

"Dude. What's wrong? I know what I saw during the mind meld, and we have to talk about it."

Lance gasped slightly as Hunk spoke. He- Hunk- what? Hunk knew? His happy thoughts must not have worked as well as he thought. How much had they seen? How much did Lance's traitorous mind reveal? "How..." Lance started timidly. "How much did you see?"
They all exchanged glances and moved closer to the two who were still hugging on the bathroom floor. Shiro was the first to speak.

"Enough," he'd said. He crouched down on the floor in order to be closer to Lance. In doing so, he was able to get an even better view of Lance's finch as reality slowly settled in.

He sighed a bit. "Shit."

Allura now stepped forward to speak. "Lance, is it what we think it is?"

"Depends on what you think it is," Lance said sheepishly and brought his head down.

This brought on a moment of awkward silence. It was always hard to say out loud.

"Cuts." Keith had now interjected, saying the thing that it seemed like no one else wanted to.

Okay, so they were just going to dive right in. Lance readied himself for disappointment and spoke. "Yeah." He looked up at the rest of them, trembling all over. This was almost as hard as telling his mom. Almost... but not quite. "Yeah, it's what you think it is."

There was a pause as this sunk in. To the team, this has been a shocking development to say the least. Lance had always seemed so strong-willed and happy... yet here they were. In hindsight, the signs were there: he'd been pretty closed off and seemed to avoid conversations about himself and his well-being, and they never saw his wrists. Never. Yet here they were.

"Now long?" Shiro said. He tried to sound calm, but the crack in his voice was obvious.

Lance shrugged his shoulders, averting his eyes again. "A few weeks or so after we got here."

"Can we see?" Shiro asked delicately. Everyone seemed to take a step forward again in curiosity and worry.
Oh, God... He still had fresh ones. Like... really, really fresh. They probably hadn't even stopped
bleeding yet. He shouldn't have done this. They don't care. They're liars. Liars, liars, liars. Well, if
they don't care, then maybe they wouldn't mind if he says-

"Lance." Keith's voice interrupts his train of thought, and he jumps slightly. "You have to show us."

That takes that option out. Fine. Looks like he has to. Lance reluctantly pulls up his sleeve again,
hoping that they don't see the blood. God... it's like his life is on repeat. How does he keep ending up
in this situation?

There's a hissing noise from someone as they notice the red and raw looking slices that cover his
wrist.

Hunk studies Lance's arm thoroughly and notices many lighter and faded scars. "Jesus, you did all of
this while we were here?"

Lance can't help but notice the sad tone in Hunk's voice and chuckles weakly. "No, buddy. I did...
this... a couple of years before now too. I'd..." He smiles sadly. "I'd been clean for two years. Two
years, and I went and fucked it up." The laugh that comes from the boy's throat sounds strained. "I
guess it really is true when they say that old habits die hard."

And then he did what he does best: he ran. He ran and ignored their calls, praying that he'd passed
off his crying as laughing, but knowing that he hadn't.

He ended up in Blue's hangar where he knew he could get the time he needed to process all of this.
He silently thanked Blue when she put her shield up around them and decided not to let anyone else
in. Lance could hear them trying to talk to him, but he sat hoping that, eventually, they'd all just leave
him alone.

After a while, only silence remained, and Lance felt himself relax. However, when he looked out of
Blue's eyes, he saw Keith sitting with his back against the forcefield.

"Keith?" Lance called.

When Keith heard this, he jumped up quickly and whirled around with wide eyes.
"Uhh... what's up, dude?" Lance started. He was about to say more, ask him to leave, but Keith stopped him when he blurted out:

"Lance, can I please talk to you?"

There was something so raw and genuine in Keith's voice, that Lance couldn't seem to bring himself to say no.

With a single thought, Lance signaled to Blue that it was okay for Keith to enter, and the shield came down...

But Lance had never expected this.

Chapter End Notes

I tried, okay? Haha.

Also, I'm considering adding a bit of Klance. Nothing major, just some side stuff. Tell me what you think about that, I guess please.

Hope you enjoyed!
Odd How Many People Can Relate

Chapter Summary

Lance and Keith talk, and they find out that they're not as alone they thought.

Chapter Notes

Little bit of Klance and shit. Not anything too big, I swear. I'm not going to do tacky shit where they fall in love and Lance's depression just disappears. Like... that's not realistic in any way.

Anyways, triggers and shit.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Lance had agreed to talk to Keith, he'd been expecting a lecture... not this.

Keith walked up into Blue's cockpit where Lance was still sitting with tears on his cheeks. Keith awkwardly stood in front of Lance and stared.

Lance didn't know what to do except to awkwardly stare back. He kept looking at random places in the cockpit to try and avoid eye contact, but, eventually, his always flicked back to Keith.

After a few moments of this, Lance decided to speak up.

He looked at Keith's nervous face and started to speak. "Look, Keith, I don't-"

Keith, however didn't let him finish. "You know you're not the only one."

Now, Lance's attention was peaked. There was something in Keith's eyes that made him nervous, yet... intrigued.

"What?"
Keith flushed a bit and looked away. "I... I said, you're not the only one." He paused. "You... you're not the only one who's... you know."

Was he saying what Lance thinks he's saying? "What do you mean?"

"I mean... I've done it too." Keith brings up his arm and waves it. "You're not alone."

Now this... this is a shocker. He's... no... really?

Lance's eyes widen a bit. He can barely speak, but he manages to stammer out. "Can... can you show me?"

Keith takes a step closer and pulls up his sleeve awkwardly. There, scattered along his wrist, are a multitude of faded scars. They stand out against his otherwise smooth skin. Just the thought of Keith doing this makes Lance cringe inwardly. He always seemed so strong.

Keith watches Lance scan his arm with a neutral expression, but can tell that he's shocked. Everyone always is.

"When did you do it last?" Lance asked bluntly. He figured there was no point in being subtle anymore.

Keith shrugged casually before speaking. "It was years ago. I've been through with it for a while."

"Why'd you do it?"

Keith froze for a moment at this question. He probably should have seen it coming, but it was still difficult. He'd never been the most open person in the world. "Sometimes things just got to be too much," he started quietly. "With my mom being in God knows where, and my dad just falling apart while she was gone and eventually just leaving... I don't know. It just got to me."

Lance nodded while he was listening. It was obvious that he was truly interested. "Man. That's
Lance sighed. It figured that this was where this conversation was leading, but he still hated it. "Fine."

Keith sighed in relief and relaxed his shoulders. "So, you probably just did it again, huh?"

"Yeah... whoops." An awkward laugh came from the boy's mouth.

"Why?"

Oh, God. Oh, God. "How much do you want to hear?"

Keith sat down on the floor in front of Lance, who was still seated in the pilot's chair. "All of it."

Lance sighed and readied himself, gathering his story in his head.

While Lance was speaking, Keith nodded and kept his eyebrows raised in interest. Lance had never thought that Keith would be the one that he spilled everything to. He'd honestly hoped that he wouldn't have to spill it to anyone. He didn't deserve to. Yet here he was. And he was spilling it. All of it.

Lance finished with a tasteful "so... yeah. That's that." Real sharp, sharpshooter.

Keith had his head propped on his hand. He was still looking intently at Lance with a surprisingly open expression. He looked a bit worried, but he had tried to keep his expression neutral. He knew how hard it was to open up. He almost never did. Not to anyone. He'd barely talked to Shiro, even. He'd told him some things, but he couldn't bring himself to say anything of the things he really wanted to.
After a moment of silence, Keith closed his eyes and hummed. "Wow. So, depression? That's tough."

Lance looked away. "It's not that bad." A blatant lie. Don't worry him.

"Don't do that," Keith said shortly.

"Don't do what?" Lance looked taken aback.

"Don't give me that bullshit," Keith deadpanned. "I know that it's bad. You wouldn't do this to yourself otherwise."

Lance frowned and stared down at his feet. "I... it's-" God, what is he supposed to say to that?

"Look at me, Lance," Keith said with a surprising amount of sincerity. "You're not alone. We're here for you. You need to know that. No matter what your head is telling you, we'll always be here."

Lies. Lies lies lies. Lies lies lies lies.

Why would he say that if he were lying?

He just wants to hurt them. He's a liar.

But his face and his voice. They're so-

Fake. It's fake. Don't be fooled.

No. No. No no no. He means it. He said that he did. He means it.

Don't be-
"Thank you, Keith." Lance said softly. He pulled Keith into a hug, and, after a moment of apprehension, Keith returned the hug gently.

"Of course, Lance."

Don't be fooled.

Chapter End Notes

What do you think, guys? I hope that it was okay!

There'll be more Klance in the future probably. This was just an introduction, I guess.

Anyways, byeeee
Does This Make It Better Or Worse?

Chapter Summary

Lance thinks about his feelings towards himself and his teammates.

Chapter Notes

Oof. I'm feeling inspired.

Klance stuff this time. And just general bonding between them, I guess.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

They don't care about you.

They're liars.

They hate you.

They only pity you.

Lance was trying so hard to believe what he kept telling himself, but it was really hard when everyone kept on proving him wrong.

They spent time with him. They supported him. They praised him when he hit his targets. They never left him alone.

They just don't trust you.

They think you'll off yourself, so they keep lying to you.

It makes them feel better about themselves.
"Hey, Lance!" Pidge ran up to him and grabbed his arm. "Come watch a movie with us!"

"Lance! Can you help me make dinner?" Hunk handed him a spoon to stir a pot full of some spaghetti looking substance before Lance could even respond.

"Oh, Lance," Allura said, not looking up from her work. "Would you like to help me track Zarkon?"

"What's up, Lance?" Shiro asked. It was the middle of the night, and Lance couldn't sleep. "Hmm... can't sleep? Watching the stars always helps me."

"Would you like to train with me, Lance?" Keith definitely carved the most time out of his day to be with Lance. "I bet I could beat you." But it didn't feel strained like it was with the others. Keith didn't treat him any different from how he used to. Lance liked that.

Coran had even managed to find some type of Altean medicine that mimics the affects of Lance's old medication, and that slowly, but surely, helped to improve his mindset.

So, despite what his mind was telling him, it appeared that his team cared about him deeply. Just like Keith had said.

He'd started to see more that maybe, just maybe, they could care about him. Maybe they liked him. Maybe they actually wanted him around.

But maybe is still uncertain.

Maybe is still only maybe.

"Oh my god, Lance! Why do you have to be so weird?" Keith said, but he was laughing.

Everyone else in the room flinched and looked nervously to Lance. How would he react to that? Isn't he fragile? Won't he break?
But Lance is laughing too. "I don't know, Keith. I was born this way." He shot Keith a pair of finger guns with a wink. It was okay.

The two had been getting along better than before. There was still teasing, of course, but it was more lighthearted and always made obvious that it was simply a joke. They spent more time together and worked better together. It was great for everyone.

Lance had never really liked Keith. He always seemed like a hot headed smartass who only wanted to fight the world. Oddly enough, Keith was not like that. Sure, he was a bit short tempered and stubborn, but he genuinely cared about others even though he was too awkward to show it half of the time. Maybe, just maybe, Lance... liked him? He always found himself smiling around Keith even when nothing funny had been said. Lance was confused. He didn't understand why he reacted like this towards Keith.

Whenever his mind would get too busy like this, Lance would stare out into space, trying to decipher his whirling thoughts. Space was a blank canvas on which to project your thoughts. The stars flying past the ship morphing into familiar people and objects. Ever moving and changing. Twisting. Turning. Burning. It hurt. Thinking about it hurt. It hurt so bad that it almost hurt worse than-

"What's up, Lance?" Keith approached timidly and sat on the floor next to Lance.

Lance kept staring out into the void. "Just thinking."

Keith now looked out the window as well, hoping to find whatever Lance was looking for. "Yeah? What about?"

At this, Lance laughed and closed his eyes. "That's what I'm trying to figure out."

Keith hummed a bit and then spoke. "I get that. Everything's a bit confusing right now." There was a pause before he spoke again. "How have you been feeling?"

There was always this question. It was awkward. It felt like pity. However, Lance understands that it's an important question. It just shows that Keith cares. Right?

He shrugged before speaking. "Better, I guess. Still not great."
"Makes sense. It's not just gonna go away. Have you done it again?"

Lance flushed a bit and turned his head away. "A few times," he mumbled.

"Lance, it's okay," Keith said quickly. "I'm not mad or disappointed or whatever. I get it. I really do."

Lance looked at Keith with uncertainty. "Really?"

Keith nodded. "Really." He sighed a breath of relief before speaking again. "We'll get through this, I swear."

Lance smiled and looked back out the window. "Thanks, Keith."

"Of course, Lance. It's no big deal."

Keith was wrong about that, obviously. It's a huge deal. Keith had done so much for Lance, and most of it wasn't even on purpose. Just the fact that he didn't treat him any differently from how he used to helped tremendously. He spent time with Lance, but it didn't feel unnatural or forced like it sometimes did with the others. Of course, Lance still appreciated what the others were doing, it was just a bit uncomfortable sometimes.

It was odd how Lance's heart would beat just a little bit faster when he was around Keith. It was odd how he'd laugh more and make more jokes even though he didn't do it on purpose. Everything else seemed to melt away when he was with Keith. His doubts and insecurities still prickled at the edge of his consciousness, but Lance could manage to ignore them.

Lance liked Keith. He really did. And as more than just a supportive friend. So much more. He never wanted to leave Keith. He wanted to protect him and make him laugh forever.

His mind would ask him who he thought he was. What kind of person is he to believe that anyone as good as Keith could like someone as terrible as him? He had nothing to offer. Nothing to give in return.
It hurt him to think about... but it made him feel so good at the same time. It was so confusing. So very confusing to him. Every thought rattled around in his head, and it was torture. But it was also bliss.

God, what the fuck was he supposed to do?

How can he do this?

How?

He's trying. He is trying.

He has something to try for now.

But he doesn't know what to do.

He's lost. Completely lost.

He tells Keith this. That he feels lost and scared and confused. That he wants help. That he wants to feel better. But he doesn't know how to.

"Don't worry," Keith responds, slowly and carefully placing a hand on Lance's shoulder. "I'll help you find your way if you help me find mine."

Lance smiles slightly, and leans into Keith's touch. "Okay."

Space is a blank canvas on which to project your thoughts. The stars, now, are Lance and Keith. The stars, now, don't change.

Chapter End Notes
YES

You're welcome, I guess or nah. Whichever.

Okay, yeet bye
Just In Case

Chapter Summary

Lance struggles some more and decides to create a fail safe. Just in case.

Chapter Notes

You already know, my dudes.

It'll be okay. I promise.

(I might be lying. Idk)

Anyways, it's been a shitty week, so I've gotta get this done.

Ya know... just in case something happens. :P

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sometimes, it was hard for Lance to focus.

His brain liked to fuck things up for him all the time. It loved to convince him that he couldn't do anything. That he was unable to be loved. That the one thing that he thought was good in his life was completely unattainable.

Keith couldn't love him. It just wasn't possible. Lance knew this.

But he still hoped.

And his brain let him do that because it knew that that little bit of hope hurt even more than having no hope at all.

It knew all of the ways to hurt him the worst. Every. Single. One. That was what it was best at. And it utilized those things at every opportunity that it could. Lance seemed to give it more opportunities than he meant to, though. That was what he was best at. The two made a great team that worked together to ruin Lance's life in every way possible.
Lance was sitting in his room alone. He'd finally managed to convince the team that they didn't always have to be with him. It was okay for them to leave him alone. In fact, it was better that way. This way, he didn't annoy anyone. He isn't tell them that. But the silence turned into whispers. Telling him the things that he didn't want to hear. He didn't want to know that he was stupid. He didn't want to know that he did nothing for the team. He didn't want to know that Keith would never want to be with someone like him. He didn't want to know. He didn't want to know. He didn't want to know. He didn't-

There was a knock on the door, and a voice sounded out.

"Hey, Lance. Can I come in?" It was Keith. It was always Keith. He was always the one to break Lance out of his spiral. How did he always seem to come at just the right time?

"Sure, Keith." Lance's voice came out a bit quieter than he meant for it to. It sounded fragile, and, even though it might be true, he didn't want Keith to think of him like that.

The door slid open, and a tired looking Keith came into view. He had bags under his eyes, and his eyes were red like he'd been crying. He kept his eyes averted and stood awkwardly in the doorway. He opened his mouth a few times as if to say something, but no sound came out.

Lance patted the space next to him on the bed and smiled warmly. "Come here, Keith. What's up?"

Keith's shoulders relaxed a bit, and he gingerly sat down on the covers. He sighed before speaking. "I'm- I- I just feel overwhelmed, I guess."

"Care to elaborate?" Came Lance's reply.

Keith was silent for a moment. "Okay," he said quietly. "Well, I... I haven't been sleeping well because of everything that's been going on with the Galra which has only made things worse. I can't stop thinking about how they've enslaved almost the entire universe and about what they did to Shiro. I want to stop them, Lance. I want to fight them... but... I don't think I'm strong enough." His voice trailed off towards the end of his rant.

Lance saw the fear in Keith's eyes that he had desperately been trying to hide. Lance had been so worried about himself... so selfish... that he hadn't even so much as asked Keith how he was doing. God, what a great friend. As if he could even call himself Keith's friend. No one would tolerate him enough to call him their friend. No one.
"-ance?" Part of a voice rang in Lance's ears.

Lance came back into reality to see a very concerned looking Keith in front of him. He shook his head vigorously. God, this was stopped to be about Keith. Not Lance. Definitely not Lance.

"Are you okay?" Keith had sat back down, but still looked tense.

Lance shook his head quickly. "Yeah! Yeah. I'm good. This is about you, not me. You were saying?"

"Uh... okay?" Keith sounded uncertain but, to Lance's relief, didn't press the matter further. "I was just saying that..." His voice trailed off as more thoughts filled Lance's head.

Lance was trying to pay attention. He really, really was. But his mind kept running through what has just happened. Lance was so selfish, wasn't he? And so self-centered. Not to mention annoying, loud, stupid. The list goes on. He couldn't do anything right today, it seemed. Nothing at all. Even in this very moment, he's fucking everything up.

Keith's mouth is still moving, but Lance can't make out what's being said. He hears murmurs of Hunk and Pidge a couple of times but hears Shiro's name frequently. He can hear "Zarkon" and "Galra" even more often. But, for the life of him, Lance can't hear what Keith is saying. All he can hear are incoherent mumbles and whispers that tell him how terrible he really is. Can he really only focus on himself? God, he's terrible. The whispers are right.

