The Tutor
by TheGoodKindOfNerdy

Summary

Because he’s lying. He’s just using you to make himself feel better. He’s guilty, he feels like he hurt your stupid “feelings” and now he’s trying to make him feel better about himself. Because he can see how helpless you are, pining over Lance that he just wants it to STOP.
Keith swallowed air and looked at Pidge, who was looking as if she were about to strangle someone, whether it be him or Rolo, he couldn't really tell. Then he thought of Lance.

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Or where Keith needs a tutor to prepare for finals but ends up creating drama and wishes for death more and more each day.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
My Tutor (He's Not That Bad)

Week 0

Keith Kogane was a senior in high school. He only ever planned for the jobs he wanted in the future, planning out what classes he had to pass to get accepted into certain colleges. This would be the last month of school and Keith was freaking out.

Finals, finals were coming. The Final finals, the finals that would determine his life. Keith was stressing. Like, panic attack stressing. He needed a tutor. For, everything. And he needed one fast.

Keith walked down the halls, looking at all the posters advertising tutors. Most were crossed out, saying they were full, others were half ripped off. Keith scratched his head as he looked at one of the last posters hanging up.

*Need a tutor for math or science. Maybe one for English or Global?*

*If so, call XXX-XXX-XXXX*

*Tell me what subjects you need to study for and I’ll help*

*Hourly rate: 10$ for 1-3 hours, 5$ for 4-10 hours*

*Tutor: Lance McClain*

Okay, so Keith desperately needed a tutor, but he wasn’t this desperate.

So, fun fact, Keith *hated* Lance. No, hate wasn’t a strong enough word. Keith couldn’t stand this kid. Lance was in a few of Keith’s classes and *gods* was he annoying. He was always trying to one-up Keith, always right behind him on test scores, on projects, on everything, Lance was always behind Keith.

“Maybe I could ask Pidge?” Keith muttered to himself. “Ask Pidge what?” a voice said from behind Keith, making him jump. Keith slapped Shiro’s arm as he held his chest.

“Jesus flying Christ, Shiro!” Keith yelled, making the older boy laugh. “What are you even doing here? I thought you had college testing today?” Keith asked as the two walked down the hallway.
Shiro smiled, making his scar rise up on his face. “Tests were canceled because of a car accident on the road nearby. Also, I wanted to see my little Bro.” Keith rolled his eyes as they walked outside.

“Shiro, I’m not your real brother.” Keith said. Shiro laughed. “For the time being, you are.” Shiro said as he opened the passenger door for Keith to his car. “Yeah, but once I mess up with your family, guess who’s getting moved to a different family?” Shiro started the car and turned to Keith. “It’s been a year Keith, you’re not going to leave us.”

Keith was an orphan, his parents dying in a house fire or something, Keith couldn’t remember, or, he just said he didn’t remember and refused to tell anyone.

So, he became a foster kid, moving from house to house. Not a lot of families liked him, he was too angsty, had weird music tastes, caused to much trouble, his sexuality wasn’t “right”. Shiro was the third family he’s been with in the past two years. But finally, Keith had felt like he had a home. Shiro was an amazing brother and his parents were pretty awesome, accepting of both Shiro and Keith’s sexuality.

Oh yeah, Keith is gay. Shiro is bisexual but still pretty interested in girls. Mostly.

“Yeah, but you never know. Anyway, how was studying with ~Matt~” Keith sang the name, making Shiro’s cheeks flush. “A-Allura came too.” Shiro stuttered out, pulling out of the school driveway. Keith sighed. “Shiro, you need to make up your mind. You can’t lead them both on.”

Shiro gripped the wheel. “I know that. It’s just, I mean.” he sighed. “I like Matt, he’s my best friend, we do everything together and he’s cute and funny and smart. I love him more than just friends and I’m pretty sure he does too. But, I also like Allura, she’s….predictable, and sweet. She knows how to cheer me up when I’m sad and I like her more than a friend too. It’s---It’s hard Keith.” Shiro sighed as he stopped at a red light.

Keith nodded. “I know Shiro, I know it’s hard. But what happens if, say, Allura, asks you out. What will you say?” Keith asked, running a hand through his long hair. “I’d say yes.” Shiro’s voice was strained.

“And if Matt asked you out?” “....I’d say yes.” Shiro said, voice tight. Keith inhaled, looking out the car window. “How about,” Keith turned back to Shiro. “You make a pros and cons list about both of them? Write down what you love about them and why. Shiro, both Matt and Allura are
graduating soon. You need to make a decision.” Shiro nodded.

“Fine, just,” Shiro looked at Keith. “Not yet.” Keith nodded in agreement as he turned on the radio, eyes lighting up. “Holy fuck, this is my shit!” Keith yelled.

Shiro rolled his eyes. “Language.” Shiro said but Keith didn’t hear him because he was too busy singing. “UH-HUH, THIS MY SHIT, ALL THE GIRLS STAMP YOUR FEET LIKE THIS……..FEW TIMES I’VE BEEN AROUND THAT TRACK, SO IT’S NOT GONNA JUST HAPPEN LIKE THAT!” Keith yelled and Shiro laughed, joining in.

“’CAUSE I AIN’T NO HOLLABACK GIRL!” “I AIN’T NO HOLLABACK GIRL!”

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“Hey mom, we’re home!” Shiro called, placing his keys on the hook by the door. Keith and Shiro slipped on slippers onto their feet as they entered the house.

A short, plump woman with brown, japanese eyes walked up to them. “Boys! How was school?” she asked, navigating them to their chairs at their table.

“Same old. I’m considering getting a tutor.” Keith said as Shiro’s mom gave them both a plate with cookies. “You? A tutor? Keith, you do not need a tutor my dear.” Keith smiled. “That’s nice, Mom-ish. But I just want to be prepared. I wanna get into a good college.”