After a while, Keith stops talking. Lance was about to try and think of something, anything, to say that might sooth Keith's nerves, but he was saved by a warning that the Galra were attacking. While this wasn't necessarily a good thing, it was better than trying to give out half-assed advice to someone that you weren't listening to for the past... how long had it been?

"Lance! Let's go!" Keith shouted.


There were so many fighters. It was like standing in the middle of a swarm of bees: if you swat at
one, then all of them attack. No matter how many fighters Lance shot down, there always seemed to be more.

In a way, that's what it was like trying to fight against his brain. It was tiring and seemed pointless, but Lance kept on anyways. He had to.

The battle lasted for God knows how long. It felt like years, but surely it couldn't have been more than a few hours. The rest of the team did wonderfully, obviously. They always did. Pidge had even found a way to destroy the Galra cruiser which is what won them the battle. Lance, on the other hand... well, he did poorly. He couldn't focus the whole time, and the others had easily destroyed double the amount of ships that Lance had.

"Great job, Lance! You were awesome!" They were lying. They always were.

God, everything was just crashing down around him, like it had done before countless times, and Lance was sick and tired of it.

He couldn't stop it permanently. That was out of the question now. Or... was it?

This was bad. This was really bad. He doesn't want to think these thoughts again. He can not die. He can't. Won't... for now. Maybe later.

He might as well prepare, though. Just in case.

Lance made his way back to his room under the excuse that he was going to take a nap. He closed the door behind him, making sure to lock it so he'd have privacy.

Lance pulled out a small notebook and pen that he had kept under the bed. He had bought them when he and the team went to the space mall a little while ago. The notebook was small and looked incredibly old with yellowed and frayed pages, but it suited Lance's needs. He'd been saving it for something special, so it was still blank. This was it, though. This was the "something special". He opened the notebook to the first page and started to write.

Dear whoever's reading this,
I guess if you're reading this, then I'm probably dead. Hopefully I died in some noble way during a battle, but hey! Who am I kidding? I probably just got tired of everything and finally offed myself. Let's hope that it was the first one. Either way, I want you to know that it's better this way. Don't worry about me, okay? I've wanted this for a while now. Voltron will be able to find a more suitable pilot that's actually worthy of bearing the name Blue Paladin. The universe will be altogether safer with someone more useful than me as a part of Voltron. So, don't worry. In fact, you should celebrate! You're finally rid of me! Hooray!

Onto the more personal stuff now. If you're just a random person who somehow found this, then please deliver this to my friends who are a part of Voltron. Well, unless they're dead too. Their names are Keith, Hunk, Pidge, Shiro, Allura, and Coran.

Anyways, first I'll talk to you, Coran. You were the greatest space uncle that anyone could have ever asked for. I definitely didn't deserve you. Your stories about Altea never failed to make me laugh. You always seemed to know when someone needed support and love, and you were always happy to supply that. So, thank you. I'll miss you.

Allura, first I'd like to apologize for my constant flirting. I swear it was only genuine for the first few sentences after I met you. I realized quickly that you were wayyyyyyyyyyyyyy out of my league. Now that that's said, I'd like to say that you are fair and organized and kind. I know that you've lost so much in your life, but you're still so strong. I've always looked up to you for that. Keep staying strong, Princess. See you in the afterlife.

Shiro, I may not have gotten to know you all that well, but from what I've seen, you're even better than the hero I imagined you to be before you left for Kerberos. You're a great leader to the team, and I trust that you'll take care of them when I'm gone. Make sure that Pidge sleeps, Hunk doesn't have anxiety attacks, Allura and Coran are okay, and please, please, check on Keith. I'm worried about him. Keep doing what you're doing, leader. Good luck.

Pidge, you're a fucking monster. I love ya, I really do, but you freak me the fuck out. You're definitely the smartest person I've ever met, but you're also one of the most passionate. Seriously, when you set your mind to something, that shit's gonna happen. No doubt about that. Please sleep, though. It'll keep your mind sharp, I swear! I may be stupid, but I do know that much. Watch over Hunk for me. You know he's going to need the support. I'm so glad that I met you at the Garrison and that we got to have this space adventure together like we dreamed. I guess it didn't go exactly as planned, though. See ya around, Pigeon.

Hunk, I hope that you know that you were my best friend. You were always there for me to listen and understand. I hope that I could do the same for you even if only temporarily. You really are the sweetest person that I have ever met, and I've met a lot of people, ya know, being a Paladin does have its perks, so that's saying something. I always looked forward to seeing what Earth-like food you could make from random ingredients you found on planets and in the castle. My favorite time
was when you tried to make ice cream, but it blew up for some reason. Half of the damn kitchen was charred! I'm glad that you ended up being okay. Stay that way for me, okay? Don't change a thing. And don't you worry, buddy. The rest of the team has your back just like you have theirs. Love ya, dude. Bye.

Keith, you're definitely the hardest to write for. I guess I should start with saying that I never really hated you. I suppose I was just jealous. You can do so much, Keith. You're so talented and, even though you're bad at showing it, caring. You've done so much for me, Keith. You supported me in the best way possible: by just being there. It was nice to have someone to relate to. This part's probably the hardest to say, but, Keith, I like you. A lot. I guess you could say that I like like you. Everything about you is just wonderful, Keith. I always wanted to be a part of that, but I knew that I never could. To be with you would be to blemish something good, and I can not do that. I know that you're too good for me, and that's okay. I accept it. Despite that, I still find myself wanting to be with you and make you smile like you did for me. But I can't. And now I'm gone, so it doesn't matter. You're so strong and fierce, Keith. Keep up the good work.

I love you all and miss you already, but don't forget that you shouldn't miss me. You're better off.

Much love,

Lance

Chapter End Notes

I'm dead. Yeet

Feedback? Crazy good writing? Crazy bad writing (more likely)? Wanna talk about some shit? Just wanna fuckin comment for no reason?

Great! I'm all ears, my dude. I'm bored and got no life anyways.
Lance made sure to hide his notebook carefully.

He tried hiding it in many spaces before anxiously deciding to change the hiding spot after running over the possibilities of someone finding it in his mind. Lance eventually decided on stuffing the notebook under the mattress and hoping that no one looked there. They shouldn't because no normal person just randomly looks under people's mattresses, but they don't trust him. And why would they?

He's not trustworthy.

After checking and double checking that the book is not visible, Lance gives a sigh and travels through the castle halls until he hears speaking and decides to stop. He's always been a bit nosy, and can't help wondering what is being talked about.

"-are we supposed to do with him?" Lance hears Allura's voice. It's laced with exhaustion, and he can practically hear the anxiety in her voice.

"I... I don't know," Shiro says in response.

"I'm so worried about him." Now Hunk is speaking. Are they all in there? "He's been struggling for so long, and we didn't even know."
"I don't want anything to happen to him," Pidge says quietly. "How does he not see how important he is?"

"Look, you guys need to understand that despite his poor mindset, he still has self-control. He's completely able to control whether or not he... decides to... kill himself or not." Keith's voice is steady, but cracks a bit towards the end.

Lance knows that Keith at least partially understands what Lance is going through, but he prays to God that Keith doesn't understand all of it. He would never want anyone to truly and completely empathize with him. No matter what. No matter how good it might feel.

"But... Keith, what if he-" Allura starts to talk, but Keith cuts her off. He seems prone to doing that. Especially if he doesn't agree with what is being said.

"He won't." The response is short and sounds slightly strained. "He won't."

Shuffling can be heard, and then Shiro's quiet voice can be heard. "How can you know that?"

Then there's silence. Nothing is said for a long time, and Lance doesn't want to stick around to find out what will be said. He's- he- why are they- what? They were talking about him, obviously, but why? It's... embarrassing. It really is. They shouldn't have to worry about him. They have their own problems. Hell, they're in a fucking war. They can't worry about him. They can't afford to. They can't.

Pretending. He's practiced with it for years. He needs to put his practice to use now. He has to. He can't worry them. They don't deserve that. They don't. It was always too easy too pretend. Much too easy. Lance wondered whether he was simply that good at pretending... or if people really just didn't care. The latter seemed much more likely.

Lance went to his usual place in the castle, staring out the castle window. He was alone. Utterly alone. What is this? How can he live like this? How? How? How? The stars move slowly past, and Lance tries to focus on that. Maybe if he can focus on the stars, then he can forget all of the things that are in his head. Maybe.

This place is where Lance is allowed to relax. He doesn't have to make himself smile. He doesn't have to hide his tears. He can simply... relax. But never without being careful. He has to make sure that when he puts on Pidge's headphones with the music turned all the way up (he's honestly
shocked that he can still access his playlist out here, but Pidge is a genius, so... he isn't that surprised),
that he faces the door way to make sure that no one will walk in on his sadness. They can't see. He's
trying to make sure of that. If he can pretend, then they can just forget him like they used to. It
seemed easier that way. For everyone.

Keith refused to give up, though. Keith kept on asking him how he was. Kept on acting like nothing
had changed between them when something obviously had. Why would he do that? There really
wasn't a point. Lance just couldn't see the reasoning behind it all. Maybe Keith was just being cruel
to Lance on purpose. That seemed likely. Why else would he do it?

Lance frowned slightly as song after song played over the headphones. All of his songs were
incredibly sad. It makes sense, he supposes, but it's still a bit... pathetic. Is this the only way he can
express the way he's feeling? And not even to anyone but himself. Just this once, Lance decided to
turn away from the door and look out the window while he is deaf to the rest of the world. He let all
of his feelings show on his face. There was anger, confusion, loneliness, and, of course, sadness. It
wasn't something that anyone was allowed to see. He could only hope that no one would walk in on
this: him watching the stars with matching spots in his eyes. It was okay, as long as no one walked in
on him.

But, of course, life just had to send another "fuck you" in Lance's direction. Make sure that he knows
that life won't go right for him. Ever.

Lance felt a tap on his shoulder and whipped his head around to see a concerned looking Shiro
whose mouth was moving. Lance did his best to set his face right in just a moment before pausing his
music.

"What?" He said slightly louder than he meant to. Sometimes he forgot how loud he played his
music.

Shiro blinked a few times before repeating what he said. "I said: it's time for dinner." Dinner? How
long had Lance been here? "Are you alright, though? You had... a look... on your face."

A smile. A smile is always a good choice. "Yeah, yeah! I'm great! Just listening to some music."

Shiro's face brightened instantly, but there was an underlying knowledge to it. He knew that that
wasn't all that Lance was doing. "Oh, cool. What were you listening to?"
Ah, of course. An important question indeed. He lifted up the mp3 like device to show Shiro what was on the screen. It was one of his favorite songs right now. He related to it a bit more than he would like to admit.

"Afraid by The Neighborhood?" Shiro read aloud quietly. "I've never heard of that song. I'll have to listen to it!" His voice had a sort of forced cheerfulness to it. Lance didn't want Shiro to think that he had to do that.

Lance shrugged a bit, but his heart was beating fast. "It's not that good, you know? It's just okay." That was a lie, but Lance wasn't sure as to how Shiro would react to the song and was terrified about it.

Shiro seemed to deflate a bit. "Ah," he said shortly. "I see... well, anyways... dinner is ready. Come whenever you feel like it." Shiro's retreating footsteps could be heard, and Lance continued to listen them fade until they were so soft that he couldn't hear them anymore.

When Lance was sure that Shiro was gone, he sighed slightly and closed his eyes, leaning back against the window sill again. What will Shiro say if he actually listens to the song? It doesn't matter, he guesses, but it'll still stay in the back of his head for a while. After sitting peacefully for a moment in silence, Lance decides to get up and go eat dinner with the rest of the team. He figured that nothing else could go wrong, but, again, he was wrong.

"this facial expression on his face... I don't know what he was thinking about, but he seemed so... sad." Shiro. Shiro was talking to the team about him. And for the second time in one day, Lance was caught outside the door of a conversation about himself that he really didn't want to hear.

"What was he doing?" Pidge asked worriedly.

"He said that he was just listening to music."

"Did you see what he was listening to?" Hunk now chimed into the tense conversation.

There was a silence, and Lance assumed that Shiro was nodding. "Yeah. He was listening to some song called Afraid by The Neighborhood, I think. I've never heard of it before. Have any of you?"

There was a chorus of "no"s, and then silence again.
Allura's voice could now be heard. She was always the person to take action. She never could stand to be stuck in situations that had obvious solutions. "We could listen to it, if we truly wanted to. With Pidge's technology, it shouldn't be all that difficult to access."

"Doesn't this seem like an invasion of privacy?" Keith's perpetually frustrated sounding voice asked.

A pause. "No, I don't think so," Shiro said. "He showed me what he was listening to, so he probably wouldn't mind if we listened. Right?" He sounded a bit unsure, and if Lance were brave enough to admit that he was eavesdropping, he would have readily said "no."

But Lance was not brave, and so the song played quietly over hidden speakers. God, this was embarrassing. It was so embarrassing. It felt like a deep, inexplicable part of Lance's soul was being examined under a microscope by a crowd of anxious scientists. They were eager to scrutinize every part of it that they could, and they did without shame, not knowing that what they were doing was wrong.

After the song ended, silence rang throughout the dining room. Lance was holding his breath outside the door still, waiting to hear their reactions.

"Wow." That was the first thing said. It was quietly followed by many agreements from everyone else.

"That's pretty damn sad," Keith mumbled under his breath. "Even for Lance." It was so quiet that Lance shouldn't have been able to hear, but he did. His brain always made sure that he tuned into those messages that would make him feel uncomfortable.

"Keith, are you sure he won't-"

"No. He won't." A pause. "I know it."

"But how do you know?" Another silence.

"See, Keith. You don't know. You don't."
It's horrible that even Lance agrees with the others. Keith doesn't know what Lance will do. There's nothing about him that anyone can be sure of. Even Lance knows this. Why does Keith refuse to see it?

"Oh, God," Hunk starts with fear in his voice. "What if he's already planning something?"

Lance isn't. Yet. He has his note, but he doesn't have a concrete plan. Unless things go terribly wrong (which they tend to do), Lance is much too scared to actually create a plan and follow through.

"Lance probably isn't in his room yet. Considering he hasn't eaten dinner," Shiro says calmly. Shiro seems to think that his calm facade fools everyone, but it doesn't. Not even close. Lance wonders if it's the same way with him. Maybe he's not as convincing as he thought. Maybe he needs to try harder.

"Let's check his room," Pidge suddenly suggests, seeing where Shiro was going with his dialogue. Wait... check his room? Really? God, the universe is really trying to deliver a message today: rest in peace, Lance. You may as well kill yourself now.

"It might be safe to do so," Allura says without hesitation. "He might have some means of injuring himself in his room that we do not yet know about, and we don't want for him to..."

The ending is implied. It always is, but no one really wants to say it. It's been something that Lance has almost grown used to. He thinks terrible thoughts so often that he sometimes forgets that others don't. Others can be happy. Others don't need to search hard for a reason to live. For a reason not to just give up forever.

Lance doesn't want for them to look in his room. It's his room. Well, technically, it's not actually his room, but... no one else should even be aloud to go into it anyways. If the others look, then they might find the notebook. He doesn't want for them to find the notebook. He really, really doesn't. They would worry about him... well... unless they wouldn't. Maybe they just wouldn't care. With how they're acting, though... they would at least confront him about it, and he would have to talk about it. He doesn't feel like talking. He never does, but especially not now.

Walk away. That's what he's going to do first. They can't know that Lance was listening to them, so he'll just walk away.
Lance takes light and careful steps as he returns to his "safe space" in the castle. It certainly doesn't seem very safe anymore. He checks over his shoulder every so often to make sure that no one sees him leaving the scene and asks where he was. After getting about halfway there and not hearing anything, Lance slows down and takes less care in quieting his footsteps. He tries to stay calm as he continues making his way to his destination, but too many thoughts run through his head. Too many to focus on anything. He always seems to do this: lose himself in his thoughts at the most inopportune moments, and, in space, almost every moment is inopportune. Who knows what the fuck he's doing anymore. Lance has no fucking clue. He never has, and he probably never will.

The soft blue that emanates from the lights in the back halls of the castle gives the halls an eerie and sterile feel. Everything looks untouched and undisturbed with a thin layer of dust covering the light fixtures on the walls. Lance knows that people used to live here, even if it's hard to believe now. Altea was full of people, and, surely, a good many of them lived in this very castle to help the king and queen effectively run the kingdom. Maybe they traveled down this now abandoned hallway every single day. Maybe they thought the same thing as Lance about the blue lights. Maybe they were scared too. But, hey. Who knows? They might have just lived a normal happy life like people are supposed to. Well... until their planet was destroyed, and they were killed of course. They probably weren't as happy about that. Or maybe they were. Once again, who knows?

Lance finally reaches his "safe place" again, and decides to simply put on his headphones and act like he never heard anything at all. They probably wouldn't even find anything. He got rid of his blades a few days ago, and he doesn't have any other means of doing... that. The only incriminating evidence left would be the note.

It would probably be fine.

No normal person looks under someone's mattress.

Chapter End Notes

Please tell me what you think of it. I don't know what the fuck I'm doing anymore.

Welp, I hope you enjoyed it anyways :D
The Only Option

Chapter Summary

Things go terribly wrong.

Chapter Notes

Things get pretty intense this chapter. Especially towards the end. Read with caution, friends. I've updated the tags (even though I literally only added one). If you look at it, it might give a spoiler, though, so just do whatever you want, my dude.

Also, can someone please explain how my fic got almost 200 views and like 50 kudos in maybe a day??? What the fuck???? You guys are too fucking nice to me, I swear to god.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Things always go wrong. They must. It's the way that the universe functions and keeps itself alive.


It doesn't matter. At all.

Lance was still sitting on the window sill in a back hallway in the castle with Pidge's headphones on. He was trying not to think too much about the situation that he was in, but it simply wasn't working. When your whole reality comes to be at risk again and again and again, you'd think that you'd eventually get used to it. But you never do. Not ever. It's always terrifying. You never know what's going to change this time. What will people think of you now? No one knows. Sometimes you don't even know after the fact. It remains a mystery.

People tend to keep their true opinions about you to themselves. They'd never admit that they hate you. They'd never admit that you're completely worthless and useless. That when they found out about your... unhealthy habits... they secretly agreed with your philosophy that you deserved it all. They won't tell you that because that's not a socially acceptable thing to say. At least not out loud. It makes them feel better about themselves if they can get a smile to appear on your face even if the smile is obviously fake. They love to live in ignorance. The less they know about you and your feelings, the better. They don't care. And, like you, they pretend. Every. Single. Day.
There's a lot of things that don't make sense, Lance decides, but there's nothing that can be done to fix that.