“Call me Mom,” she told Keith as an answer, like she does everyday.

She then nodded, leaving the room to continue cleaning up the kitchen. Shiro looked at Keith. “Hey, Keith. I’ve never asked but, what do you want to do? Like your job?” Shiro asked. Keith shifted in his chair as he bit into his cookie. “Well, I was thinking. I know I’m not gonna do something like military like you did, or computer graphics like Pidge is. I mean, I like to draw and so I was thinking about jobs that I could use that in and…” Keith trailed off and looked up at Shiro.

“I wanna be an animator.” Keith said finally. Shiro smiled. “Hey man that’s a pretty cool job. Do you know what school you want to go to?” “I was thinking School of Visual Arts?” Keith said. Shiro’s eyes widened along with his smile.
“That’s in New York, right?” Shiro asked Keith nodded. “Yeah, a little far from here, but close enough I can still visit occasionally. I really want to just, go to college now.”

Shiro smiled as he cleaned up their now empty plates. “Keith, patience yields virtue. I’ve told you that how many times?.”

“Twelve this week.” Keith replied and they both laughed.

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Keith stared at his phone as he lay on his bed. He debated with himself between pressing “call.” Did he really need a tutor this bad? Why was he even considering Lance, he was worse than him at everything. But still, he was the only tutor still available that was in his grade.

Sighing, Keith pressed call, sitting up in his bed. Almost immediately, someone picked up. “You have reached the line of Lance McClain, who is speaking?” a voice said flirtatiously. Keith sighed and rolled his eyes.

“I’m calling to ask for tutoring.” Keith said, ignoring Lance’s question. Lance brightened on the other end. “Oh really? What subject would you like me to help you in?” Lance asked and Keith could hear him moving around on the other end.

“All of them.” Keith answered. There was silence on Lance’s end until he laughed. “Wow, you must suck at learning, right?” Keith smirked. “Not exactly, I just want to be prepared for my Final finals.” Keith answered.

“Oh, you’re in my grade?” Keith nodded until he remembered Lance couldn’t see. “Yeah, I just want to be prepared.” Lance made a humming sound. “Kay, so, I’m guessing you want to get to studying right away? I’m free Wednesday at four to six, if that’s okay with you we could go to the public library then?”

“Yeah, sure. I think I’m free.” I'm free everyday, Keith thought. “Great! See you then!” Lance hung up. Keith sighed. “It’s just until finals, you need to study.” Keith muttered to himself. “Just, three weeks you have to deal with him.”
Keith woke up Wednesday morning to fifty texts, all from Pidge. He groaned as he sat up, grabbing his phone, dialing her number.

“What the hell do you want, Pidge?” Keith asked. He could hear another voice on the other end. “Keith, okay. So you know how you love to make your little animations? Well I found this competition were the grand prize is a scholarship to New York’s School Of Visual Arts!!!!! Isn’t that the place you want to go?” Keith was awake now, eyes wide.

“Wait wait wait. Are you serious?” Keith asked. “Yes and--- HUNK I’M ON THE PHONE! STOP TOUCHING THAT!--- I thought it would be really cool. You wouldn’t have to worry about paying the tuition on your own and it means even if you are assigned to a new family, you’ll still have a place to go!” Pidge was practically screaming in Keith's ear.

Before Keith could answer, a crash on the other end of the phone was heard. “HUNK I SWEAR TO FUCKING GOD I’LL---I gotta go Keith.” Pidge yelled. “WaitWaitWait, sign me up for the animation contest.” Keith said.

Pidge paused. “Right away sir.” Keith could practically see her saluting to him on the other end. “HUNK I’M GONNA FUCKING KILL YO--” Pidge hung up and Keith laughed, standing up and stretching.

“Okay, plan for the day, One) go to school, Two) don’t die, Three) meet Lance at the library at four.” Keith muttered to himself and jumped when his alarm clock went off. He growled as he hit the snooze button. “Stupid Pidge, making me get up before my alarm.”

Keith pulled on his usual clothes, an outdated band shirt (My Chemical Romance) some black ripped skinny jeans, his black gloves and his red beanie. Casual.
“Someone actually called you?” He heard Rolo say behind him. “Yeah, finally got someone to call for tutoring!” Lance replied. “Who are they?” Rolo asked while spinning his pencil in his hand. “They’re, uhm,” Lance’s face fell and he sighed. “Fuck, didn’t get their name. Well, I’ll know when I meet them later.”

Rolo laughed straightening his hat over his ears. “Yeah sure. What if it’s someone you hate?” Rolo asked. Lance laughed at that. “Please, I don’t hate anyone, because no one hates me. I mean, could you even hate this?” Lance smiled and gestured to himself.

Rolo scoffed. “Ask Nyma.” He said and Lance pouted. “Okay, man, exes do not count.” Finally Keith snapped, turning in his chair to face Lance.

“Do you have an off switch?” Keith growled out. Lance smiled. “Maybe.” Keith rolled his eyes and turned back in his chair, muttering something. It sounded like…. only a few weeks?

Lance shrugged and turned back to Rolo. “Not even him?” Rolo asked. Lance raised an eyebrow. “What?” He whispered. “Don’t you hate Kogane?” Rolo whispered. Lance shook his head. “I despise, loathe, can’t stand the guy, but I don’t hate him.” Lance answered before the teacher whacked her ruler against her desk, making the two jump. She glared at them, telling them to pay attention.

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“Hey, hey Lance, are you eating with Pidge and me today?” Hunk asked. Lance nodded as he put his arms behind his head. Hunk pulled at his shirt sleeve. “Uhm, Pidge’s bringing Keith with her.” Hunk said.

Lance stopped walking for a second. He sighed then continued walking. “Yeah sure. That’s fine,” he smiled and turned around. “Someone finally called me for a tutor.” Hunk smiled. “Oh dude, that’s cool, who is it?” Hunk asked. Lance shrugged. “Dunno, didn’t get their name.” Lance answered as they walked into the cafeteria.

Pidge ran up to them, dragging Keith behind him. Pidge glared at Hunk briefly before saying hi to Lance.

“What did Hunk do?” Lance asked Pidge. Pidge smiled and pointed an accusing finger at Hunk. “This boy, broke my laptop this morning, and tried to blame it on Rover!” “The dog?” Lance
asked, looking at Hunk. Pidge nodded. “Yes, the dog, who, may I remind you, Hunk, is at my neighbors house until i finish studying!”

“I-I forgot that.” Hunk stuttered out and twirled his fingers. “Hunk, seriously. Don’t break Pidge’s things, she fucking yelled in my ear this morning on the phone.” Keith said and Lance looked at him.

Lance didn’t really understand Keith. This boy had been in his filming class, he had been at the top of he class, until three months ago when Keith dropped out. Also, his eyes. They were purple, which Lance didn’t get. Were they contacts or something? And if so, who the fuck wears purple contacts, eyes like that aren’t normal.

“What are you staring at?” Keith asked, interrupting Lance’s thoughts. Lance shook his head and looked back at Keith. “Nothing, was thinking.” Lane answered and Hunk smiled. "Thinking ’bout you’re tutor subject?” Hunk asked.

Lance rolled his eyes, not noticing Keith shift awkwardly in his spot. Lance poked Hunk’s shoulder and scoffed. “One, don’t call it that, it sounds like I’m torturing them and tw--” “If you’re the tutor, it is torture.” Pidge interrupted.

Lance frowned. “And two , no, I wasn’t thinking about that. I was thinking about finals.” Keith snickered, which earned a glare from Lance.

The four walked over to a table, Pidge and Keith going on line to order food, Hunk pulling out a fucking buffet of food, and Lance, a sandwich.

Pidge and Keith came back from the lunch line and sat down, Pidge across from Lance, Keith next to Pidge, Hunk across from Keith, Lance next to Hunk.

They ate in silence until Pidge finished, fishing something out of her book bag. “So, I have an idea.” Pidge said, holding the item behind her back. “No.” Keith said and Pidge growled at him. “I haven’t even said anything yet.” she replied

Keith took a fork full of school pasta before answering. “Yeah, but the idea is yours, so no.” Pidge, ignoring Keith, placed a game board sized box on the table. The three boys gave it a questioning look.
“....A box?” Lance asked and Pidge kicked him under the table. “Idiot, it’s inside the box.” Pidge lifted the lid to show the group a ton of game cards, along with about 100 small blue squares and 50 red ones.

“I call this game, Truth Or Dare, the card game.” Pidge said. Hunk raised an eyebrow. “Pidge, I’m pretty sure that is already a thing.” Pidge ignored him.

“I made up the cards. The object of the game is for each truth you answer, you get a red piece, for each dare you complete, you get a blue one. At the end, whoever has the most pieces, win.” Pidge explained. Keith picked up a red piece.

“But why are there less red ones then blue ones?” He asked and Pidge’s glasses did that anime glare thing. She smirked. “You’ll see. Lance, Truth or Dare?” Lance jumped but smiled.

“Dare.” he said as he picked up one of the blue cards. His eyes widened as he read the card. “D-do I have to?” he asked. Pidge smiled and nodded.

Lance sighed as he placed the card down, standing up on his chair and Keith leaned in his seat to read the card.

Get up on a platform and sing as loudly as possible, “Deep Throat”

Keith covered his mouth as he held in laughter, looking up at Lance. His face was red, but he started to sing anyway, in a small, cracking voice.

“Hump me, fuck me
Daddy better make me choke
Hump me, fuck me
My tunnel loves a deep throat.”

The whole cafeteria was laughing and Lance sat down quickly. “Why is that a card?” Lance asked as he grabbed a blue square. Pidge smiled. “That was one of the least bad, for you at least, cards in there.”
Keith was dying. Of laughter, that was. He held his sides as he held in laughter, resting his head on the table and Lance huffed out.

“Glad you’re enjoying it.” Lance said sarcastically. Hunk nervously reached for a Truth card. He read the question, face turning red. “U-Uh, I.” Hunk placed the card down and showed them.

*Who is your crush?*


“...ay” Hunk repeated. Lance frowned. “Hunk,” he said and Hunk inhaled. “Shay.” He answered and the three rolled their eyes. “That’s not really a secret, Hunk. You talk about her all the time.” Keith said and handed Hunk a red piece.

Hunk’s face went red as he took the red object. Keith grabbed a Truth card and read it aloud.

“What is a secret no one else knows?” Keith read and tapped the card against his lip. “I know who Lance is tutoring at Four to Six in the library today.” Keith answered.


Pidge grabbed a card, humming softly as she chose a Dare. “Spin in circles then pick a card and give it to the closest person.” Pidge got up and spun in multiple circles, the four of them earning a few strange looks from nearby tables. Pidge, clumsy, walked to the table and grabbed a dare card, handing it to Lance.

Before Lance could read the card, the lunch bell rang and Pidge cleaned up the cards at lightning speed.

Keith and Pidge walked off to their classes, Hunk and Lance the opposite way. “So you got a tutor, right?” Pidge asked Keith, who turned an raised an eyebrow.
“Did I tell you?” he asked, confused. Pidge smiled and shook her head. “Nope. Shiro did. I was just wondering. Is it Lance?” she asked, smiling smugly and looking up sideways at Keith. “Yeah, why?” Keith asked.

Pidge looked forward, smiling even more smugly. “No reason.” Keith raised an eyebrow, but the bell rung and the two had to rush to science for class.