Lance attempts to turn up his music even louder before seeing that it's already as loud as it will go. The louder it is, the more likely it is to drown out his thoughts, but they eventually adapt and return. He closes his eyes and leans back. He's sure of one thing, and one thing only: that the situation that he's in currently is not the greatest. He heard what the others were saying about him, and he can tell that they're pouring everything they have into their caring facade. For some reason, it was decided that the best thing to do at the moment would be to check Lance's room. His notebook was hidden under the mattress, but they probably wouldn't look under there. God, he hopes that they won't. If they do, then things will definitely change again.

Nothing stays the same, and that's obvious, but Lance doesn't even have time to adapt anymore before things are changing once again.

It's okay, though. It really is.

God, why does he keep repeating that lie? It's obviously not okay. Not even close. Maybe he thinks that he'll eventually believe that it's true. Maybe it's that he knows that a lack of sadness is the closest he will get to happiness ever again. He has to think that that's fine. Maybe it's that he knows that he'll never again feel like he's truly worth anything because, truth be told, he isn't. He needs to think that's fine too. Maybe he thinks that the more he lies, the more he repeats it... the more he'll actually believe that it's true.

Maybe that's it. Or maybe not. There's no way to tell.

Lance sighs, or at least he thinks that he does. It's hard to tell when he can't hear anything but his thoughts and the distant sound of his music. He keeps on getting caught up in his thoughts. In the things that he only thinks to himself. Things that he knows no one else will want to hear. That's okay too. Just pretend. Pretend enough and maybe his real self will finally get lost too.

The air around Lance seems to get colder and colder, the deeper he gets into his thoughts. He really should stop. Bad things happen when he gets too deep into the truth.

Lance notices when he opens his eyes, that the stars that pass are many different colors. Some are white like they're always stereotyped to be. But many are more than that. Some are red and fiery like Keith. Some are yellow and energetic looking like Hunk. Some are pale green and small like Pidge. Some are orange and gleeful like Coran. Some are pinkish and stable looking like Allura. Some are light purple and have more shaky outlines like Shiro. And some are blue and sad like Lance. There's
so many different stars. Not one is the same as the other. He wonders how many aliens there are staring up at the same stars as him. He wonders if they see people in the stars too: one's that they know and care for dearly. But maybe that's just Lance. He might be the only one.

Lance feels a hard tap on his shoulder and looks up to see an angry looking Keith holding... oh no.

Lance pulls his headphones off quickly and leaps up from his comfortable spot on the window sill. He opens his mouth to try and say something, but he's cut off by Keith's angry and shaky voice.

"Lance, what the fuck is this?" He flips to the first page of the notebook and shoves it into Lance's face. "Why did you write this? Why?"

Lance remains silent. How is he supposed to explain this?

Keith's eyes lose a bit of their rage, and he looks down. "I thought that you wouldn't- I thought that you'd tell me if you..."

Lance turns his face away from Keith and shuffles his feet a bit. "I wasn't actually going to-"

"Then why, Lance?" Keith shouts, anger back on his face. "Why?"

"I... I was just... I wanted to have it. Just in case," Lance manages to say quietly.

"Oh my god, Lance," Keith mutters. "Just in case of what?"

That's a good question, Lance realizes. What was he preparing for? It can't be what Keith is suggesting... or maybe it can. That really wouldn't be too surprising to Lance.

"Answer me, Lance," Keith pleads. "Please. Tell me what this is."

"It was just a precaution. For if I died somehow." This isn't a complete lie, but it's not the whole truth either. Not even close.
"Are you sure, Lance?" Keith says, his eyebrows creased in frustration. "Because this sure seems a lot like a suicide note to me."

"Keith, I swear, I wasn't planning on-"

"Bullshit!" Keith screams. "That's bullshit!" A tear drops from his eye, and his whole demeanor changes. He takes a few steps back and tries to hide his reddening face. "You're lying. I know you're lying to me."

Lance tries to advance towards him to take the notebook back, but Keith clutches it close to his chest with a slightly scared expression on his face. Keith's eyes dart over to the door. It's obvious what he's thinking. He's going to show the others.

"Keith! Please don't!" Lance begs. He stops moving forward and clasps his hands together in front of him. "Please, please don't. I swear to you, I wasn't going to do anything."

Keith's face changes to pure anger. "Liar! You're a fucking liar!" He makes a break for the door, and Lance doesn't even attempt to stop him. He knows that there's no point in trying. He'd never be able to.

Instead, he simply collapses to the ground into a small ball and presses his hands to his face. Tears drip down his face. His whole body is shaking as he thinks of all of the things that are sure to happen to him now.

Was Keith right? Was he lying? Probably... he probably was. Or maybe it was definite this time. Lance knows deep down why he really wrote that note, and Keith was right. He'd been debating over whether the solution to all of this was really death or not, and, after mulling it over for a while, it seemed pretty obvious that it was the only viable solution. It was true when Lance said that he wasn't going to do anything. Lance didn't have a plan yet, so he couldn't, but he was getting dangerously close to actually needing that note. It would be better that way, really. For everyone.

You had better hurry up and do it, Lance. His mind spoke rationally. The option will be gone soon, and you'll be left with no escape.

Yes. Yes, that's right. He'd better hurry. He has to hurry and get it done.
Lance stretches out his arm and his bayard appears in his hand. He feels it transform into his familiar weapon that he uses against his enemies in battle. He finds it a bit funny that the last person he'll use it on, in his greatest battle, is his greatest enemy of all.

He raises his arm slowly, ever so slowly, until he feels pressure on the side of his head. It was cool and comforting.

Keith was right. He did write the note just for this. He is a liar. A terrible, horrible, useless, pathetic liar.

Footsteps can be heard coming down the hall, coming closer with every second.


Lance's finger starts to move closer to his palm, and he squeezes his eyes shut in preparation for what's coming.

It's fine, though. And this time, he believes it. It really is okay.

"Oh my god! No, Lance, no! Stop! Please!"

A scream can be heard and Lance snaps his eyes open in fear and squeezes the trigger quickly.

But he doesn't do it quick enough.

He feels his arm be pulled away from his head as the gun goes off, and a solid mass barrels into his body. Suddenly, he's pinned to the ground by strong hands.

*Now you're stuck. You've failed. That's all that you are: a failure.*

Lance squeezes his eyes shut once more and lets a sob rip through his throat and pour out of his
And as reality is slowly processed in his mind, Lance is quite sure that he's never felt like this before.

Chapter End Notes

Oof. Can you tell that it’s been a bad week for me? Whoops :P

What did you think, guys?? I hope that it was okay, but, like, idk

Also, I'm considering writing a little one-shot of when Keith found Lance's note and the whole experience that followed, but I won't do that if no one wants to see it (actually, I might do it anyways, so... yeah). Idc, I'll do whatever

Thank you guys for all of the comments, btw. They make me so fucking happy, like, they no joke make my day.
Promise

Chapter Summary

The team tries to express their feelings, and Lance and Keith try to work out their relationship.

Chapter Notes

*Klance intensifies*

Oh, it's the good kush

BUT IT'S THE DOLLAR STORE SO HOW GOOD CAN IT BE

I'm sorry. I know that's a dead meme, but it's a big mood rn

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was disappointing that Lance couldn't do it.

He had tried. He really, really had.

But Shiro was just too damn fast, and they all took too much pity on him. He didn't want their fucking pity.

Lance couldn't understand why the hell they would stop him. He could see no reason whatsoever for them to choose to do that. He had gotten so, so close. So goddamn close. They would have finally been rid of him which, surely, would have been a relief, but they had stopped him.

Why? Why did they stop him? What reason was there for them to do this? Why?

As Lance sobbed on the ground underneath Shiro's strong hands, he asked them these questions, forgetting his subconscious promises to keep thoughts like this to himself.

"Why did you stop me?" He screamed desperately. "Why, why, why, why, why?"
Lance could hear soft crying and heavy breathing as he continued screeching at them. Had he really caused all of this mess? Had he made them panic and cry? Did he hurt them that badly? Or was this all an act again? Oh, god. This was a disaster. This whole thing was a fucking disaster. His whole life had been a fucking disaster, but this moment was definitely the worst so far. It was obvious that he'd never, ever forget this. No matter how much he might want to. Lance knew that he'd never get the opportunity to try anything like this ever again. He knew that the others would never let that happen. It was honestly terrifying and slightly nauseating to think about what he had almost just done, but he can't say that he regrets it. Not yet.

He'd been so close. So fucking close.

But, god, he couldn't even do this right.

Suddenly, Lance feels a pinch in his arm and is able to turn his head enough to see a stony faced Coran injecting a neon blue liquid into his vein. The liquid's effects take place almost immediately as Lance feels his arms and legs go numb and become paralyzed, and his eyelids become extraordinarily heavy.

Lance tries to shout in defiance and confusion, and maybe even anger, one last time before the world goes completely out of focus, but he's much too tired to even try. He might as well just... go to sleep. His body falls still, and his consciousness loses itself in the static.

But it's good to have silence. It's good to feel nothing.

Because empty is better than whatever that other shit is.

Eventually, Lance woke up in his bed, the brightness of his room hurting his eyes and causing him to let out a groan.

His head felt like someone had hit it with a mallet over and over and over again by an angry person in some sadistic way of letting out their emotions.
He heard shuffling off to the right, and, as his eyes adjusted, he saw six figures come into view: Hunk, Pidge, Shiro, Allura, Coran, and... Keith. Each one of them had a look of worry and... relief?

"Lance!" Hunk yelled out as he ran over to the bed and engulfed the boy into a gigantic hug.

And as Hunk's warm and comforting arms wrapped around Lance's thin, slightly fragile figure, he remembered how he had ended up in his bed with everyone waiting at his bedside for him to wake up. He's shocked that he could forget it for this long, but he sure realized it now, and this realization explained why he felt drops of wetness falling onto his back and heard Hunk's breathing become more and more irregular. There was a loud sniffling noise, and Hunk's shoulders started to shake. They only shook slightly, at first, but they slowly started to shake more violently as time went on. It was obvious that he was trying to keep his crying as subtle as possible, but it wasn't working, and Lance felt his face heat up as he squeezed his eyes shut so he wouldn't have to look at the others' faces and try to handle all of their emotions that are directed at him.

Eventually, Hunk let go of Lance and covered his red and wet face with his large hands. He got up from the floor and quietly excused himself from the room, walking out the door quickly.

When Pidge saw this, they gave Lance a caring look, and spoke quickly and quietly. "I'm glad that you're okay."

This obviously couldn't be further from the truth, but that could be settled later. It would be fine for now.

Pidge's eyes were shiny and red, but they still smiled as they turned to leave. Then, they walked out the door to find Hunk and, hopefully, comfort him. Maybe they would get a little bit of comfort for themselves too.

Lance watched as they left and felt the guilt overflow onto his face and down his cheeks, but he quickly wiped the traitorous emotions from his face.

Shiro walked over cautiously and kneeled down in front of Lance's bed. He placed a hand on Lance's shoulder and looked into his eyes. Shiro's face was solemn and calm, but his hands were shaking slightly, giving away how he really felt. He opened and closed his mouth a few times as if trying to decide what to say or if he was going to say anything at all, but he eventually just settled on giving Lance a quick hug. It was a bit awkward and felt slightly forced, but the true feelings behind it were extremely clear.
Shiro then stood quickly and shot a glance at Allura who returned the sad look that she had received. Then, Shiro also made his way towards the exit and walked out the door with steady but slightly rushed strides.

Obviously, it was Allura and Coran's turn to pity Lance. They both silently walked over and sat down at the end of Lance's bed and gave him sad, pitiful smiles.

"I..." Allura started. "I am glad that you are still here... " A pause. "But I am disappointed that you didn't come to us before things got so-so..."

Coran placed a hand on Allura's shoulder and gave her a look that said "not now." He now turned to Lance and gave him his best attempt at a smile. It was weak and didn't reach his eyes, but Lance still appreciated the effort given. "What Allura means is that you have to talk to us, Lance." He said quietly. "Please. We would all be devastated if something happened to you."

Lance almost rolled his eyes, but was able to stop himself. Why were they still lying to him? What would it take to tell them that Lance knew? What does he have to do to prove it? To prove that he knew and understood?

But Lance would never say these things out loud. Especially not right after a dramatic event like this. He'd just pretend again. Instead of speaking his horrible thoughts, Lance smiled and nodded, leaning forward to hug the two of them gently.

Being satisfied with this conversation, it seems, they both rose from their seats and walked hand in hand to the door. Allura stopped to give him a weak smile and wave before Coran pulled her out of the room.

Now, it was just Lance and Keith, and the air in the room seemed to drop at least twenty degrees and become much, much thicker.

Unlike the rest of the team had, Keith simply stood there in silence, staring at Lance with his arms crossed. Keith's face was blank and unreadable, and, frankly, this made Lance nervous. Keith had been blatantly angry with Lance when he had confronted him about the note. Surely, he was absolutely furious after Lance had tried to pull something like this. Logically, this made sense, but Lance hoped that this wasn't the case. He didn't want Keith to be mad at him, but he was sure that he deserved it for trying to do something as selfish as this.
"Keith, I... I..." Lance tries to say something. Anything. He tries to apologize. Tries to explain himself. But he finds that he can't lie right to Keith's face again. He doubts that Keith would believe him anyways.

Keith's eyebrows turn upward, and he sighs. "Look... I... I'm sorry that I yelled at you." Keith's voice is small and unstable. "I honestly shouldn't have invaded your privacy and read your notebook, but I did. Then, I... I yelled at you for what you wrote. I was just so worried, Lance. But... it's not your fault. It... I... this was my fault."

Lance's eyes widen as he hears Keith say that last part. It definitely wasn't Keith's fault. Not even close. In fact, Keith was probably the only reason that Lance had lasted this long in the first place, so Keith definitely wasn't to blame.

"No!" Lance shouts. He has to tell Keith these things. He already feels terrible, but he can't stand having Keith think that all of this shit was his fault. "No, Keith! It's not your fault. Don't you dare say that. You're the only reason that I'm still here Keith, so you can't say that."

But Keith doesn't look up. Instead, he continues to stare at his feet. He lets the silence linger for a moment longer before breaking it. "Do... do you really love me?" He whispers.

Lance had almost forgotten that he had written that part down in the note. Throughout all of this shit that had just happened, the fact had completely slipped his mind that Keith knew now. Keith knew about Lance's true feelings towards him. Lance feels his face flush, and he brings his eyes down to stare at his bare, scarred arms, finding that to be easier to look at than Keith's vulnerable face.

"Yeah, Keith," he answers dully. "I really, really do."

This confession brings silence, so Lance sighs and speaks again, not wanting to make this conversation even more awkward than it already is.

"Look, it's fine that you don't like me back," Lance says and shrugs. "I don't deserve you anyways." He tries to laugh, but it sounds more like crying, and- Oh, god. It is crying.

But there's another sound besides this pathetic choking noise that is coming from Lance's mouth: footsteps. And Lance lifts his head up slightly and sees Keith with tears on his face, taking the few steps needed to reach Lance's bedside, and Lance doesn't know what to expect. But it wasn't this.
Keith takes Lance's face delicately in his hands and pushes his lips into Lance's.

And everything stops.

This moment of pure bliss and utter confusion sparks hope that Keith might just love Lance too, but there's a voice in the back of his head that says that it's simply pity. In this moment, however, Lance decides to ignore that nagging voice.

Lance doesn't ever want this wonderful moment to end, but, of course, it must.

When Keith pulls away, and Lance sees his sparkling, violet eyes that are filled with shock and joy, Lance can't be sure that he really didn't die and go to heaven.

He has just a second of selfishness and blurts out the first thing that comes to his mind, but he can't say that he regrets what he says. "Don't leave me, Keith."

Keith laughs and bit and sits down on the bed next to Lance, looking deep into Lance's eyes. "I won't."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Chapter End Notes

OOF

You know the drill. Pls tell me what you thought.

Also, how do I have over 1000 views and over 100 kudos. WHAT THE FUCKING FUCK
Close Your Eyes And Try Not To Shatter

Chapter Summary

It will get better. It has to.

Chapter Notes

Woo woo. Here's another chapter!

Sorry my chapters are always short, but I get to update more often that way, so... pros and cons, I guess??

Anyways... let the pain ensue >:D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lance yawns a bit as he wakes up and rubs the sleep away from his eyes.

He looks around the room and jumps when he sees Keith's body lying on the floor with a pillow underneath his head and a blanket over his body.

His face looks so peaceful with some of his hair straying onto his face. His stomach rises and falls in a steady and soothing rhythm, and Lance can't help but smile at the sight. His smile only gets wider as he remembers Keith's promise from the night before. But his smile eventually falls because he realizes that it must be due to pity. There's no way that Keith can really love him. He's unlovable.

For a while, Lance simply decides to sit in bed and revel in the silence of the room other than Keith's soft breathing. It's nice while it lasts, but the whispers continuously try to invade his mind. Even when Lance tries to shut them up, tell them to leave him alone, they come back. They tell him that his efforts are worth nothing. That no matter what, they'll always be there to fill the silence. They're the only ones that Lance can truly trust to never leave him.

These thoughts overwhelm Lance, as usual, so he decides to rise from his bed to splash some water onto his face. Maybe the water will reach past his skin and finally wash away all of the fucking dirt and darkness that has grown in his mind.

He closes the bathroom door quietly as to not wake Keith up, and turns on the faucet.
The water flows steadily. Just like his thoughts.

Lance vigorously splashes water onto his face until the noise in his mind quiets into something that is semi-bearable. He dries his face with a towel gently, and looks into the mirror. The person that he sees looks awful.

There's slight bags under his eyes due to his self-inflicted sleep deprivation, and his mouth and eyes droop a bit more than they used to. It's like his face has forgotten how to smile since he's hardly practiced the action at all recently.

Lance tries at a smile, hoping that his face will simply do what it's supposed to, but it all looks incredibly artificial and hurts him to look at.