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Keith was sitting in his room, staring at the wall. He just had to sit here, for two hours, until it was time to study. Keith, subconsciously, pulled out his phone and looked for new texts.

No New Messages

Keith sighed and flopped backwards onto his bed. Two hours, what to do? Keith smiled and got out his sketch book, flipping through it to find a free page. Finding one, he grabbed a few charcoals, black dust getting on his hands, and started sketching out his idea.

By the time three forty rolled around, Keith’s hand was covered in black, and his sketchbook page was filled with a charcoal drawing of himself. He smiled at it before hearing his alarm go off, jumping up and grabbing his textbooks, Keith ran off to the library.

When Keith got to the library, he looked around for Lance, noting the cuban had not shown up yet. Keith took a seat at one of the study tables in the quietest part of the library. His phone buzzed and he looked at it, seeing a text from an unknown number, he opened up the message.

Unknown: Where are you sitting at?

Keith figured it was probably Lance, and responded by typing a quick response.

Keith inhaled slowly, realizing he was the only one at the table. His eyes moved around the library, spotting a girl from his arts class, Nyma, and another girl wearing some weird alien-like mask. He remembers asking her once why she wore it and she mumbled something about brainwashing.
“Keith?” A voice asked. Keith’s eyes moved to the left and locked with Lance’s. “Oh, uh, hey Lance.” Keith said, looking down at his textbooks. Lance stared at him for a few moments as his eyes widened in realization.

“No!” he yelled, slamming his books on the table. Keith jumped along with Nyma. “You are not who I’m tutoring! No, I’m not going to teach someone who still wears a mullet in the 21st century!” Lace yelled. “Quiet you two!” A woman yelled at them from behind the library check-out counter.

Lance sighed, turning back to Keith. “Why do you even need tutoring? You score higher than me on everything.” Lance said as he sat down, the chair farthest from Keith. Keith rolled his eyes. “Like I said on the phone, I’m preparing for finals.”

Lance rolled his eyes two. “Shouldn’t you be listening to Green Day or My Chemical Romance instead of studying for something you don’t need to?” Lance asked. Keith raised an eyebrow, then crossed his arms. “What makes you think I listen to Green Day or M-C-R?” Keith asked, sounding offended.

Lance scoffed, leaning forward on the table. “You’re so emo. I bet you sit in your room listening to Twenty-one Pilots all day, all your clothes are black. Your wardrobe probably consists only of Hot Topic clothes. Hah! I bet you write angry poetry at night!” Lance exclaimed.

Keith laughed. “Uh-huh. Sure. And I bet you listen to Shakira, Hollaback Girl and old pop songs all day. You probably flirt with yourself in the mirror in case a girl ever shows any interest in you. And your wardrobe consists of blue and blue only.” Keith said.

Lance puffed out his cheeks, ready to protest until he looked at his shirt. Light blue with darker blue “V”-like design. “And you’re wrong, by the way, about me.” Keith continued, pulling out his sketchbook. “I draw all day. And I-, yeah I listen to all three of the above bands, but I also listen to Gwen Stefani and the Spice Girls.”


“Yes, Shakira. I’m still paying you.” Keith said. Lance pretended to think about it, ignoring the
nickname and looking up at the ceiling. “Fine then. I’ll tutor you. But only because you listen to Spice Girls, and you’re paying me.” Lance said, pulling out his own textbooks.

Keith snorted as Lance started writing down some mock equations for him to finish. Lance handed the paper to Keith. Keith raised his eyebrow at it, tilting his head. “When did we--” “Last year. I’m quizzing the oh-so-great Keith on how well he can remember things from throughout his years. Our finals, as my sister Rosie told me, consist of everything we’ve learned throughout high school.”

Keith tilted his head the other way before putting the paper down to write. He looked briefly up at Lance. “Guess it’s great having an actual sibling.” Keith murmured low enough for Lance to not hear.

Keith picked up his pencil. ‘Solve for K: -x 2 - (k + 7)x - 8 = -(x - 2)(x - 4).’ Yeah, okay. He could do this.

~~Four minutes later~~

“How the fuck do you do this?” Keith asked and Lance looked up in surprise. “You really don’t remember how to do this? I thought you were stalling or something.” Lance moved so he could sit next to Keith.

:Okay, so you need to simplify on both side of the equation, duh, you did that. But now you need to isolate the variable. And you end up with,” Lance showed the paper to Keith. Now with the answer: k = x-15.

Keith scrunched up his nose. “Yeah, I guess that was easy, after you explained it.” Keith grumbled angrily, a little mad Lance was actually better than him at something. Lance laughed a little.

~~three hours later~~

“You owe me 30$.” Lance said. Keith rolled his eyes, handing him a twenty and a ten. “Thank you. I actually learned something from you.” Keith said, jokingly. Lance gasped. “I don’t know whether to be happy or offended.” Lance said.

Keith grinned a little, picking up his stuff. Lance looked at the sketchbook Keith pulled out earlier.
“Hey, can I look at your sketches?” Lance asked. Keith looked at his sketchbook then at Lance. “Hmm,” Keith looked at his sketchbook once more. “Only if you promise to tutor me again.” Keith said, finally.

Lance raised an eyebrow. “Sure. When?” “Friday. You know a lot more than I thought you did and I have no social life.” Keith said, laughing at himself a little at the end. Lance grinned. “Sure, but you’re still paying me.” Keith nodded and Lance reached for his sketchbook. Quickly grabbing it, Keith grinned at Lance.

“You can look at them next time.” Keith said and Lance whined. “Awe, come on!” Lance whined and Keith began to walk away. Lance almost fell out of his chair trying to chase after Keith. Keith smiled to himself as he watched the latino trip over his own feet trying to catch up to him.