God, Lance just wants things to go back to how they used to be. He's almost completely lost hope that they will, but he can't help but want it all the same. He's aware that his brain will never just fix itself, and that he'll always be plagued by these thoughts. He's tried to accept this. He really has. But this is something that really seems unacceptable to him. This isn't how Lance wants to live his life. It's borderline unbearable, and he's still so young. Unless some horrible accident really does occur, then Lance will be stuck living like this for years and years to come.

The others don't understand how hard it is. Now, Lance generally doesn't like to play the "no one understands me" card, but, in this case, it's true. There's no possible way for them to understand without actually experiencing it, and Lance would never wish that upon them. Undesired existence is one of the highest forms of torture, he thinks.

Lance closes his eyes, not wanting to look at his unfamiliar reflection, and more whispers fill his head.

*They'll never love you.*

*You should have died.*

*No one wants you.*
You were a huge mistake.

You can't do anything right.

You're nothing.

They only pity you.

Your friends don't really like you.

They're not really your friends.

Why are you still here?

What are you waiting for?

Can you hear us, Lance?

Why are you ignoring us?

We know that you can hear us.

We see you trying not to cry.

You're so pathetic.

Do you understand, Lance?

Lance?
Lance's eyes snap open and everything is so loud. He can't stand it. Why is he doing this to himself? It's not on purpose. It really isn't. Why can he see his reflection laughing as he panics? He shouldn't be able to see it. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real. It's not real.

His eyes squeeze shut. He just has to ignore it... but they won't leave him alone. The voices won't stop. They just won't stop.

"I can hear you, okay?" He screams. "I know! I fucking know!"

And when Lance opens his eyes again, he sees a hole in the mirror, and shards of glass stuck in his knuckles and scattered along the floor.

"Lance?" Keith's muffled voice sounds out from behind the door. "Lance, are you okay?"

Lance scrambles over to the door and opens it. He sees Keith's scared face which only seems to get more intense when he sees the scene in front of him.

"Lance, what did you do?" His voice isn't angry. It's just full of pity.

Tears slide down Lance's face. "Keith, I- I- I don't know what happened. I was just- and then-" And now he's audibly sobbing on his hands and knees, shards of glass digging into his bare flesh on the ground.

Suddenly, Lance is engulfed in a hug, and he hears Keith's shaky voice. "Breathe. Lance. Just breathe. It's- it'll be okay."

Keith doesn't know that, of course. Lance doesn't know that either. It's impossible to tell, but things don't look so promising.

Keith helps to pull Lance up off of the ground and settles him onto the bed. Keith then somehow avoids the glass on the floor in the bathroom and retrieves the emergency first-aid kit that's under the sink. It's slightly embarrassing when Lance sees Keith's eyes widen a bit as he sees how many of the bandages and how much gauze is missing. Keith doesn't say anything, though. He just tries to get the
glass out of Lance's cuts on his hands and knees, and then disinfects them with the hydrogen peroxide that's in the kit. It stings a bit, but Lance tries not to flinch and make Keith worry even more. Once the cuts are clean, Keith gently bandages the wounds and then looks up to Lance with a sad smile.

Surely this whole situation must be hard for Keith. It must be hard to pretend that you care for this long. Who knows how long he'll keep it up for? He's done it for this long, and the facade just keeps on gaining more and more layers of lies.

"Okay, Lance. I'll be right back," Keith says. "I'm going to go get the others to help clean up." He walks towards the door, but hesitates and looks back at Lance for a moment. He was probably debating over whether or not he should leave Lance alone like this again, but he must have ignored it because he turned back around and walked out of the room. Lance was glad that Keith trusted him enough to do that, but he really shouldn't.

Keith must be truly ashamed of Lance because Lance is so pathetic. He can't do anything right. Everyday, he just continues to make mistakes. His own actions will lead to his downfall. Lance knows this. That's, honestly, his entire goal. Lance knows that Keith will give up on him eventually, and, when he does, Lance will already be ready for it. Everyone gives up eventually. They realize that they've met a lost cause. Some people last longer than others, but they always give up eventually.

The team arrives at his room after a few minutes, and Lance doesn't even look up. He doesn't want to see their sadness and disappointment.

Shiro and Allura speed past him, averting eye contact, which is fine by Lance and only proves his point that they're ashamed, and they start to clean up the mess in the bathroom. Allura tries to make conversation as they sweep up the shards of glass, but the conversation falls flat after a few sentences are exchanged.

Hunk, Pidge, and Coran rush over and ask Lance if he's alright and what happened. They must be horrified at the blankness of his expression, but he doesn't know what expression he should have right now. He doesn't even know what to feel. Maybe he's feeling so much that it's manifesting into the emptiness that he feels now. That wouldn't be the most shocking thing that has ever happened to Lance. His emotions were swirling around him earlier, though, so it couldn't have just disappeared. Right?

Lance doesn't know how to answer the questions that they ask him, so he just doesn't. He seals his mouth shut and refuses to say anything. The hurt on their faces, even though they try to hide it, is obvious. Lance feels guilty for hurting them, but he knows that they wouldn't understand what he would say even if he had the words to say it.
Hunk, Pidge, and Coran eventually break off into groups to try and help fix the mess that's presented before them.

Coran helps Shiro and Allura to clean up the shards of glass, and Hunk and Pidge go off to make breakfast for the team.

What time was it anyways? Had Lance woken them up? How selfish of him. It had just been an accident. He didn't mean to make a scene. He shouldn't have said anything. He should have been more quiet. Should have tried harder to not bother them. Should have been successful before when he tried to die.

"Lance." Keith sits beside Lance on the bed. He gently intertwines his fingers with Lance's, being careful to avoid the wounds that riddle his hands. "Are you alright?"

Lance looks up at Keith with tears in his eyes. The emptiness is overwhelming. "Keith, I'm so sorry. I don't know what happened."

"It's okay, Lance," Keith says quickly. "Really. It's fine. It's confusing, I know, and I won't say that I understand exactly what you're feeling, but we can get through this. We will get through this. We just have to work together, okay?"

Keith's dedication is truly stunning. It's really sweet of him to care, but he doesn't seem to get that Lance is unfixable.

Instead of responding, Lance just starts crying again and leans his head into Keith's shoulder.

Keith seems taken aback at first, but eventually pulls himself together enough to wrap Lance in an embrace.

Lance sits and focuses on the contact, letting it tether him to reality. He can do this.

Yeah... it'll be fine.
Keith is here. Keith won't leave. He promised.

And Lance knows that he can resist the thoughts. He's done it before in the past.

He can do it.

But first, he has to close his eyes and try not to shatter.

Chapter End Notes

K

You guys... I don't know how or when I'm going to end this story oh my god I should have planned this out

Also, if you want to see more Keith one-shots, then I'd be happy to write them, but I don't know which scenes to do them for

And, as always, thank you for taking the time to read this and comment and shit. It really means the world to me. :)}
We'll Get There

Chapter Summary

The team decides that things have to be talked out, and it's awkward to say the least.

Chapter Notes

DON'T KILL ME I'M SORRY THIS TOOK FOREVER
Exams hit hard and depression hit even harder :P
I'm back thoooooooooooooooooo
Yay?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

For a while (Lance loses track of how long it is, but he knows that it isn't long enough), Lance feels safe in Keith's warm embrace. He can't think of anything that can hurt him while he's enclosed in Keith's arms. Lance finds that not even his brain is strong enough to ruin the moment.

But it can't last...

All good moments come to an end. It's a fact that Lance has become frustratingly familiar with.

Lance can feel Keith loosen his grip on him, and it takes everything that he's got to not grab Keith again and never let him go.

When Lance looks up again, he sees Keith's eyes. They're full of worry and what Lance is hoping isn't pity (he knows that it is, though). There's a shuffling in the background, and Lance suddenly remembers that they aren't alone.

Shiro and Allura are standing side by side in front of the bathroom door. They look concerned, constantly avoiding eye contact and shuffling frequently. Shiro hands Allura the broom that he was using to clean up the glass with, and she walks out of the room after sharing a knowing glance with Shiro.

"Lance..." Shiro starts to speak softly. It almost seems as if he's scared that if he speaks too loudly or says the wrong thing... he'll break Lance. Maybe he will... "You know that we have to talk about this."

The warm feeling that he settled in Lance's chest dissipated as soon as he heard those words. He knew that they would make him talk about it. It wasn't something that could be avoided, despite how much Lance wished he could. He'd been dreading the conversation, and here they were about to have it.

Lance laughed awkwardly and scratched the back of his head. "I guess... but we don't have to?"
Shiro gave Lance a very poignant look. "I think you know that we do."

"Okay. Fine." Lance sighed a bit but tried not to make things worse by bringing anxiety into it. He can only handle so much at once.

"I think that we should talk with the whole team," Shiro said carefully but firmly. "They're worried about you too."

Lance felt his heart speed up a bit at the thought of sharing everything with the whole team, but he took a deep breath before nodding slightly. He didn't look up as Shiro traveled out of the room to get the others.

Lance could feel the panic setting in. He couldn't believe how many times he had gotten into this same situation. He hated talking about his feelings (unless they were happy ones). He had no right to worry the others. They shouldn't have to think about him on top of their own problems. They all have things to think about. Not to mention the fact that they're in a fucking war. Honestly... they don't have time for his trivial problems.

"Hey." Keith's voice penetrated into Lance's thoughts once more. "We can do this. Together." A small smile sat on Keith's face.

Lance tried to smile back, but it felt empty. "Yeah."

*Don't worry them. Don't.*

Keith pulled Lance into an awkward hug once more, and Lance melted into it. He forced himself to focus on the rise and fall of Keith's chest instead of the ache in his chest.

*Don't. Don't. Don't.*

Shiro eventually reappeared at the doorway of the room and knocked before entering.

Lance laughed, pulling out of Keith's arms. "Shiro," He said through laughs. "You don't have to knock when the door is open."

"Sorry." Shiro had a sheepish look on his face.

Pidge poked their head out from behind Shiro's body. She gave an awkward wave to Lance once they made eye contact and stepped into the room. Hunk, Coran, and Allura made their way into the room too. Hunk gave Lance a warm smile but there was something sad behind it. Coran copied the action, and Lance tried hard to return the gesture. Allura simply avoided eye contact and stood by Shiro as if she thought he could protect her.

"Hey, guys," Lance said quietly. He gave them all a lackluster pair of finger guns with a wink.

*Convince them you're fine.*

"Hey, Lance." Pidge spoke softly, but her face was much less pale than the day before.

Hunk sidled up to the bed and sat beside Lance and Keith. "Hey, buddy! How's it going?" He was clearly trying to hold himself together for the sake of the rest of the team, but his cheerful facade was slipping.

"Better than yesterday," Lance said sincerely. "How are you?"

Hunk seemed to freeze for a moment before his face fell, and he spoke with a broken voice. "I'm
terrified, Lance. I... I could have lost you..."

Lance put a hand on Hunk's shoulder. "Don't worry about me! It was just a stupid decision. I'm fine now!" Lance smiled so widely that it was blatant that he was lying.

Suddenly, Lance heard Keith's voice speak, and he jumped slightly at the anger behind it.

"Lance!" Keith shouted. "What the fuck are you doing?"

Lance tried his best to look innocent, but it was obvious that he knew what he was doing. "What do you mean?"

Keith stood from the bed and kept on yelling. "You had a gun to your head, Lance! You could have died!" He paused. No one filled the silence. "For God's sake, Lance. Look at your damn wrists... Do you really want us to believe that you're okay?"

Lance looked down and refused to make eye contact. He didn't want to see the disappointment in Keith's eyes. He was sure it was there. It had to be.

"I... I don't want you to worry about me." His voice grew quieter by the word. "You all have your own problems."

Hunk turned Lance's face towards his own. Tears were streaming down his face as he spoke. "Don't you dare think that we don't have room to worry about yours too."

Another small voice piped up from across the room.

"Lance..." Pidge was frowning deeply, and their eyes glistened. "Why? Why did you do it?"

You're trapped. You have to answer. But don't tell them everything. Just tell them enough to placate them.

"I... I... I- Well..." A pause. "I was overwhelmed, I guess."

"Overwhelmed by what?" Shiro asked carefully.

Shit... Shiro's too smart. He knows all of the right questions to ask to get Lance to talk.

Lance stayed silent for a moment. He tried desperately to force out a lie but found himself speaking the truth. "The thoughts."

"What thoughts, Lance?" Allura had a confused look on her face.

"They... Well, they... Uh... They- Fuck." He stopped for few seconds to gather his thoughts. "They tell me that I'm nothing. They tell me that I annoy you all. They tell me that I'm useless and that I should just stop... living."

"God, Lance," Pidge whispered. Their face had paled. "You don't believe them, do you?"

"Well, why wouldn't I?" Lance said with a laugh. "It's all true, isn't it?"

"Wh-What are you talking about?" Hunk cried desperately. "No! No, they aren't true!"

"Liar!"

"Lance!?"
Lance snapped his head to look at Keith who visibly flinched upon seeing the fury in Lance's eyes. He recovered quickly, however, and continued speaking.

"Please... please, Lance. Believe me when I say: those things are not true."

Lance looked down, and his eyes seemed to lose whatever fire had been there in the previous moment. "I... I don't know if I can."

Hunk frowned at the boy before engulfing him into a hug. "We'll get there."

Keith awkwardly joined the hug which prompted the others to join as well. Pidge squeezed in-between Hunk and Keith, and Coran kneeled down in front of them and wrapped his hands around them. Allura joined in on the left side next to Shiro, who held them all together with his strong arms.

It was awful to talk about these things. Lance knew that better than most. But he's accepted that it's necessary to do so. It's necessary because if he didn't, then he'd never get to find the glimmer of hope that keeps him alive.

The glimmer that says: hey! I know things are shit now, but... we'll get there.

And Lance... he... he has to believe that they will.

Chapter End Notes

Askdjfklgdjdlkj this was so awkward to write because, shit man, I know it's awkward as fuck to talk about this shit, but it has to be doneeeeee

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooof

anyways.... I hope you enjoyed?? Pls tell me what you think bc literally the only reason why I wrote this chapter is bc I went back and read all of you guys' awesome comments. Motivation is like yeeeeeet but you guys really help get the strength to catch it.

SORRY ENOUGH WITH THE SAPPY SHIT JUST KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU ALL OKAY BYEEEEEEEEEEEEE
The team really doesn't leave him alone anymore. It's worse than when they found out about his... habits. They always make sure that he takes his medicine, and they won't let him have any sharp objects. They won't even let him have his bayard anymore which is... fair, but it's still annoying. Now, Lance really is useless to the team. He can't do anything to help them. He just sits there. He's an object to be pitied. Surely they only keep him around because it makes them feel better about themselves.

Lance still wishes that he'd just been successful in his attempt, but... he's got to have hope. He just has to. He promised that he would try, and he can't let the team down. He can't let Keith down.

Keith.

Keith is incredible. He doesn't seem to pity Lance like the others do. It probably has something to do with the fact that he's been through some of the same shit. He'd had bad habits too. He'd been through much more than Lance, though. So... much... more. Lance really shouldn't complain about his minuscule problems. He shouldn't be sad when so many other people had it worse than him.
Keith didn't agree when Lance said that.

"Lance..." He grabs Lance's hand and looks deep into his eyes. "You do know that it's okay to have problems? That you're allowed to be sad even if other people have problems too?"

"But, I shouldn't complain about it so much," Lance says quietly, averting his eyes. "I always complain. I never fucking stop. I complain when I know that there are whole alien races that are enslaved by the Galra... I know this... and I still don't stop complaining."

When Lance dares to look back at Keith's face, he sees that it's littered with concern. His eyebrows are upturned, and his mouth is twisted into a frown.

"Everyone complains, Lance," he says, trying to smile. "It's how they vent. It's healthy."

"But-"

"Don't," Keith cuts him off quickly, anger flashing on his face for a moment. "Lance, it's okay. I'll listen to you. No matter how much you want to complain."

Lance tries to give him a smile without letting the tears spill from his eyes. "Thanks, Keith. You're the best."

Keith chuckles softly. "Well, Lance, I think that you're pretty great too."

"Pfft, of course," Lance scoffs. "Now, come here, mullet."

Lance pulls Keith into a kiss, both of them laughing through the tender moment. Even when they give up on kissing, their hands are still intertwined as they smile at each other, sitting in a comfortable silence.

Keith was the one who eventually ended the moment. His face was flushed, and his hands had started to shake.
"Lance... can I... say something?"

Lance cocks his head but nods. Oh, God. Was Keith going to say that he didn't really like him? That he was finally tired of him? Shit. Lance should have seen this coming. It always did. But... Lance had really thought that Keith liked him. He'd thought that-

"I... I love you."

When Keith says this, Lance's jaw drops open, and he feels his face heat up.

Keith turns an even brighter shade of red and starts to stutter. "Oh, shit. Is it too soon? You don't have to say it back! I just thought that you should... Oh, God."

Lance laughs loudly. It's the best laugh he's had in a while. One where his eyes are squeezed shut and his head is thrown back.

"I love you too, mullet," he says through laughs.

Keith's face breaks into a smile, and he wraps his arms around Lance's neck, giving the most passionate kiss Lance had ever received. Lance practically melts into the wonderful bliss of Keith's lips on his own.

After that, Lance only continues to talk more and more with Keith. They would talk about things that were occurring within the castle, and they would talk about things that were occurring in the entire universe. Sometimes... well, maybe more than sometimes... they'd even talk about their feelings. Keith wasn't very good at that, but he tried. And Lance appreciates that. So very much.

"Hey, Keith!" Lance says in a way that almost sounds like he's singing. "So... I just saw Shiro and Allura together... I'm pretty sure that they're a thing."
Keith doesn't say anything, and his face looks like he's trying really hard not to cry.

"Keith? Are you alright?"

Keith looks up at the boy, and a tear falls. He quickly wipes it from his cheek and looks back down at the floor.

Now this... this has Lance worried. "Keith... what's wrong?"

Keith still doesn't look up, but he sighs and starts to speak. "I'm just... why did my mom leave me? What did I do wrong?"

Lance was shocked... Keith had never acted like this before. He'd never seen him look so... sad.

"Keith... you didn't do anything. She must have left for a reason, and it wasn't your fault."

"But I must have done something. I must have made some mistake..."

Lance places his hand on top of Keith's and scoots closer to him on the window sill. "Keith... you... you are perfect. Your mom couldn't have left you unless it was for a reason. I promise."

Keith smiles, tears falling from his eyes. "Hey, sharpshooter. I'm supposed to be comforting you, not the other way around."

"Oh, come on," Lance says, rolling his eyes. "I'm here for you as much as you're here for me. That's what boyfriends do." He shot a wink at the shorter boy who blushed in return.

"It's weird to hear it out loud," Keith says quietly.

"What? 'Boyfriends'?!" Lance says teasingly, stretching the word out to a ridiculous length.
"Oh, stop it, Lance." Keith says with a laugh. "You're ridiculous."

"Yeah, but you love me." Lance leans in and kisses Keith's cheek gently.

Keith throws his head back in a laugh. "Yeah... I really do... and I'll never leave you."

"Ditto to that."

"Really, Lance?" Keith says while laughing. "Ditto to that'? That's the best thing you could come up with?"

"Hey!" Lance says happily. "I'm not as smooth as I look."

"Oh, trust me, Lance. I know."

Lance laughs quietly and looks Keith in the eyes. Lance really loves Keith. He really, really does. He loves him because Keith was always there for him, no matter how bad of a day it was, and Lance wanted to do the same for him. It was the least he could do after all that Keith had done. Honestly... it made Lance so happy to think about it. There were so many things that Keith had done for him, and most of it wasn't even on purpose. Just talking to Keith made Lance's day. All Lance can do is hope that maybe... maybe he could do the same for Keith?

Maybe?

It was a bad day.

A really bad day.
So... who does Lance turn to?

Keith.

Sure, he feels guilty for bothering him, but Lance doesn't know what else to do.

It's late.

Very, very late.

Lance knows that he has to talk to someone, though.

He has to...

Or he might...

Lance knocks quietly on the door.

From behind it, Lance hears a mumble that might have said "coming".

The door opens, and an extremely tired looking Keith emerges. His eyes widen when he sees that it's Lance, and he takes a step back, moving his hand to gesture that Lance should come in. He sits down on the bed and pats the spot next to him.

"What's wrong, man?"

Lance chuckles, almost regretting waking Keith up... almost. "Why do you assume something's wrong?"
Keith raises an eyebrow and scoffs. "Well, it's almost four in the morning. I figure you wouldn't wake me up unless something was wrong. So... what's up?"

Lance is shocked at how perceptive Keith really is. He's still pretty dumb when it comes to emotions, though. "Uh... it was... I just had a bad day."

Keith cocks his head to the side. "What happened?"

Lance sighs and drags his hand through his hair. "I don't even know. I just... I don't feel right."

"What do you- wait... oh... are you- oh..." Keith looked down at his hands. "Do you want to talk about it?"

Lance looks away. He was rubbing his wrists, desperately trying to get a grip on his feelings. "I just don't know what I'm feeling anymore."

"Are you thinking about... that... again?"

"I..." Lance laughs sadly. "I don't really know. I'm so confused."

"Lance... talk to me," Keith says softly. "Please."

"Well... I don't think such bad things about myself anymore... and I don't think about... killing myself... as much."

"That's great, Lance!" Keith had a smile on his face... Lance almost didn't want to continue.

"Yeah! Yeah..." Lance's voice grew quiet again. "But..." A pause. Did Lance really want to tell Keith this?

Keith looked at Lance, thinking. "But?"
He has to tell Keith. He has to. He promised that he'd never leave.

"I... I almost miss it."

For a moment, there's just silence.

Keith's eyes are wide, and his voice shakes when he speaks again. "What?"

It takes Lance a moment to realize how bad that sounds, and he shakes his head vigorously. "No! No, no no. I didn't mean..." He stops speaking and groans quietly before speaking again. "I don't. I don't miss it. I just... That was familiar. This? This is completely different. I mean... it's good! It's a good different. It... I'm just... confused."

Keith's eyes are still wide, but his voice is much more steady when he responds. "I don't understand what you're feeling. I really don't. You say that you're feeling better and that it's good, but you're also saying that you miss it?"

Lance looks down in shame. Of course Keith didn't understand. Lance didn't even understand. God, why did Lance even come? He shouldn't have-

"I don't understand," Keith says with a sigh. "But I trust you. Even the fact that you came and talked to me now... that proves that you've gotten better."

When Lance hears this, he almost can't believe it. Is Keith right? Is he better? It's hard for Lance to tell... but he hopes that he is. He really hopes that he is. He really, really doesn't want to disappoint Keith.

"Do you really think that I've gotten better?" Lance's voice is shakier than he meant for it to be, but he's found that it's okay to be vulnerable in front of Keith. That's what boyfriends do... right?

Keith looks at Lance with a smile. "Yeah, Lance. I really do."

"Thanks, mullet." Lance gives his best attempt at a smile before pulling Keith in for a hug which draws out a laugh from the smaller boy.
"Of course, sharpshooter. Of course."

Chapter End Notes

Can you imagine being in love? Wow.
AKDKVKFKKDKFKRKG I HOPE THAT IT WAS OKAY BC I KIND OF HATED IT

Also, if you listened to the song pls tell me what you thought I need someone to cry with

Okay love you guys byeeeeeeeee
Why He's Alive

Chapter Summary

Time passes, and Lance gets better. He's got a purpose.

Chapter Notes

SCREEEEEEEE
I'm gonna update a lot probably within the next few days because I've got a lot that I want to write but it's gonna be long so I split it into multiple chapters

Anyways, enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lance... he's been doing... better?

Is that what he's feeling?

He's not feeling so bad about himself...

But...

He still hears what his head is trying to say.

It's just... muffled.

Every now and then, it gets strong enough to make him fake a smile. To make his head spin and his wrist itch.

It's been a while since he scratched that itch, though.
Even when his head was really trying to get him to do it.

Oh, Lance.

Lance sat in his safe place again, listening to his music. It's been easier lately, but that doesn't mean that it's not still hard as fuck to do anything. He sits, and he can only hope that maybe if he ignores everything, it'll just go away. Forever.

Lance?

He looks out the window at the stars. They flicker and seem to drift in and out of existence. It's beautiful, honestly. They're so impermanent. So deadly. People like to admire them, but they won't get anywhere close. If they do... it burns them. It's something that Lance can relate to. In this world that's so different from him. He's so... different.

Lance. Listen. Trust me.

Maybe it's a good different? One that will help him make a difference? A good difference? That's got to be it. He's heard of plenty of people who are different but do good things for the world. Like Gandhi and Martin Luther King... uh... Jesus, but he's not really a person... Well... Lance can be a good different. He's already saving the universe... right?

You really need to trust me, Lance. You know that everyone else lies.

Yeah... he's saving people. He does it every day. He's done it every day for months, and the days just keep passing by.

They're all liars, Lance. All of them.

No... no. They aren't... they aren't lying to him... Why would they?

Oh? I have your attention now.
Lance's hand brushes over his wrist softly. He can feel the raised lines on that reside on it. It's an odd feeling... He's always shocked when he looks down and realizes that what he did... was real. It's an awful realization.

*I was getting worried that you really couldn't hear me.*

It's all real... it's a terrible, awful reality that Lance lives in. God... he couldn't have just been born normal? He couldn't just have a normal brain that didn't try to kill him every second of every day? Why can't he just be happy?

*Why do you let that stupid medicine fool you? You know the truth.*

Cold hands wrap around Lance's chest, and a familiar heavy feeling settles behind his eyes.

*You always let yourself be manipulated, don't you? You're just grasping at straws. You're trying to do anything you can to make this life tolerable. It'll never be tolerable. You know that, right? You can't let that fucking medicine trick you into thinking it is. You can't let it do that, Lance. You can't.*

Can't he? It's certainly easier than the latter. The truth fucking sucks... why the hell would he try to embrace it when he can live in blissful ignorance?

*Come back to me, Lance. Come back. I'm better for you than these lies.*

The arguments are senseless. None of it makes sense anymore. None of it.

*Death is easier than any of this, Lance. It's so easy. Come back. I can help you.*

Well... some of it makes sense... but Lance refuses to go down that road. He won't get back out again. He knows that.

*Fine. Fine. Be a fucking, idiotic piece of shit if you want to. I couldn't care less. You'll come back one day.*
You always do.

After maybe a month of letting the medicine take effect and extensive talks where Lance awkwardly promises not to try anything, the team lets Lance have his bayard back, and he can finally fight in the war again. He can use this time to prove that he's not useless to them. He has to make their kindness worth their while. He has to prove that he can help them. That he can help others.

And... he does?

The little wormhole thing that they travel through does a big whoops, and the entire team ends up getting thrown off into different directions never to be seen again (okay... maybe that's a bit dramatic, but, to be fair... he didn't know that at the time). Anyways... he and Hunk land on this super watery planet and there're mermaids and shit (it's basically Lance's paradise), and they think that the queen mermaid is mind-controlling them all so that's a fight that goes down. However (huge plot twist incoming), the queen just ended up being mind controlled by another mind-controlling plant thing, and- well... basically they ended up saving the whole planet (as you do), and Lance got a kiss from this super hot mermaid (it wasn't as good as Keith's kisses, though). Pretty awesome day, honestly (despite the fact that they were basically stranded on an alien planet the whole time).

Then, Lance saves Slav (it's a genius shot that he takes, truly. Like... he just takes aim, breathes in, and then boom. Lance has probably never made a shot that good. Who's to say that he won't do it again, though?) He didn't do it on his own, of course. He has to make sure that his teammates do some work, right? And, sure, he had a little hiccup with the whole yupper thing. And, yeah, he may or may not have had a little bit of an anxiety attack when the yupper agreed to all of his self-deprecating statements (turns out that it's just in their nature...), but it ended up okay! Although... Lance has to admit to feeling a bit guilty about not taking his very agreeable friend back to the castle with them. Maybe that's for the better, though... The yupper seems relatively happy where she is.

Being useful...

Being loved...

It's a great feeling. Lance absolutely loves it. God, who knew that it was so great? Lance sure didn't.
It lasts for a while, and Lance decides to stop counting how many days have passed after he hits fifteen (why play with fire, right?).

Then...

The team finally decides that they should take on Zarkon head on. It took them a while to prepare (a disgustingly long amount of time, honestly), but they eventually get the plan together and prepare their strike.

It's a long and hard battle, and Zarkon ends up having another fucking Voltron that's fueled by quintessence. And, Jesus, does that thing hit hard. At one point, Lance is pretty sure that they all went unconscious for just a few moments. He honestly can't be sure because, well, he was unconscious, but there's a pretty startling gap in his memory between getting hit over and over and over and hearing shots coming from the castle and yelling in his ear asking him if they're okay.

Shiro ends up doing some pretty crazy shit (i.e. giving Voltron these huge ass wings and making an even bigger, more epic sword than normal), and they're able to destroy Zarkon's huge, terrifying suit easily (well... maybe not easily, but whatever).

In the midst of celebrating and just being happy that no one fucking died, of course, something has to go wrong. The team just finds out that Shiro just up and disappeared.

"Wait..." Keith's voice shakes when it comes through the coms. "Where's Shiro?"

And no one knows. They really don't.

"Keith?" Lance doesn't know what to say... Shiro really is just... gone. And, obviously, he loves Shiro too, but he knows about Keith and Shiro's past (they're basically brothers)... God, this whole situation... it must be confusing and... frankly, crushing. "Are you okay?"

Keith doesn't answer the question and stays silent for a while... The silence is painful. His voice quivers when he finally speaks. "I... Where is he? Where did he go? Why isn't he here with the rest of us?"

Keith rapidly spirals after that, and Lance knows that he has to get to him. He has to help. He can't just let Keith sit there and panic. That definitely won't lead to anything good. Lance knows that from
The team arrives back at the castle shortly after that, and Lance just sprints towards Red's hangar. It's honestly odd how everyone always seems to be running and panicking when they're both in the castle and outside of it. Someone's always in trouble. Always... Lance would find it funny if it weren't so sad.

"Keith!" Lance shouts and looks up at the dark eyes of Red. Is Keith even in there anymore? Geez... this act is getting stale. "Keith? Can you hear me? Are you in there?"

Red's eyes flicker for a moment before she bends down and opens up her mouth to allow Lance to enter. The second he enters, Red returns to her lifeless looking state on the outside. Clearly, Red is worried about Keith and doesn't want anyone to bother him. Lance has to admit to feeling the same. Maybe that's why Red let him in.

Keith is sitting in the pilot's chair still, his expression blank. A strand of hair is settled over his face, and Keith makes no move to fix it. His eyes are the only thing that show how distraught he really is. An unusual softness resides within them, and a deep concern rests behind that softness.

When Lance takes a few steps forward and kneels down next to his distraught partner, Keith's violet eyes shift towards the boy, and his expression just... breaks. His face screws up into a frown, and tears begin to fall down his cheeks.

"Where did he go, Lance?" Keith says as he lunges himself at the younger boy, wrapping him in a hug. "Why isn't he here?"

Lance squeezes his eyes shut, returning the hug with a tenderness that used to be reserved for only his family. He rubs gentle circles on Keith's back as he tries to think of a reasonable answer. "I... I don't know. I really don't."

This only seems to make Keith sob harder, and Lance panics, trying to salvage his answer. God, how is he supposed to handle this? "Uh... but you know that he's smart and strong. So, wherever he is... I'm sure he's fine."

"But what if he's not?"
Goddamnit, Keith. Why does he have to ask these questions?

"If he's not," Lance starts, pulling out of the hug to look Keith right in the eyes, "then that's okay too. We'll find him, Keith. You know that we won't stop until we do."

Keith sniffs and wipes his nose on his scuffed armor. He nods slightly, some of the fire in his eyes reignited, and says: "You're right. I... I shouldn't freak out. He's Shiro, for Christ's sake. He'll be fine."

Lance smiles, ruffling Keith's hair playfully. "Uh huh! You know I'm right. When am I not?" He puffs his chest out and winks.

Keith snorts and gently pushes him away. "Oh, come on. You're wrong all the time."

"Am not!" Lance feigns hurt, putting a hand over his heart.

The two's laughs slip out of the security of Red's cockpit, bringing warmth to the rest of the castle too.

Lance can't help but smile as he sees a blush return to Keith's pale skin.

This is what he's here for.

Chapter End Notes

Asksfkkdkflci I hope it was okay???

I'll probably post another chapter within like one or two days (maybe less depending on my motivation hehe)

Anyways, as usual, tell me what you thought (please)

Love you byeeeeeewe
A Big Change

Chapter Summary

With Shiro gone, a new leader has to be selected. This, of course, changes things much more than anticipated.

Chapter Notes

Another chapter, as promised

I'm still going to update more soon but I gotta separate these chapters so I don't get overwhelmed hehe

Anyways... enjoy! There's a wee bit of angst so enjoy that

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Having a purpose... is much more enjoyable than Lance would have thought...

Sure, he knew that it must feel good (at least better than what it feels like not to have one), but he severely underestimated how amazing it really is.

He helps the team.

He saves people.

He defeats the Galra.

He's their sharpshooter.

What would they do without him?

Uh... nothing good. Duh.
He's there to help them.

Well...

Okay, so, maybe he did give Keith a hard time about him taking over the position of leader, but he was just... concerned, of course! Well... maybe he was a bit jealous. But it would have fixed his problems! His place on the team would have been affirmed. He should have gotten that position... not Keith.

God, what's wrong with him?

Keith earned that spot. He was chosen. This is what Shiro wanted. Lance can't even really say that it would have fixed his problems if it had worked out the way he wanted it to. One good thing wouldn't fix it. Lance knows that... he's had plenty of good things happen to him, and he's still not fixed. That's just... it's just a little... hard to accept.

He'll support Keith. He will. He has to.

Keith... he doesn't take it well either.

He panics, his breath speeds up, he yells at the team that he can't accept the position. And Lance knows that Keith can't just decline the position, but he understands what he's going through. But... just because he understands... he's not just going to let Keith give up. Black accepted him. He's their new leader. It's not Keith's choice.

Keith stands, staring at the team as if expecting someone to agree with him and say that he can't lead them. He stares deep into Lance's eyes, and Lance feels his heart drop. This was his fault, wasn't it? He was the one who made Keith feel like he couldn't be the leader... He'd spent hours trying to convince the team that Keith would be an awful leader... Oh, God... What has he done?

With a sigh, Lance walks up next to his panicking teammate and puts a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"Look," Lance starts. "You and I both know that no one can replace Shiro... But... the Black Lion wouldn't choose just anybody it didn't feel was worthy to lead Voltron." He pauses for a moment,
thinking of what to say. "I respect its choice." Lance's voice is quiet as he admits to his feelings. Wow, this was embarrassing... but Keith needs this. And it's true. Keith... Keith can do this. "I respect it... and you should too."

Keith sniffs lightly. It's obvious that he's trying hard not to cry. Obviously, Lance's grand speech didn't completely erase Keith's doubts. His answer is hardly a murmur. "Thanks, Lance."

"You're gonna be a great leader!" Lance shouts enthusiastically, throwing his hands into the air.

The whole team, Keith included, laughs lightly at Lance's outburst, and they all huddle closer together during their moment of bonding.

Lance can't help but smile. The team is his family. Sure, they aren't the same as the one that he left behind on Earth... but... he loves them, and he would die for each and every one of them.

"Wait, who's going to pilot Red?" Keith asks suddenly. He pulls out of the group huddle and looks at his new lion.

They have a few moments of debate after that, trying to decide who would pilot the Red Lion now when the alarm suddenly goes off and someone says that they're under attack by the Galra.

And Lance is ready.

He's ready to help the aliens.

He's ready to help his team.

But then...

"Blue?"

She won't open.
She won't let him in.

She's never done this before.

Is she okay?

Is something wrong with her?

Is something wrong with him?

God, what's happening...

What did he do?

"Come on, Old Blue," Lance says pleadingly. He drops to his knees and crawls closer to the impenetrable shield that separates him from his beautiful Blue. "Come on! It's me! Lancey Lance? Open up."

Nothing.

Oh god no.

Sure, before... he would have been disappointed but not surprised.

It would have been a relief, honestly.

It would have meant that Team Voltron would finally get the blue paladin that they deserve.

But...
That isn't what he wants anymore.

It's not what he wants.

Blue, please.

Oh, God, please.

"Okay, enough goofing around!" Lance puts his hands on his hips and speaks in his most authoritative voice. "I mean it. We've got to get out there and help the others."

Again, nothing.

Shit.

Shit shit shit.

"Oh, come on, Blue!" Lance shouts, the desperation in his voice obvious. This can't be happening. Please, Blue. "Why are you mad at me?"

What did he do?

Why won't she let him in?

Oh, God...

What did he do?

Why is she shutting him out?
Why?

Oh...