Shiro’s car was outside for Keith and Keith ran up to him. “Hey Shiro!” Keith said, jumping into the back seat upon seeing Matt in the shotgun seat. “Hey Matt.” Keith said, giving Shiro a pointed look. Shiro’s face reddened. “Not now,” Shiro mouthed.

Matt turned to Keith as they started to drive away. “Hey, so I heard you got a tutor?” Matt said, it being more of a question though. Keith shrugged. “I just wanted to be prepared. But, it turns out i actually did need a tutor, we went over practice equations and I didn’t know it. Lance had to explain it to me.” Matt tilted his head.

“Lance? As in, ‘Lancelot,’ ‘Lance McClain,’ as in the Lance that Pidge claims has a vendetta against you? That Lance?” Matt asked. Shiro raised an eyebrow too and looked in the mirror at Keith. “You didn’t tell me you tutor was Lance.”

Keith shrugged. “It’s not like we’re fighting while studying. And he does not have a vendetta against me.” Matt made a face “M-hm,” he replied sarcastically. Keith frowned. “Shiro! Make your boyfriend stop teasing me!” Keith whined. Both Matt’s and Shiro’s faces flushed.

“Shut up Keith,” Shiro said, sternly. Keith smiled to himself, pulling out his phone.

Two new text messages from: Lance and Pidgeon
Lance: Hey, so I have 2 babysit on friday but we could study here

Keith: sure. I don’t really care where we study

Keith looked out the moving scenery through the window before looking at his phone again.

Pidgeon: so,

Pidgeon: If Hunk is dead tomorrow

Pidgeon: It wasn’t me

Emo-McNugget: Pidge, wtf

Pidgeon: HE BROKE MY LAPTOP KEITH

Pidgeon: AND HE BLAMED IT ON ROVER

Emo-McNugget: that’s still not a good reason to kill someone.

Pidgeon: THAT LAPTOP WAS ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE AND HARD TO FIND LAPTOPS ON EARTH, KEITH.

Pidgeon: WHO THE FUCK IS GONNA REPLACE IT?

Pidgeon: HUNK IS WITH HIS SEVERED BODY PARTS.

Pidgeon: I’LL SELL HIS ARMS FOR FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS EACH. HIS HEART’LL GO FOR ONE THOUSAND.

Emo-McNugget: …. 

Emo-McNugget: you thought this out, didn’t you?

Pidgeon: HE BROKE MY LAPTOP OF COURSE I’VE THOUGHT THIS OUT.
New Text Message from: Hunk-io

Hunk-io: JSHDHSGWHSISJSUWIGSJHAIWHI
Hunk-io: I FUCKED UP

Keithy-boy: I can tell.


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Keith entered the house, kicking his shoes off at the door as Matt and Shiro walked to Shiro’s room.

Flopping onto his bed, Keith pulled out his sketchbook, tapping his pencil on it. He was on the second to last page of it and wanted to make the last pictures the best. Keith smiled and started drawing five people bases as Shiro knocked on his door.


Keith sat up, leaning on his knees, looking up at Shiro. “Did you make the list?” he asked and Shiro shook his head. “Shiro, make the list.” he said and Shiro let out a weak laugh. “Okay, Cap’n Knives.” Keith rolled his eye, throwing his pencil like a dart at him, making it stick to the wall briefly before falling.

“Leave. I wanna sleep. Go hang with your ~boyfriend~ and ~girlfriend~.” Keith sang. Shiro rolled his eyes, throwing the pencil back at Keith. “Yeah, see ya.” Shiro called.

Keith smiled and laid on his bed, looking at the ceiling. He didn’t understand why Shiro was
having such a hard time choosing. Matt was clearly the better option, at least, in his eyes. Hunk would argue and say Allura was better for Shiro.

But Keith liked Matt. For Shiro, he means. Matt was like another brother to him, always helped him out with life, when he was in his heavy depression phase, he would help him get out of it, would lead him in crowds were he often had anxiety attacks. He also, when he moved in with Shiro’s family, helped him learn everyone’s name and how the Shirogane’s treated their house.

Keith didn’t really know anything about Allura. Yeah, sure. She’d helped him unpack moving in here, but Keith can’t remember the last time they’ve ever had a normal conversation.

Keith sighed and fell asleep.

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“Keith! Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!” Someone was pounding on his door. Groaning, Keith stood up, stretching his arms back and opening the door.

Pidge flew in, pushing him back and shutting the door again. “Pidge, the fuck?” Keith asked once he’d landed on the floor. Pidge looked at him and nervously laughed. “Hah…. so uh,” Pidge flopped onto Keith’s bed. “Fun fact.”

Keith turned and looked at her. “Hunk is scary.” She said, cracking a weary smile. “He chased all the way here, yelling at me because I may or may not have kidnapped Yellow.” Pidge said sweetly, kicking her small legs. Keith’s eyes widened.

“How, do you, kidnap, a bird?” Keith asked and they heard heavy footsteps stomping through the house up to Keith’s room. Pidge held a finger up to her mouth, signaling for him to be quiet.

Keith grinned, standing up and walking to the door. Eyes widening, Pidge hid behind the bed. “Hunk!” Keith yelled out the door. “She’s in here!” Said man came running down the hall, smiling sheepishly.

“Sorry to barge in like this, I know she’s in here though.” Hunk said, walking into the room. Pidge stood up and pointed an accusing finger at Keith. “Traitor!” Pidge yelled as Hunk lobbed a pillow at her, making Pidge shriek and hide. “GIVE ME BACK MY GODDAMN FUCKING BIRD,
“PIDGE!”

“SHE NEEDS TO BE WITH HER KIND!”

“YOU’RE A HUMAN, PIDGE. NO MATTER WHAT!”

Pidge gasped offended.