Wait...

He tried to fly the Black Lion...

He... he tried to leave her...

"Shit..." He mumbles quietly. "Do you hate me now?" He looks up at the unresponsive lion and presses his hand on the barrier. "I'm sorry for wanting to fly the Black Lion! It was just a phase!"

He's got to do something.

He's got to fix this.

So, Lance puts on his best smirk and, in his best flirty voice, says: "Hey, uh, Blue! I've gotta say, that's a great color on you."

Nothing.

Nothing nothing nothing.

"Oh!" Please, please work. "Are you from outer space? Because your body is out of this world."

Once again, no response.

"Fuck, that was like my best line." Lance runs his hand through his hair and groans softly.
What is he going to do?

He's got to get out there.

They need him.

A thousand voices ring through the coms.

"Shit! There's too many of them!"

"Guys, I need help!"

"I'm having a litte bit of trouble over here!"

"Lance? Where the fuck are you? Get out here!"

Through short breaths, Lance manages to squeak out an answer. "I can't! Blue's shutting me out."

His thoughts race and all he can think is:

*I'm just a goofball... like they all said.*

*Of course I'm not good enough to be a paladin.*

*I couldn't be the leader...*

*Now I'm not even meant to be a paladin.*
I'm so useless.

The team would be better off without me.

I'm pathetic and weak.

They don't need me.

He hears a voice in his head that grows louder with each and every thought he has.

See, Lance?

You came back to me.

I'm surprised it took you this long.

You're so stupid.

How could you really think that they needed you?

Why did you listen to their lies?

Why do you stay here, Lance?

Why did you give up so easily before?

It's obvious that you're unnecessary.

Just end it already.
His eyes settle onto his bayard, and, for a second time, he thinks of using it for something other than its intended purpose.

But he doesn't.

He hears a sound in his head that stops him.

It's foreign... definitely not of his own doing...

It's not Blue...

Is that... another lion?

Suddenly, Allura is behind him, and her sudden appearance makes Lance jump a bit.

"That's the Red Lion, Lance," she says. "You must go to it."

Lance's mouth drops open upon hearing this. "No way!" *I don't deserve it.* "Keith probably trained it to bite my head off." Allura's eyebrow raises a bit when he says this, and Lance knows that it wasn't a believable lie, so he just keeps talking, trying to make sure she doesn't get a chance to work out what's really going on. "Maybe it's roaring for you..."

Allura sighs, and her shoulders droop slightly. "I wish that that were true, but the Red Lion has not chosen me... it has chosen you."

Lance honestly can't believe what he's hearing. There's no way this can be true. "I... I don't understand..." *Why me?*

Allura kneels down and places a hand on his shoulder. "Although my father built Voltron, he knew that Zarkon was a better leader, so he accepted the position of right-hand man. He piloted the Red Lion, and so shall you." When Lance's expression goes from confused to even more confused, she continues. "When you accepted Keith as your new leader, you proved that you value the team more
than your own want for glory. You're just like my father, Lance."

That can't be right... he's nowhere near that level... but he says nothing.

"You must go to it, Lance," Allura insists. "You can do this."

Lance sighs before pulling Allura into a quick hug and whispering a quiet thanks. He then rushes out the doors and towards Red's hangar. At this point, he knows the route by heart from going to see Keith so many times after battle. His footsteps echo in the halls as he runs. It would almost be peaceful if it weren't for the sound of his heavy breathing and the desperate shouts of the rest of the team. Although Lance might not be the most qualified to help them all, he's the only one who can help them right now. He's got to get out there. He can't fail them again.

As he rounds the final corner, and the Red Lion comes into view, Lance can't help but wonder if this is really happening... Is Red really accepting him?

That can't be what's happening.

This must be a dream.

Or maybe it's a nightmare.

He walks carefully up to the lion's barrier and gently places a hand on it. Her eyes immediately light up, and Lance steps back as her barrier drops. She kneels down and opens her mouth to let him enter. She's much less smooth and graceful in her actions than Blue. There's a certain feeling of aggression that's behind every move that she makes. God, it's so different. How long is this change going to be in effect? Is Lance really cut out for this?

He settles into the pilot's seat, listening to his team's cries for help. The bay doors slide open, and the battle before them is revealed. He sees the team. He sees the Galra. Rapid flashes of light fly past the opening in the castle walls. There are so many ships... so, so many of them. And the team... well, they aren't doing so well. So, Lance takes a deep breath and pushes down on the controls, sending him flying into the battle.

And he knows... it doesn't matter if he thinks he's cut out for this.
He was chosen.

Red *chose* him.

And he has to trust her decision.

Whether he likes it or not.

Chapter End Notes

SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

I hope it was okay???

Tell me what you thought! Or don’t... whatever works I guess

Anyways love you byeeeee
One Too Many

Chapter Summary

So, Red is pretty hard to fly and struggles happen. The usual.

Chapter Notes

HAHAHA
This took longer than I meant for it to
Well it's short and shitty but here ya go

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Whoo hoo! Boy, this lion can move!"

Red moves ridiculously fast, and her movements are jerky and unpredictable. She definitely moves differently from Blue. This is going to take some getting used to.

Beneath the cheers of Hunk and Pidge, who are simply relieved to have some backup, Lance hears a groan that could surely only be coming from one person.

"Hey!" Keith shouts as he shoots another Galra ship down. "Be careful with Red!"

Okay... so, Keith is still a little mad at Lance. It's understandable, of course, but it still hurts.

Lance sighs and shouts into the coms as he fires (and misses). "Oh, come on, Keith! I'm doing my best."

Suddenly, Lance crashes into an oncoming Galra ship (it came out of nowhere! Promise!) and lets out a scream. "Fuck! I... uh... I meant to do that."

"Yeah, right," Keith murmurs. The sarcasm drips from his voice.
"Shit, guys," Pidge says between shots. "We're kind of a mess, aren't we?"

"Yeah," Hunk agrees, taking down a few more soldiers using his body (lion?) slam. "Besides, we still can't even form Voltron. We're one lion short."

The rest of the group hums in agreement until:

"Not anymore!" A new voice shouts into the coms.

And then, bam. Out of nowhere, Blue comes flying into the battle, taking down a multitude of Galra ships (and missing about half of her targets. But, hey, take what you can get).

"Wait a sec," Lance says. This is just unbelievable. How? Also, why? Oh, God, please. It can't be "Allura?"

"Yep!" She shouts excitedly. Lance can feel the enthusiasm radiating off of her, and it's almost contagious. Almost. "Let's do this- wait where are they going?"

As the Galran soldiers retreat (a shock and relief, honestly), a growl emanates from one of their throats.

Keith, the anger soaking through his words, suddenly shouts: "Come on! We're going after them."

The rest of the team lets out a gasp.

"Uh... Keith?" Lance starts timidly. He really, really doesn't want to make Keith any more mad at him than he already is. "I don't think that's a very good idea."

"You want me to lead, Lance?" Keith snaps back, no even letting Lance finish. "This is how I lead."

Ugh. Long story short, this was a super bad decision which led to much pain, confusion, but, also, the eventual formation of Voltron (razzle dazzle). Maybe Keith's way of leading is a little bit... uh... rash... but, when the whole team really works together, it doesn't end up that badly. In fact, one could
even say it ends up... good?

Maybe they'll be able to manage to win the war without Shiro after all.

Maybe...

A few days pass after that, and lots of unnecessary drama goes down (and what would Voltron be if there wasn't always drama? Probably well rested and actually ready to defend the universe. But there's no time to go into that).

Well, something... really, really big (and really important) happens after that.

Like... really big.

So, they're all split up on another search for Shiro. They've done this before, of course (countless amounts of time), but they've never gotten anything out of it. They've searched everywhere near where he disappeared, in countless Galra ships, but there's always been nothing. Honestly, their hopes aren't high that they'll find anything this time either.

But...

After a few hours of searching, Keith gasps and is suddenly screaming into the coms. "Oh, shit!"

This sudden outburst kind of sends Lance into a panic. What's wrong with Keith? Is he okay? Did something happen to him? Where is he? How far away from Lance is he? Can Lance get to him in time? "What is it, Keith? What's wrong?"

"I found him!" Keith shouts, and grunting can be heard as he makes his way towards... did Keith really find him?

"What?" Most of the team audibly gasps.

"I found Shiro!" Keith repeats.
And Keith did. Keith found Shiro.

The joy is immense, and everyone cheers upon hearing the news.

Shiro honestly looks like a complete wreck, though...

His hair is long and matted, and he's in a dirty, frayed Galran prison uniform.

It's a sight that makes Lance only feel worse about what happened.

They let this happen.

He let this happen.

He let Shiro disappear.

He could have done more...

Should have done more...

But he didn't...

And look at him now.

Oddly, however, despite the horrible shit that he must have gone through, Shiro seems surprisingly unaffected. It's almost as if he never left them.

He acts the exact same as he did before. And, sure, he always had issues before (the whole team could tell despite how well Shiro thought he hid them), but Lance was sure that they'd be worse now
after this whole situation.

Maybe he's completely fine. Hell, they don't know what he went through. It may not have been as bad as they thought. Or... maybe it was so bad that he's just shutting it out of his mind and that's what's causing this whole

He acts the same as he did before he disappeared. Nothing's changed.

Well, except the Black Lion won't let him back in for some reason...

Keith agreed to let him take Black over again.

Shiro was ready to.

But Black just refused to let him in.

It's... strange.

But... once Shiro is able to take Black back over again (surely she just needs to warm up to him again), they have to figure out who gets what lion.

That's all that Lance has been thinking about.

Ever since the initial joy of Shiro's return wore off, his mind has been focused on only that fact.

He could probably stay on the team if he really wanted to.

Allura would probably give him Blue back if he asked her to...

But he couldn't do that to her.
She seemed so happy, and she’s so damn talented.

Keith would definitely be taking Red back.

There’s no way that Lance would let Keith leave the team.

Shiro would be taking Black, of course.

And there’s no way Hunk and Pidge are leaving their lions.

So... shit.

As Lance makes his way towards Keith's room, these thoughts stir in his mind infinitely.

It's not long before he realizes that he's arrived, and he lifts his hand to the door and knocks lightly.

The door opens quickly, and Keith's eyes widen slightly at the sight of him.

*He doesn't want you here.*

*Just leave.*

Lance groans internally. *Just fucking shut up.*

"Hey, Keith," Lance says quietly, looking down at his feet.

"Uh... hey, Lance." Keith's voice is soft. He steps back from the door and makes a gesture to invite him in. "What's up?"
Lance sighs. He crosses his arms over his chest and begins to speak. "Well, I was just thinking..." God, what am I doing?

"What?" Keith cranes his head towards Lance to show that he's listening.

"Well," Lance begins again. "I just... there's... not enough lions."

Keith cocks his head, and Lance continues.

He puts up his fingers. "If my math is correct..." He puts up six fingers. "There're six paladins..." Five go down. One stays up. "And five lions. That's one paladin too many." That finger is ugly, and useless, and unnecessary.

Keith squints his eyes, and Lance does everything possible to try and avoid the eye contact that Keith is obviously trying to initiate.

"Lance..." His voice almost sounds like it's a warning. "What're you saying?"

With a groan, Lance says what he's really thinking. "Look, we should have our best soldiers on the front lines, and I think that the best thing I can do for the team right now, is step down."

Keith almost seems taken aback by this. He puts his hand on Lance's shoulder and shakes him softly. "Lance? What the fuck. No, you're not stepping down."

Lance scoffs and gently brushes Keith's hand off. "Keith! This is a war. Please... don't get sentimental. I can't stay. We have to win this."

It's true, isn't it?

Lance isn't needed.
He just isn't.

He's the weakest link, and the team is only as strong as it's weakest link.

They deserve better.

Keith, not giving up, puts both of his hands on Lance's shoulders. "Hey! Stop that! You're not going anywhere. We need you here."

Not knowing what else to do, Lance just sinks into himself. He's obviously getting nowhere. "Okay."

"Come here." Keith pulls Lance into a giant hug, and Lance feels a small smile sneak onto his face unexpectedly and without permission. Keith is surprisingly affectionate once he gets comfortable. It's a pleasant surprise, honestly.

Lance melts into the hug. It's the necessary affirmation that he didn't know he needed.

"Thanks, mullet," Lance murmurs into Keith's soft hair. He pulls out of the hug and makes his way towards the exit. He doesn't really want to be alone... but that doesn't matter.

"Oh, and Lance?"

He turns around, no knowing what to expect. His heart flutters a bit due to... nerves.

"Leave the math to Pidge."

_Ha. Wow. Geez, mullet, you always know what to say._

A small laugh escapes Lance's mouth, and the door shuts behind him.

Chapter End Notes
AHHHHHHHHHH
Ima go die now
I hope it was okay??
Pls tell me what you thought (even if it's bad I guess (just say it nicely ;-;))
Slipping

Chapter Summary

Keith starts to do more with the Blade of Marmora than with the other paladins, and Lance... well, he really doesn't want Keith to leave.

Chapter Notes

Asdfjfigfjfigfigkuryey hello there
Here is another chapter!
I actually sort of like this one so I hope you guys feel the same :)

ALSO: YOU GUYS ARE TOO AWESOME
OVER 300 KUDOS AND ALMOST 4500 HITS???
A A A A A A H H H H H

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Walking out of Keith's room was kind of difficult.

Lance really didn't want to be alone, but he didn't want to bug Keith anymore than he already had.

And maybe... maybe... Keith wouldn't have been annoyed if he had stayed?

Maybe...

But Lance wouldn't risk that.

Besides, he's perfectly content with sitting in his safe space and listening to his favorite music. Well... maybe a little less than perfectly content, but mostly content.

Watching the stars and planets pass as rhythmic sounds are being pumped into his ears is a surprisingly comforting feeling.
He closes his eyes, and everything else just seems to melt away.

He's left in a blissful state of emptiness.

It's incredibly impermanent, though.

The next few weeks are kind of tough on the team... and Lance.

He's got to remember that his position as Red's pilot might not last much longer.

It's painful but important to keep in mind.

Ugh. Anyways...

The next few weeks are difficult because Keith keeps leaving to help the Blade of Marmora and then the alarm'll go off (very inconveniently), and they'll have to fight the damn Galra without forming Voltron. It's difficult, yes, but Keith just wants to find out more about his heritage. Lance can't blame him, honestly. He frequently has selfish thoughts about leaving the team to see his family again, but he's never actually acted on them. Hello, Keith? The team kind of needs you.

Still, as much as Lance wants to yell at him, he really can't be angry at Keith for wanting to do what he's doing.

Lance still wants to at least talk to him about it, though. He... he needs to tell Keith that they need him. He needs to tell Keith that he needs him. Without Keith... Lance can feel himself slipping, but he knows that he can get through it by himself. If... if he can't... then he just must be... weak.

Ah! No! See, that's exactly what he's trying to prevent! He's slipping! *Slipping! Slipping.*

Lance is afraid of what he'll do once he's really lost his footing.
And the one time that Lance finally gets the courage to talk to Keith about how his absence has been affecting his mental state, he finds that Keith is... crying?

Lance's mind goes into high gear in an instant.

What happened to Keith? Did something happen on the mission? He did just return... Did he get hurt? Did someone else get hurt? What's going on?

"Keith?" He calls out softly, knocking on the door to Keith's room gently. "Are you okay?"

The sniffling stops suddenly then, and a red-eyed Keith opens the door.

"Hey, Lance..." Keith's voice is so, so quiet. It's too quiet. Even for Keith.

Lance moves towards the shorter boy and places a hand on his shoulder. "Keith, what's wrong?"

Keith suddenly wraps his arms around Lance's waist and buries his face into Lance's chest. "I- On the mission..." His breaths are short, and fresh tears are falling down Keith's face.

"Woah, woah, woah." Lance leads Keith back into his room and settles him down on the bed. "Breathe, Keith. Breathe." He takes deep breaths as if showing Keith what to do.

Keith takes deep breaths in time with Lance's, and his breathing slowly becomes more regular.

After some time, Lance looks deep into Keith's eyes, his eyebrows arched in concern. "Better?"

Keith nods slowly and takes Lance's hand when it's offered.

"Okay," Lance says while exhaling. "Now, tell me what happened."

Keith takes one more deep breath before speaking. "On the mission... we thought that we'd found a
ship that could be holding a shipment of quintessence. We thought that we'd found something that proved what suspicions we had about Zarkon's plans... but it was a trap. It- it was a trap, and Regris..." Tears travel down his cheeks once more, "Regris didn't make it out... He- he- there was an explosion, and he didn't" His speech becomes incoherent from there, and he pulls his hand out of Lance's, pressing his hands over his eyes.

Lance feels a wave of sadness hit him upon hearing this. Sure, he didn't know Regris, but seeing Keith this upset shows that he was obviously very important to him. And the fact that he's gone now and that Keith has to deal with that... well, it hurts.

Lance pulls the shaking boy into a hug but says nothing. He doesn't know what to say. Someone died. People die every day for them. It's hard to truly process all of the death around them, so when a death occurs that actually affects one of them... no one knows what to say. Not anymore.

After a while of simply sitting in Lance's arms, Keith's crying eventually comes to a stop, and he just sits silently, not moving at all.

Lance makes no move to release Keith but decides to break the tense silence. "Keith, are you going to be okay?"

Keith remains quiet for a moment before answering with a sigh. "Yeah... yeah, I'll be okay." A pause. "Thanks for listening and... for being here."

Lance smiles softly and brings up a hand to stroke Keith's head. "Of course. It's the least I can do."

The two just continue to sit there together, Keith still engulfed in Lance's arms, before Lance asks another question.

"Hey... Keith? You know that you can always talk to me, right?"

Keith shifts in Lance's arms for the first time in a while. Fuck... was that a weird question? "Uh... yeah... Why?"

Lance flinches slightly at Keith's nonchalant answer. Is it really that simple for him? "No reason," he says quickly. "I just... I wanted to make sure you knew."
Keith hums softly and settles deep into Lance's embrace.

And they just sit there and say nothing, feeling each others breathing. Truthfully, they don't need to say anything. This is a moment that's meant to be quiet.

And Lance just smiles softly, trying to stave off the horrible thoughts that keep crawling into his mind.