Keith shook his head in annoyance. “You guys, both stop fighting. Or else.” Hunk turned to look at Keith, curiously. Pidge made a face. “Or else what?” She asked.

Keith smiled and pointed at both of them, singing something to the tune of Katy Perry’s Last Friday Night.

“Last Friday Night.” Keith pointed at Pidge. “Pidge got super duper drunk,” he pointed at Hunk. “than Shay, Hunk said that he loved, I got it on video. LAST FRIDAY NIGHT!” Hunk and Pidge stared at Keith, mouths open in shock and Hunk put the pillow on the floor.

Keith smiled and waved them both out of the room. “Now begone! I have yet to change and you guys are being too loud.” Keith said. Pidge rolled her eyes. “If I know Matt, he’s probably already up.” Keith shook hi head, looking at Pidge. “Allura stayed over too.” Keith said.

Pidge blew out extra through her nose in anger. “If Shiro doesn’t fucking pick one of them soon,” she let the threat hang in the air and walked out, dragging Hunk with her.

Keith sat on his bed and flopped backwards. He exhaled slowly. “Great way to start the day.”
Week 1

Keith rubbed his eyes as he walked out of his room. He walked into the kitchen to see Matt sitting at the table, a cup of tea in his hands, staring at his cup lifelessly.

Keith pulled out a chair and sat across from him. “Hey Matt.” Keith said and Matt looked up a little sadly. “Hey Keith.” there was silence for a few moments and Matt looked down the hallway. “Keith, i know this might sound, weird and maybe…..selfish but,” Matt looked at Keith questioningly.

“Does Shiro ever talk about me? Like, at all? Or does he only talk about like, school or….Allura?” Matt asked. Keith looked at him apologetic. “He doesn’t really talk about either of you. I mean, he does mention both of you from time to time but, not really, a….lot.” Keith lied through his teeth, looking Matt right in the eyes.

Matt sighed and took a sip of his tea. He stood up. “Uh, anyway, sorry for this, uncomfortable conversation, i should get ready for class.” Matt said. Keith opened his mouth to remind him he didn’t have classes until way later, but and Allura came running out of Shiro’s room, her travel brush in her hand and running through her hair.

Matt left the house and Keith turned to Allura, who was fighting her shoes on. “Hey, Allura. Where’s the fire?” Keith asked. Allura’s head whipped around. “My dad,” she jumped into her shoe. “Called me ten minutes ago, calling me back home. Tell Shiro I’ll see him in class.” Allura said as she slammed her foot into her other shoe.

“Kay. Tell Alfor I said hi.” Keith replied as he adjusted his jacket, he’d gotten dressed right after Hunk and Pidge had left. Allura nodded then ran out of the house.
Keith stretched his arms above his head, eyes shifting to the clock next to him. “Shit.” he screamed and stood up fast, running his fingers through his hair before walking out the door with his shoes. He walked into them easily then grabbed his bag which he hid in a bush so he could ignore his homework easier.

He walked to the end of his street, pulling out his phone when he suddenly felt a weight on his shoulder. Keith turned annoyed, only to see Lance with his arm draped around him. “Hey Mullet. Whaddup?” Lance asked.

Keith rolled his eyes and pushed Lance’s shoulder off him. “You may be my tutor, but i still don’t like you.” Keith said. Lance scoffed. “C’mon, who doesn’t like this?” Lance asked, gesturing to himself. Keith started counting off on his fingers. “Me, Nyma, that one random alien obsessed girl, Loto--” “Okay I get it!” Lance interrupted then smiled a crooked smile at Keith.

“Bu-dum .”

Keith felt a heavy thump in his chest when Lance had made that expression but he simply ignored it. “Anyway, amigo.” Lance said. “My sis Rosie, and my younger sibs Rachel and Miguel will all be there tomorrow. I don’t get why Rosie couldn’t just babysit but, anyway, I just wanted to let you know, they all mostly speak in spanish unless we have guests, and even and they still mostly speak the former. Just wanted to let you know.”

Keith nodded, annoyed and wondering why the bus hadn’t arrived yet. There was only one other person at Keith and Lance’s bus stop and that was Shay’s brother, Rax. Rax for some reason didn’t like Keith’s group of friends and Lane, he thought they were suspicious of something always.

Finally , the bus arrived at their stop and Keith practically ran onto it. Lance saunters onto the bus and sits in the seat across from Keith. Great, he wants to keep talking , Keith thought to himself. Okay, don’t get Keith wrong, he hates Lance, but it’s not like that’s why he wants to avoid conversation. Keith is very, sensitive , in the mornings.

Meaning, he’s more prone to anxiety or panic attacks. He can normal deal with them fine unless he’s put under a lot of stress, or put in an extremely awkward position. Much like now….

So of course Keith started freaking out when Lance continued talking about his family. Keith wasn’t trying to ignore him, he was mostly listening, though he found that the more Lance talked, the less his nerves were riled up.
Lance was going on about his family, Maria and Mario, his twins siblings who would be at a soccer ball competition tomorrow night. His older sister Rosita, or Rosie as Lance seemed to call her, from the way Lance talked about her, made her seem like a nice person, but also like she would slap a bitch. Lance talked about his dad, Juan, who was most of the time on business trips. His mom, Amelia, who was a house mom but had to go to a meeting with a friend tomorrow. Miguel, who was apparently a big prankster. And Rebecca…

Rebecca had leukemia. That made Keith look at Lance, who was now smiling softly at his hands. “I love Beckie.” Lance said. “She’s amazing, nice, a pure sweet heart. She’s, she’s bald now, but man can she make a mean braid. Ohmigod!” Lance yelled, slamming his hand on the bus seat, making Keith jump. “Can she braid your hair?” Lance asked.

Keith raised an eyebrow at Lance and was considering shouting ‘no’. But, Rebecca, if she likes braiding hair…..Keith has long hair-ish… why not?