A few weeks after that, the team gets a distress signal saying that the Galra are attacking a group of rebels. Of course, they go to their aid as quickly as possible. Well... all of them except Keith. Keith, of course, is on a mission with the Blade of Marmora, so he isn't available to take calls right now. But by the time he gets the fucking message, they'll all be dead. His absence shouldn't be that big of a deal, though, honestly. The group of rebels isn't that big, so the mission shouldn't require that much effort... but holy shit there's a lot of Galra here. In a matter of moments, they're surrounded, and the four team members that are present in the battle are barely managing, even with the help of Coran from the castle.

"Shit!" Pidge shouts into the coms. "There's so many of them!"

"Where's Keith?" Allura asks desperately, narrowly dodging a blast from one of the infinite number of Galra ships.

"I don't know, but he better get here fast!" Lance's voice rings clear, a slight tinge of annoyance in it. No, he's not mad, but it would be super helpful if they could form Voltron right now. A fact that is completely irrelevant since it's impossible to form Voltron without Keith.

"We need Voltron! Where is he?" Hunk says as he tries to hold the multitude of ships off (pretty unsuccessfully).

"He's on a mission again," Shiro murmurs into the coms. His answer is definitely not the one that the rest of the team wanted to hear, and it even draws a few groans from the present paladins.

Looks like they'll just have to manage without Keith.
As they fight and take down as many ships as possible, it seems like two ships join the battle for every one that's destroyed. There's no way that they'll be able to take them all down without Voltron, and Keith doesn't seem like he'll be coming anytime soon.

Lance's thoughts race as he takes down one Galra ship after the other in a way that almost becomes routine after a while.

Is this where they die? What would Keith think if that happened? What would happen to the universe if they were gone? Would the just find more paladins? Do they need Allura for that process? How would Coran react if Allura died? What would Lance's family think if he died? Would they ever know that he died? What about Pidge and Hunk's families? Pidge still hasn't even found their brother and dad yet. Would Hunk's family ever know about what amazing things he did? What would happen to the rebellion if they died? What would happen to the lions? What's going to happen to any of them?

Shit. What're they going to do? They obviously need to form Voltron, but Keith isn't here. God, of all the times for him to be on a mission.

Then, the Black lion flies out of the castle, and Lance feels relief fall over him. Thank God, Keith has finally arrived. Now they can form Voltron and finish this battle.

But the voice that comes through the coms is definitely not Keith. "Alright, team! Form Voltron!"

"Shiro?" Pidge asks in disbelief.

"Oh my gosh, it's Shiro!" Hunk shouts enthusiastically.

Things go pretty smoothly after Shiro takes over the situation. They form Voltron and kick the Galra's asses (of course), and things end up pretty great. Although some of the rebels were injured, most of them escaped the event pretty much unscathed (miraculously). And things ended up perfect... Well... they would have been perfect if they didn't have to discuss Keith's absence during the battle and how that put them all in danger, once Keith returned. God knows when that'll be, though.

Lance honestly feels like a mother.
When Keith finally arrives and walks into the main room of the castle, Lance knows that the combination of dirty looks from everyone must be physically painful. He flinches upon seeing them, already preparing to defend himself. He's still in his Blade of Marmora uniform, and it's obvious that he's just finished a mission.

"I..." Keith starts timidly. "I heard what happened. I'm sorry I wasn't there to help."

Shiro's arms are crossed in front of him. "Keith, you can't just leave the team alone like that."

Keith looks down. His voice is quiet. "I... I know. I just... I was with the Blade, and there was a mission-"

"Keith," Shiro says with a sigh, successfully cutting him off. "Your actions put the team in danger. They could have died. They need you. We need you, Keith."

"No, you don't, Shiro," Keith says exasperatedly, rolling his eyes subtly. "They need you, Shiro! And now, they can have you back as their leader. You reestablished your bond with the Black Lion while I was gone. Now you can be the leader that I couldn't be. I was never meant to pilot the Black Lion." His voice grows quiet as he says his last few statements.

"Don't say that, Keith. You were a great leader," Lance says quietly.

Keith gives Lance a small smile but says nothing.

"Keith," Shiro says softly. "Is that why you've been pulling away from the team?"

Keith looks down again. "I guess that's part of it..." He glances over to Lance for a split-second before looking down again.

"Part of it?" Lance questions. God, he wasn't... When he said that there was... He didn't mean for Keith to... "What's the other part?"
"I'm going to do a mission with the Blades. It could take weeks, maybe months, who knows. I just know that I have to be on that mission." Keith says suddenly. His voice shakes a bit as he speaks, but his back is straight; his chest: puffed out.

That couldn't be the only other reason... right? He... Lance must have done this... He must have caused this when he said... Keith can't... Lance takes a step forward and speaks again. "But-"

Keith clears his throat and Lance flinches slightly. The look Keith gives Lance is alarming, and Lance decides not to push his answer any further.

"What?" Shiro asks in shock.

"Keith! You can't do that!" Pidge shouts, taking a step towards him.

"No..." Hunk whispers, covering his mouth with his hands.

Keith looks away from the team. "I have to do this, guys. You'll be fine without me. Shiro's the rightful leader anyways."

Lance shares a look with Hunk, and Hunk gives him a reassuring look despite the fact that he's obviously not very sure of the situation either.

"If you think that's what you want," Shiro starts softly. "Then we won't try to stop you. Just... just know that we're always here for you."

"I know that," Keith says, looking into Shiro's eyes. "And it means so much to me."

"Oh, come here, mullet," Lance says shakily, seizing the moment to hug Keith goodbye.

"Hey, I want in on this too!" Hunk shouts as he wraps his arms around the two boys, tears openly falling down his face.
Quickly, everyone else joins in on the group hug, too, and it's a tender but sad moment for everyone.

"We're really going to miss you, Keith," Pidge says quietly, their voice shaking.

"Yeah," Allura agrees. "Please keep in touch with us."

"I will," Keith promises with a nod.

"Good luck, Keith," Lance whispers, being the last one to remain in the hug, besides Keith. "I love you, and I know you'll make us proud."

Keith squeezes Lance softly. "I'll do my best... for you."

A small part of Lance feels like it dies as Keith pulls out of the hug and moves towards the door.

He waves as the door closes, leaving the rest of them behind.

The team is left without him.

Lance is left without him.

Lance is slipping.

And now... his tether is gone.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so that's the chapter!
What'd you think?????? *question marks intensify*
Now that time stuff is done we'll get back into some more actual story content (aka a ridiculous amount of angst and a slight amount of fluff)
Yeah...
Good luck with that
As Lance watches Keith disappear behind the door of the castle, he feels anxiety start to take root in his mind.

Lance, of course, decides that the smartest course of action is to retreat to his room before things get really bad.

The team doesn't need to see him like that... Not again.

He walks swiftly down the hall that leads to his room, making sure to choose a path that wouldn't allow him to encounter Keith if he were packing things up from his... old... room.

Lance opens and closes his door quickly before plopping down on the bed. His room is a mess, but it's bearable. It's an organized mess. He knows where everything is that he'd ever need. The phone (or space equivalent of it, courtesy of Pidge) is on the table next to the bed. His clothes are at the end of the bed on the floor. His first aid kit is underneath the sink in the bathroom (safety first, right?). His- well... that's not important. It's not like he'd ever actually need to use it.

Lance picks up his phone and scrolls through his short list of contacts, searching for a distraction from his anxiety inducing thoughts, before he stops, his finger hovering over one name.

God, he's going to miss Keith.
Keith, his tether.

Keith, his love.

What's going to happen when he's gone?

What's going to happen to Voltron?

What's going to happen to Lance?

Deep breaths.

It's okay.

Lance would be fine without Keith...

Right?

Right...

He'd be fine.

Completely fine.

Nothing would go wrong.

Nothing.
Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

You're nothing.

Why do you stay with the team?

Why do you burden them with your presence?

You don't need to stay with them.

You don't need to be here.

You should just give it up.

There's nothing for you here anyways.

Just give up.

Give up.

Give up.

Give up.

You only make mistakes.
All you are is a mistake.

Nothing you do means anything to any of them.

Nothing at all.

Even your mistakes are insignificant.

You are completely useless and stupid.

Why would you think that they love you?

Why do you convince yourself that those fucking lies are true?

They're not, Lance.

You let those liars convince you of your worth.

You let them convince you of your value to them.

It's not true.

Only I am willing to tell you the truth.

Come back to me, Lance.

I'm only doing what's best for you.
I'm only doing what's best for all of them.

Listen to me.

I can help you fix your mistakes.

It'll be easy.

And to start... all you need to do is one thing...

Shit. Shit shit shit shit shit shit shit

No.

No.

No no no.

What did he do?

What did he do?

He wasn't supposed to do that.

He said he'd never do that again.

He promised.

He promised himself.
He promised his mom.

He promised the team.

He promised Keith.

He promised them all.

But he lied.

He's a liar.

He said he wouldn't...

But he did.

He did.

He did.

He did.

What's he supposed to tell them?

What's he supposed to say?

Lance drops the shiny piece of metal and looks down at his thighs, the stinging sensation refreshing yet nauseating at the same time. He simply stares, emotionless, at what he's done... He'd never expected that he'd actually go through with it... But he did... Oh, God, he did.
Once the realization of what he's truly done slivers into his mind, he goes into full panic mode, his heart rate speeding up and his hands shaking. Bile rises in his throat, but he refuses to let himself be sick. It's not real. This must be a dream. It has to be some horrible nightmare. He said he wouldn't do it. He promised. But he lied.

"Fuck..." he stammers out, his eyes darting from object to object, desperate to find something, anything to ground himself.

Phone.

The phone.

He's...

He's got to call Keith.

Keith would know what to do.

He quickly grabs the phone like object off of the bedside table and fumbles through the list of contacts until he reaches Keith's name and clicks on it.

It's late...

He probably won't even pick up.

Maybe...

*That's for the best.*

After three rings or so, a groggy sounding Keith picks up the phone, much to Lance's relief and dismay.
"Hello?" Keith mumbles quietly, the tiredness evident in his voice.

"H-hey, Keith..." Lance says with mock cheeriness.

"Lance?" Keith says, sounding slightly more awake now. "What's up? It's super late."

"Yeah, sorry," Lance says with a laugh. "I just... well... I need to tell you something."

"What is it?"

*What are you doing?*

*Lance, this is stupid.*

*You're making a mistake.*

*Stop it.*

*Stop.*

"Keith, I... I made a mistake..."

There's a moment of silence before Keith says anything.

"What kind of mistake?" Keith asks, although, he surely knows exactly what Lance is saying.

*Lance, it's not too late to stop.*
Just lie to him.

Lie.

You don't have to do this.

I know what's best for you.

Listen to me.

"I... I did what I said I wouldn't..."

"Lance... did you...?"

He's disappointed in you.

You're a failure.

Why would you do this?

You didn't have to say anything.

You could have lied.

You should have lied.

Should have listened to me.

I know what you need.
"I'm only here to help you."

"Why don't you listen to me?"

"I..."

Apparently, that one word is the only answer Keith needs as the call goes completely silent.

"Keith?"

"I'm coming back to the castle."

"What?"

"I'm coming back. Right now."

"No! No... You don't have to do that."

"I..." A pause. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah!" A forced laugh. "Totally! I just... I just made a mistake... I'm... I'm okay."

"Lance... don't do that."

"Do what. I'm not doing anything." Calm voice, panicked mind.

"You don't have to say you're okay when you're not."
"But..." Another pause. "I was getting better. I'm not supposed to do this, Keith. I'm not supposed to make mistakes like this. I-"

"Lance, it's okay to make mistakes. It really is. It doesn't mean that you're not getting better. It doesn't put you back at square one. It's okay. We... we all make mistakes. You... me... all of us..."

Lies.

Don't let him trick you.

"But... Keith, I... I told you I wouldn't..."

"I'm not mad at you, if that's what you're worried about."

"I just..." Shock. Why isn't he mad?

"You can do this, Lance. We can do this. You're not alone. I... the whole team is here to support you... and... I shouldn't have left... I really shouldn't have..."

"Don't you dare blame my mistake on yourself." His voice is firm. "This... it's not your fault. It... it was my decision... and... it was a mistake."

There's silence once more.

"Keith, please don't come back to the castle and leave the blade just because of me. Please."

A pause.

"Fine... Fine. I won't. But you have to promise to tell the rest of the team about..."

You're not doing that, Lance.
You're not.

You've already told Keith.

You can't tell anyone else.

"Yeah, okay..." A reluctant agreement. A lie.

"Okay... good. Do... do you still need to talk about it? Or...?"

"I'll be okay, Keith. Sorry for waking you up."

"Don't be sorry." Too late.

"Love you."

"Love you too."

Lance sighs upon hearing the beep signifying the end of the call. He lies back on the bed, shaking from the stress of the past few minutes. It sure felt like a lot longer, though...

It's odd how long a few minutes can feel when it's literal torture.

Lance, you're not going to tell the team.

They'll be disappointed.

They won't ever trust you again.
Do you really want that?

You've already ruined Keith's trust in you.

Do you really want to make it worse?

Don't tell them.

He can't tell them.

He won't.

He just... won't make the same mistake twice.

He means it this time.

Really.

Chapter End Notes

i made a mistake
Chapter Summary

Mistakes are made, and Lance doesn't know how to fix them.

Chapter Notes

so school's coming up and anxiety and depression are kicking into high gear so you're getting a whole bunch of fucking angst

yayyyyyyyyy

also, this is probably obvious as fuck, but ima say it anyways, none of this fucking shit is a good idea, okay? please take care of yourself because i love every single one of you

anyways yeet good luck it's kinda intense

One mistake is nothing.

Fool me once, shame on you.

Fool me twice, shame on me.

God, what a fool he is, then.

One mistake is nothing.

But what is two?

Three?
What does it matter, Lance?

No one cares anyways.

Well, Keith cares... doesn't he?

He said that he does.

Lies, Lance, lies.

When will you see that?

How many times must I prove it to you?

Why would Keith lie to him about that?

Pathetic.

He wouldn't... right?

You're so gullible.

Keith cares about him.

Stop it, Lance.

He proved that in the call last night.

Stop.
Keith listened... he even said he'd come back to the castle.

*Why do you believe this shit?*

Keith cares. He does.

*Ha. Seems like you're more of an idiot than I thought.*

Why can't the thoughts ever just shut the fuck up?

It's so hard living like this.

The only time that they even momentarily stop is when...

No. He can't. Not again.

*Oh, but what's one more mistake, Lance?*

Yeah... what's one more mistake?

Just one more time.

But, that's what he says every time.


Lance honestly never thought he'd be so happy that he only ever wears long pants. This way, no one can see his mistakes. Hide them from others and maybe he can hide them from himself. Maybe.
Despite the fact that there's not much risk of being caught, training with the team is truly awful in every aspect, every movement of his legs sending a wave of agony to his brain. Salty sweat stings and blood flows. It's all just a reminder. A reminder of what he's done. A reminder of what he hasn't.

"Lance, pick up the pace!" Allura shouts at him. "You're three laps behind everyone else."

Today, of all the days, is the day where Allura decided that they should do a running exercise. Because, of course, it's absolutely necessary to find out how long and how fast you can run. As if battles don't test that enough.

"Sorry, Allura," Lance mumbles, trying to run faster, trying to run through the pain.

Maybe it's good that he's feeling this way. Maybe it'll convince him not to make the mistake again. But, truthfully, the pain is... good. He enjoys it in some sadistic, self-hating sort of way. It grounds him. It makes him so painfully aware of the world around him and what he's going through. Now, there's no argument against the fact that he's struggling. He has the proof. It's all over him. He's drowning in it. He is the proof.

After ten more agonizing laps around the track, Lance falls to the ground, gasping out curses as he feels blood sliding down his leg.

"I have to stop, guys," Lance says through short breaths. "I'm sorry."

"Really, Lance?" Allura asks, exasperation in her voice. "You're tired already?"

Hell yeah, he's tired. His mind constantly whispers how inadequate he is. How he should run faster. How he should work harder. His legs ache painfully every time he moves. Pain gets tiring. It doesn't help that he really hasn't been sleeping all that much either because... well...

Denying himself sleep... it... it makes him feel better.

You don't deserve sleep.
And, so, he doesn't.

It's not all that bad, really. Sure, his eyelids constantly droop, and, for the first few days, he really couldn't do anything right and felt like literal shit, but it's not that bad now. It's kind of enjoyable, honestly. He feels like he's floating on air. Like he's not really present. It's a light feeling. A **good** feeling. Surely it can't be hurting him **that** badly... right?

It's not like it really matters much anyways. As long as he can do what he needs to to protect the universe, it doesn't matter what he does to himself.

As long as the others don't know... it doesn't matter.

*Don't worry them.*

"Lance, are you quite alright?" Allura's voice breaks through his thoughts.

It's then that he realizes that he's still kneeled on the floor, breathing heavily.

He stands up, only swaying a little, before flashing a smile at the girl, who has a concerned expression on her face.

"Yeah, Allura!" He says, false confidence in his voice. "I'm totally fine. I'm just catching my breath."

Maybe it's just Lance, but it seems to be that whenever someone says that they're "fine", they're definitely, one-hundred percent not.

"Are you sure?" The pity soaks her voice, and Lance inwardly cringes. God, he wishes that they'd never found out about his issues. They didn't need to know. It'd have been easier if

"Yes, of course," Lance says, rolling his eyes for added effect. "You don't need to worry so much."

Allura chuckles a bit at this, which makes Lance's heart ache slightly. She worries too much. She trusts too easily. "Yes, you're quite right. I should, as you humans say, 'chill out'?"
Now, this draws a laugh from the boy. A real one. "Exactly."

As Lance finally makes his way towards the shower rooms after convincing Allura of his complete and utter fineness, he stops and remembers that he can't use those. Those are too risky. Too public. Yeah, forget that. Nah. No, thanks.

"Hey, buddy!" Hunk calls from behind him, causing Lance to jump slightly. He must have just finished his running and was aiming to do the same thing that Lance was: get the fucking filth off of him. "Where ya going?"

Shit.

"I'm just going to shower," Lance says, gesturing towards the hall which leads to the paladins' rooms.

"Uh... okay?" Hunk says, eyeing the boy curiously. "Why don't you just use the ones here?"

Shit shit shit.

"I like mine better," Lance says with a shrug.

Hunk moves closer to the other boy. "Okay, but... well... I just... I want to ask you... Are you..."

Lance laughs nervously at Hunk's incessant stuttering. "Just spit it out, Hunk. What is it?"

Hunk sighs softly. "Are... are you okay, dude? You've been acting super weird since Keith left."