“Sure.” Keith mumbles out and Lance grins and something about it, just…

_Bu-dum_.

The bus pulls into the school and Keith stands up, grabbing his bag and walking off the bus, only to be attacked by a small gremlin. “KEITH! PLANS, SITUATION, NOW!” Pidge yells, she notices Lance and grabs his arm, dragging the two of them behind the school. “What is i---” “Sh!” Pidge whisper-yells as she points around the corner.

Lance and Keith both peek around the corner to see Hunk and Shay. “Sh-Shay, I wanted to, I just wanted you to know that, that I, um….” Hunk trailed off.

“Holy shit, he’s doing it.” Keith mumbles and a hand is covering his mouth. Keith glares at Pidge but looks back as Shay envelopes Hunk in a hug. “Hunk! I love you! You’re amazing, you’re nice, you have awesome skills, you’re so sweet!” Shay yells, smiling a closed-eyed smile. Hunk smiles back and hugs her too.

“Shay, I love you too! You’re nice, and beautiful, and kind, and you’re an amazing sister to Rax, even when he told on you to the Principal Zarkon. You’re the sweetest and kindest person I’ve ever met. I, do, would you go out with me?” Hunk asked and Shay nodded.

The bell rang, making the five jump and Lance, Keith and Pidge all ran to their class before Hunk
could catch them. Keith separates from Lance and Pidge, taking a seat in his homeroom class.

Lance slid into his seat next to Pidge just as their homeroom teacher, a very fun and happy guy named Coran, walked in. The way Voltron High works was that the school was a combination of two middle school, Galra Junior High and Altea Middle School, different names, same grades and teaching level. There was one elementary school though in the district, Garrison Elementary, so Lance never got the two middle school things.

Until he got to high school that is. The kids from Galra Junior High were very intense and competitive. They all believed in all for one and one only rather then one for all and all for one. They also, for all of freshman year, picked on the Altean kids.

Whereas Altean Middle School kids were more care-free, more gentle and kind. They shared with others and got good grades.

So Lance had found it funny when he met Pidge in Altea Middle School. He, Hunk, Pidge, Shay and a few others were “Alteans.” While Keith, Rolo, Nyma and others were “Galras.” Though now that they were older, the school difference didn’t matter much.

Anyway, in the High School, their homeroom classroom was also their first period classes and most likely their study hall teacher. Coran was a pretty relaxed teacher, he taught his own version of science, telling the class about space theories he’s come up with and about space findings. Keith often came into the classroom during Pidge and Lance’s study hall and he and Coran would have a conversation about aliens and other planets along with that one girl from the library that wears the mask.

The first period bell rang and Coran called their attention. “Class!” everyone turned to their, goes-by-their-first-name teacher, who had a pile of papers in his hand.

Coran smiled once everyone’s attention was on him.

“Since most of you are seniors,” Pidge smiled brightly at being the only sophomore in the class. “There is a senior summer formal on the last friday of the school year. It’s for seniors only unless their date is from another grade. Other school kids are allowed, again, as long as they are a date. There will be pink and blue, or blue and blue, pink and pink, bracelets for couples going. When you buy a ticket, just mention which colors you want and they’ll give them to you. Also, you don’t have to have a date, but c’mon, you guys are seniors, you want you’re last dance to be a date, right? Also, i may be the cruel teacher and spy on you to find out your crush, no worries.”
The class laughed a little as Coran passed out information sheets that had the price, date, location, time and dress code on it. Lance smiled at the paper and at Pidge. “Gonna find a hot senior girl to go with?” he asked Pidge, who responded by kicking him.

“Shut up. Besides, who are you gonna choose? You have the whole school just waiting to be your date,” Pidge said and snickered. Lance rolled his eyes. “I dunno. Maybe I’ll ask like, Rolo, or maybe try for Nyma again?” Lance asked.

Pidge laughed. “Look Lance, I know you’re bisexual and shit, but Rolo, are you that desperate?” Pidge asked. Lance stuck his tongue out and rolled his eyes. “I’m just saying. And besides, Rolo’s nice-ish.” Lance argues, pouting his bottom lip.

Pidge rolled her eyes now. “Yeah, nice and straight.” Pidge argues and Lance can’t say anything back because Coran started writing on the board.

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Lance was laying his head down on his desk like he usually does during study hall. Pidge and Hunk were both in his study hall period, but both had to go down to the computer graphics room for some club meeting.

Sighing, Lance pulled out some papers until there was the usual knock on the door. Coran smiled and opened the door for his favorite student. “Hello, Keith!” Coran said and Keith smiled at the science teacher. “Hey, Coran. So, I was studying the Super Blood Blue Moon that recently happened and….” the two trailed off into conversation and Lance sighed heavily, pulling out his phone.

Mama: Hey Lance. Thank you again for promising to watch your siblings, Rosita says thanks too. I will leave you money tomorrow for pizza and drinks. Make sure Rachel goes to bed at 8 and Miguel at 9. The twins will be home around 7:30 and will most likely pass out after their game. Have fun tutoring!

Lance sighed as he read his text. “What’cha looking at?” Florona asked, her sleek dyed pink hair swaying over her shoulder as she looked at Lance’s phone. Lance jumped at the sudden intrusion of space, turning to the girl. Florona smiled at him brightly.
“Sooooo, who ya texting?” she asked. Lance rolled his eyes. About a year ago, he would’ve died if someone had told him he’d be talking to the beautiful Florona, or the ditzy Ezor, or any girl he was friends with in fact. But now, he was used to it. Most of the girls he’d start flirting with would get annoyed with him, but soon later on would become his friends.

Only then did he realize how nosy girls were though.