Lance's smile just completely drops at this. "Yeah, I'm fine. I don't think I've been acting any differently than before."

"Well, I..." Hunk's eyes dart towards Lance's wrist before quickly looking away once more. "You've
just been more... sluggish, I guess. You're not making as many jokes as usual... I just want to make sure you're alright."

Lance visibly rolls his eyes. "I'm fine, Hunk. Don't be so damn paranoid."

Hunk shrinks away slightly, eyebrows furrowing. "What the heck, Lance? I'm only trying to help."

"Well, I don't need your help," Lance snaps.

Hunk frowns deeply. "Fine, but don't think I believe you. Something's fucking wrong with you."

Fueled on pure adrenaline and anger, Lance doesn't think about the events that just transpired as he makes his way back to his room. He quickly walks into the connected bathroom, with a now fixed mirror, and turns on the shower. He strips off his sweaty, slightly bloody training clothes, revealing red striped thighs, and Lance just stops.

Hunk was just trying to help... Why did... Why did Lance push him away like that?

*You don't deserve help, Lance.*

*You know that.*

*That's why you pushed him away.*

The water is cold and stings the open wounds on his body, and Lance just stands there underneath the constant pelting of the water and his thoughts.

*You can't do anything right, can you?*

*You only make mistakes.*
You make mistakes all the time.

Look at yourself, Lance.

Look at yourself.

Can you see it?

Can you see what you've done?

He can see it.

He can feel it.

He hates it.

He hates it so much.

He hates himself.

Hate.

He's filled with it.

He's such a hateful person, isn't he?

All he can do is hate, and all he does is receive hate in return.

You only get what you give, right?
God, it's such an awful law of life.

If only he could get the opposite of what he deserves.

Though, that probably wouldn't end well for any of them.

No, that law is there for a reason, and it's certainly in full effect for Lance.

He should probably apologize to Hunk.

He should *definitely* apologize to Hunk.

But first... he needs to shower and...

Water can wash away a lot, but it can't wash away your feelings.

*Only one thing can.*

Chapter End Notes

  whoooo boy

  what's even happening even more, honestly
Guilt

Chapter Summary

Lance wants to fix it. He really does. But he doesn't know what to do.

Chapter Notes

sorry for my smol (okee kinda lorge) hiatus lmao
I needed a mental health break for a bit lol
(aka I was feeling pretty awesome and wanted to distance myself from my old feelings
for a bit)
BUT AYYYYYY WE BACK NOW
here's the shit you wanted
or maybe didn't hehe
either way, you're welcome and sorry

See the end of the chapter for more notes

No more.

Please, no more.

He can't.

He won't.

He won't do it anymore.

He promised he wouldn't.

But he'd already broken that promise.
So... he's got to fix it.

*Then what's the point of stopping?*

Shut up.

*You know that I'm right.*

Fuck. Off.

He can't do it.

He *won't*.

"Hey, guys!" Lance shouts, waving cheerily at the rest of the team. It's early in the morning, so he really only gets half-hearted 'hello's from the people who are sitting at the breakfast table. It's fine. He understands. They're just tired *of you.*

"Hey, Lance," Shiro says with a yawn. "I'm guessing you slept better than the rest of us."

Lance looks around at the drooping eyes and vacant stares of the others. Their exhaustion is evident, and he can't help but feel a bit jealous for some ridiculous... frankly, scary reason. He hasn't been sleeping well either. Why doesn't he look like them? Why doesn't he feel as badly as they do? What's wrong with him?

"Uh, yeah..." Lance says with a sheepish smile, running his hand through his hair. "I guess I did." He glances over at Hunk just in time to see the other boy's eyes quickly dart away. Lance's nerves spike, and he stammers out the first thing he can think to say, trying to distract himself from the memories from yesterday that swarm back into his mind. "So... uh... what're we doing today?"
Shiro looks between the two boys, noticing the tension, but says nothing in regards to it. Maybe he just doesn't want to get involved yet. Maybe he thinks it's not worth his time. "I think Allura said something about doing another mindmeld."

Lance visibly flinches at this, looking away from the others who he's sure are looking at him. "Uh... are we sure that's a good idea?" he mumbles. "I mean... after last time..." His voice trails off, and he stares down at his hands.

Shiro places a reassuring hand on Lance's shoulder. "That was a while ago, Lance. I'm sure it'll be better this time." He smiles softly, trying to calm Lance and, less directly, everyone else.

Better...

It'll be...

"Yeah..." Lance says with a forced grin, still not looking up at the others. "Yeah, you're right. It'll be fine."

It'll be fine.

Fine.

Totally.

As Allura and Coran set up the device and pass out the headgear, most of the team fidgets and refuses to make eye contact with each other. Lance can't blame them, honestly. Mindmelds kind of always felt like an invasion of privacy, but no one could have expected the real can of worms that it opened up. But that's over. It's in the past. Everything is fine now. He just has to convince himself of that. But it's not possible to, is it? Especially when he knows it's not true.
You're fine.

He's fine.

Well...

He's not.

He should be able to feel that he can talk to them.

They've told him that numerous times that they'll listen.

That they're there for him.

That all he has to do is say the word when he's feeling bad.

But he can't.

He is physically unable to force himself to put all of his problems on someone else.

They don't deserve that.

No one does.

It's better if he keeps them to himself.

It's better if he thinks he's fine.

But...
Allura clears her throat, and the sound echoes throughout the small room, signifying that they're ready to begin.

"Alright, team! We can do this!" She shouts enthusiastically, throwing a hand in the air, but there's a hint of doubt behind it. The attempt, at least, lifts everyone's spirits a bit, but Lance doesn't like the other part he hears... "Let's hope this goes better than last time..."

He hears a buzz as the machine cuts on and closes his eyes. He's ready to focus on Voltron only. Nothing else matters.

Nothing.

He reaches out into the darkness and feels Red call out to him, and... it's truly an odd feeling.

Red feels much different from Blue. It's almost as if she's simultaneously angry and sympathetic at the same time.

Lance can't lie, though... it's nice.

"Good job, paladins!" Coran shouts, and Lance jumps a bit. It's clear that they're doing well. Maybe that means it'll be over soon.

Lance risks opening his eyes for a moment... just to see what's happening.

He sees Voltron hovering in the middle of the circle of paladins, a comforting sight to see. A sign of their unity. Their... trust...

Then, his eyes hover over each of the paladins one by one. Pidge looks so peaceful and focused, so dedicated to the task put in front of her... Shiro doesn't look so nervous for once, as if this is the one place he can be happy... Allura is still beautiful (duh) but has an aura of strength about her, too... and
Hunk is- oh... he has his eyes open? Why? What's-

In the moment that they lock eyes, Lance sees a flash, and, all of sudden, Voltron is no more.

Then, Lance can see himself on the screen in front of Hunk.

And he feels his memories drift back towards Hunk's and his fight from the day before.

He feels the burning guilt.

The disgusting lies.

The horrible truth.

He reaches up and rips the horrid machine off of his head, throwing it to the ground.

He should have never put it on again.

He should have never trusted that he could keep his secret.

He'd always had such a loud mouth.

Maybe the same principle applied to his brain.

He'd never been good at keeping his own secrets.

Maybe, just a little bit, he wanted people to know.

Maybe that was why...
But now?

Now, he *definitely* doesn't.

He can't ruin this.

He can't break their trust when it's just starting to become stronger again.

No.

No no no no.

*Please* no.

"What is going on between you two?!" Shiro shouts as he sees the bright and quick images flashing in front of an absolutely livid looking Hunk, and Lance's headset on the ground in front of him as he takes heaving breaths, head in hands.

Hunk gives Lance a glare like Lance had never seen before, sending shivers down his spine. He finds that he can't stop shaking.

"Something is very wrong with Lance," Hunk says, not breaking eye contact.

The other team members now turn their heads towards Lance. He can feel them looking for any signs of a problem. They're watching him. They're studying him. As if he were some sort of experiment. As if he were some poor person to be pitied.

He scoffs at the very thought of it.

"I don't know what you're talking about, Hunk," he says confidently.
"Why do you keep lying to me?!" Hunk asks, leaning forward suddenly.

Lance sees Hunk's headset flashback to yesterday.

* A smile.

* It doesn't quite reach his eyes.

* Lance looks so tired.

Lance falters for a moment. Is that what Hunk sees? "I'm not lying to you!"

* Frowns when he thinks no one's looking.

No one should have seen that.

"You always do!" Hunk's voice quiets, and he shrinks back. "You never tell me anything... Nothing that matters, at least..."

* Alone, looking at the stars.

That's...

"Hunk... I..."

"Do you think I can't handle it?"

* Huddled on the floor.
Drenched in blood and tears.

But...

"No, Hunk, I just-"

"You just what?!"

Screaming.

Crying.

A gun on the other side of the room.

No.

Lance can feel their stares.

Is that what-

He-

They can't-

But...

No.
"You're right."

Hunk's head perks up slightly upon hearing Lance say this.

A tremor runs through Lance, a weak smile spreading across his face.

"You're completely right, Hunk." A laugh. "Something is seriously wrong with me."

Silence.

Stares.

"No matter what I do, I can't shake it. A nagging voice. A revelation. Nothing I do can stop it."

Weak laughter.

Tears.

"What am I supposed to do?" A short breath. "I feel like I've tried everything. Every time it seems like something's working, it all goes to shit again."

Terrified looks.

Uncharacteristic seriousness.

"It won't go away. It won't leave me alone."

"Lance?" A step forward.
"No." A pause. "Sorry, just... give me a second..."

Well, he spilled it. He spilled it all. Or at least the parts that mattered.

Now he just has to face the damage left in his wake.

But... that's the hardest part.

Lance takes a deep breath, composing himself.

"Sorry about that." He mumbles. "I lost it there for a second."

"No!" Hunk shouts out suddenly, and Lance looks at him confusedly. "Don't be sorry. Never be sorry for sharing your feelings. Not to your friends."

Lance smiles a bit and sighs softly. "Thanks... for being there... for... tolerating me."

"'Tolerate'? Bullshit. We love you, dude," Hunk's voice is soft. It reminds Lance of home. "Now, come here, buddy." He opens his arms wide and invites Lance in.

Immediately, Lance steps into his arms, embracing the warmth and security.

The other paladins join into the hug too, beginning with Pidge. They all bring such a nice feeling with them, and it's obvious that they care about him and each other so much. It's something he doesn't normally think about in fear that this idea of love will be corrupted too. But, for now, in this specific situation, he'll allow himself to dwell on it.

He's overwhelmed by the love.

By the support.
By the care.

By the guilt.

Chapter End Notes

yeet
yeet
yeet
yeet
yeet the pain away
yeet
yeet
yeet
yeet
**Snapping**

Chapter Summary

Things go horribly wrong during a conversation with Keith.

Chapter Notes

ayyyyy it's Halloween so spoopy
and guess who's going trick or treating as Lance???
this fabulous being

anyways here's your order of sadness

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Anything can be overwhelming if there's enough of it.

Pain?

Absolutely. It doesn't take much of that to overwhelm someone.

Sadness?

Same sort of deal.

Support?

Shockingly enough, it gets pretty overwhelming after a while, too.

"So, this circuit connects to the internal or external one?"

Hunk and Pidge are building... something (okay, Lance wasn't really listening, but it's
not completely his fault). For whatever reason, the two geniuses decided to invite Lance to build it with them. Sure, they're both outrageously smart, but that seems like an error in judgment if Lance has ever seen one. He was hesitant to accept at first because... well...

*You won't have anything to contribute.*

*You'll only hold them back.*

*Such a burden.*

But they insisted. Pidge is honestly one of the most stubborn people that Lance knows, and Hunk sort of takes on that quality when he's around the little gremlin. They simply wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. It's not all bad, of course, and, Lance can't lie, he kind of wanted to take them up on the offer anyway. At least then he wouldn't be alone... Besides, he figured it would be interesting. Hell, maybe he'd even learn something.

But boy, oh boy, this is possibly the worst thing that could be inflicted upon any human being in both the past and future. Well, maybe that's a little dramatic, but it's honestly awful. Lance doesn't really understand anything that they're saying, and, shockingly enough, he really isn't able to contribute much to the process because of that. Lance never thought he was *completely* stupid. He never failed classes (well, not many), and was able to understand most of the things he was being taught with minimal effort. But goddamn if this doesn't make him feel completely idiotic, then nothing else does.

"Ah, Pidge, I think that wire should be welded with the blue internal wire."

Okay, *that* he understands.

"Of course! Duh! How else would the electricity enter a feedback loop, thus allowing the outputted results to be filtered back into the input! Thanks, Hunk!"

Okay, yep, nope. He's out. No more.

Lance quietly makes his way towards the door, hoping that the two hard at work would just not notice him trying to leave. It's not far... The door is in sight... He's so close... Just-
"Lance? Where are you going?"

Cringing, Lance turns his head to look towards a confused looking Hunk and Pidge. He can almost see... hurt? On their faces?

"Oh, I was just going to go back to my room and nap for a little while. Is that cool?" Lance smiles as genuinely as he can and sees Pidge squint but shrug and return to their work fairly quick. Hunk is a bit more hesitant to let him leave, however. Figures.

"Are you sure you want to go? We're going to miss you. Will you be ok-a-"

"Hunk," Lance cuts him off quickly. "I'll be fine. See you at dinner?"

Hunk remains quiet for a few seconds before giving Lance a half-hearted smile. "Alright. Sleep well."

"Will do, good buddy!" Lance says cheerily.

Finally able to escape from the torture of smart people conversations that he doesn't understand, Lance begins to make his way back to his room with a sigh. Of course, he lied about sleeping. He definitely won't be doing that.

No...

Instead, he'll be doing exactly what's expected...

Calling Keith.

Because damn, Lance misses that angel of a boy.
It had been almost a week since they'd talked.

A week!

How Keith survived that long without Lance truly eludes him.

_Easily._

But he's got to hope that Lance-deprivation didn't get to the poor... human... galra... humalra? Galman? Ooh, galman.

The space phone rings a few times, and there's no answer. It's strange... Keith usually answers incredibly quick when possible. Maybe Keith is on a mission. Maybe this is a bad time. Maybe Keith isn't in his room. Maybe Keith just doesn't want to talk to him at all.

_Sounds about ri-

"Hello?"

Keith's voice rings through the line loud and clear, and Lance feels relief wash over him.

"Hey, mullet!" Lance teases. "How's my favorite galman doing?"

"I'm doing- wait... 'galman'?"

The confusion in Keith's voice makes it incredibly hard not to laugh.

"Uh, yeah! You're half galra and half human, so bam! Galman!" Lance pauses to let it sink in for a moment. "Pretty great, right?"
"That's..." A pause. "You are such a dork."

"Why, thank you, sir galman." Lance takes an exaggerated bow, even though he knows that Keith can't see him.

He hears Keith laugh over the line, and a giant smile spreads across Lance's face.

"So, my buddy, pal, friend, galman," Lance starts enthusiastically. "How have things been?"

"They've been pretty good, actually. I've certainly been kept busy, though. There's been so much training, and I've already been on so many missions. I normally don't have time to do anything that isn't related to the Blade. Honestly, it's a miracle I was around to take your call today."

"Ooh! You're a busy boy! I'm kinda jealous. That's certainly different from how things are over here. Pretty much nothing interesting has happened all week."

Well, that's basically true. Nothing happened that was related to battle, at least.

"Really?" Surprise permeates Keith's voice. "Well, I guess you can enjoy the relaxation for a little while."

Lance scoffs at this. "I wish! Allura's been keeping us on a non-stop training schedule."

Keith sucks in a breath. "Yikes. Sounds rough. But... it can't be that bad, right?"

"Oh no, it's so great!" Lance says sarcastically. "I absolutely love training!"

"Alright, smartass, chill out, I'm sorry." Keith laughs softly, and the conversation drifts into a comfortable silence.

Keith's the one who eventually breaks the delicate, frankly enjoyable, quiet.
"So... how have you been feeling?"

Shit.

Lance should have known this question would come along, but he had really, really prayed that it wouldn't.

Guess his wish didn't come true.

"Oh, you know... Not all that bad, really." He's obviously underexaggerating a bit, but it's mostly true. It could have been worse. Yeah...

Keith hesitates for a moment as if he's waiting for Lance to say more, but speaks when he realizes that that's all he's going to hear.

"Did you tell the rest of the team about what happened before?"

Another expected yet dreaded question.

"What are you talking about specifically?" Lance asks, hoping in vain to evade the conversation.

"The phone call we had a few days ago. Late at night." Keith doesn't falter at all.

Lance remains quiet for a few seconds, trying to figure out exactly what to say.

He's got to keep it vague.

Not completely true.

Not completely a lie.
It's got to be perfect.

"They're aware..."

"Oh, my God. Lance, you didn't tell them, did you?"

Well, looks like Lance chose the wrong thing to say.

Keith doesn't even sound angry... he just seems... worried.

A hesitation. "I mean... not directly, no..."

"Lance! You said that you'd tell them!"

"It's really hard, okay?! I'm sorry!"

Keith's voice turns calmer now. "Look, I know it's hard, but-"

"No, Keith!" Lance snaps. "You don't know! What could you possibly know about this?!"

Silence.

"Don't you remember what I told you before?" Keith's voice is low and quiet. It waivers as he speaks. "You're not the only one who's had to deal with this, Lance! I know exactly what it's like to have to tell someone these things! I've been there! Did you seriously forget?!"

And then, Lance remembers their conversation from before... in the Blue Lion. God... how could he have ever forgotten it? It was such a special moment between the two of them... It was something private that they shared. Something intimate...
But now... it's ruined by this event's feelings.

Lance- he... he's got to apologize...

He didn't mean to...

"Keith, I-

But he's cut off before he can even really begin.

"You know what? Save it. I really can't do this right now." Stress leaks into the sound of Keith's voice, and he sighs. "I'll talk to you later."

And with that, the line goes dead.

Shit.

Shit shit shit.

Oh, God, Lance made a huge mistake.

He fucked up so badly.

How is he supposed to fix this?

He... he... it wasn't supposed to...

This is it.
This is the moment that Keith will realize that he can do so much better than you.

That you're nothing but an ungrateful, selfish person.

Who would want to be with someone like that?

You've lost him, Lance.

Just like you always lose everyone else.

No...

He fucked up.

Oh, God, he fucked up.

"Keith, I... I'm so sorry..."

Chapter End Notes

hey
hi
hello
so i has question and it's very important

wassup
how was your day

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