“My mom.” Lance said and Zethrid behind him snorted. He rolled his eyes, ignoring her. Florona laughed and smirked. “Are you serious?” she asked and Lance nodded, earning a laugh from her.

“Keith that’s brilliant!” Coran yelled and the class turned. Keith’s face flushed when he noticed the class staring at him. Coran scratched the back of his head and smiled sheepishly, turning back to Keith. “Sorry, continue.” Keith whispered to Coran so no one else could hear him.

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“Pidge, what the fuck?” Keith asked as he sat down. Pidge smiled up at him, arms resting on her Truth or Dare box. There was a plate of grapes in the center of the table. Lance took his seat next to Hunk and raised an eyebrow.

“What’s with the grapes?” Lance asks. Pidge smiles even brighter as she opens her truth or dare box. “Weeeeeell.” She says as she places the different cards on either side of the of the plate. Hunk tilted his head at the cards in question.

“Since our dear Hunk here isn’t single,” Hunk, who had told them during study hall, flushed all the way down to his neck as the words left Pidge’s mouth. “I thought we should celebrate with a game.”

The other three sighed in annoyance but all nodded in agreement. Pidge beamed and pointed at the grapes. “The grapes are just cos why not? I’m hungry.” She said and grabbed a handful of the plate.

Lance took a bite of his sandwich while Hunk ate some Teriyaki rice with orange chicken. Keith ate salad and Pidge was feasting on the grapes.

“And the lucky person to go first is…..budumdumdumdumdum, Lance!” Pidge shouted, pointing
“What do you do for fun?” Lance read, raising an eyebrow at Pidge who just shrugged. “Uh, well. I hang out with my younger sister Rebecca a lot, she likes to draw. Keith!” Lance slammed his hands on the table, looking at the raven-haired boy. “You gotta show her your sketchbook!” he exclaimed.

Keith frowned. “Either I show her, or I show you.” Keith said, shoving a grape-tomato in his mouth. “I’m only showing one person.” Keith claimed.

Lance rolled his eyes. “Fine, show Rebecca then.” Lance said, grabbing a red piece. Keith blinked, surprised at the change considering yesterday he had been begging to see it. “Keith.” Pidge said and Keith grabbed a ‘Truth’ card, not comfortable with doing anything that draws attention.

“What is your sexuality? What’s the point of this card?” Keith asked, staring at Pidge. Pidge just laughed and shrugged. Keith slammed the card down on the table. “I’m gay.” Keith said as he grabbed a red piece.

Lance snorted and Pidge glowed as Hunk grabbed a ‘Dare’ card. He tilted his head. “Do a lap dance? What’s that?” Hunk asked confused and the other three laughed. Lance took the card out of his hands.

“Hunk gets to choose a new card, he’s too innocent for this one.” Lance stated, handing Hunk a new card. Hunk looked at it in confusion, not reading it yet. “Yeah, but what’s a lap dance?” he asked again, grabbing the new card from Lance.

Lance shook his head. “You needn’t not to know sir.” Lance said and Keith and Pidge laughed. “Make us cookies and give them to us tomorrow. What the fudge?” Hunk looked at Pidge who pumped a fist in the air.

“Yesss! You were supposed to get that card! Don’t forget to make them chocolate chip!” she said and shoved a few more grapes in her mouth. Hunk raised an eyebrow and Pidge grabbed a ‘Truth’ card.

“What’s the worst thing you’ve ever done? Ahah!” Pidge smiled wickedly and looked at her fellow table members. “Well, when I went to Altea Middle School, you guys remember when the power went out and we had to have a lockdown because someone wrote ‘The chamber of secrets has been
opened’ in blood, right?” Hunk and Lance nodded while Keith raised an eyebrow.

“That was me, not my own blood though.” Hunk’s eyes widened. “Then who’s was it?” he asked. Pidge smiled, looking at Lance and Hunk.

“Yours.” she said and the two’s eyes widened. “WHAT?!?!” they exclaimed and she cackled, palming a red piece. “You guys slept in the same dorm, and didn’t lock your doors. What do you think I was gonna do? Besides, you guys never even noticed.”

“But how did you-how do you just, what did you---EH?” Lance shouted confused. Pidge laughed again and rested her face on the table. Keith snorted as he shoved a forkful of salad in his mouth.


Pidge pointed at the card stacks, signaling for him to pick. Lance rolled his eyes and grabbed one from the dare pile.

Lance laughed at the card, pulling out his phone. “*Change your instagram bio to, “Im cumming….”* That’s pretty genius actually.” Lance said as he opened his phone, clicking on said app. A few seconds later, he put his phone down and smiled, grabbing a red piece. “Okay, Keith, my man. Your turn.” Keith rolled his eyes and grabbed a truth card.

“*Who was your first kiss ?*” Keith stared at the card for a few seconds before turning bright red. “Uh, I mean--do, do i have to answer this one? You-you guys might call me, uh, desperate.” Keith stuttered out, pressing the card to his face.

Pidge laughed and nodded. “Yes my child. Answer it.” She shoved a few grapes into her mouth smiling. “*Child’?*” Keith questioned. “You’re dodging the question! Changing the subject! Moving the plot!” Lance shouted.

“*The what ?*” Keith asked and Lance shook his head, pointing at the card. “Answer now!” he said and Keith sighed, rolling his eyes. “…llulu.” he muttered. Everyone raised an eyebrow. “Who?” Hunk asked.

“Uh, ‘Call a random number and flirt with whoever picks up .’” Hunk read. Lance once again reached over and plucked the card from Hunk’s hand. “Okay, how about Hunk stops choosing dares?” Lance proposed as Pidge finished off the grapes.

Pidge smirked. “How about, since the cards are getting there, we continue playing this on Saturday or some other time?” Lance nodded in agreement for Hunk’s innocence and Keith just snorted.

Lance turned and looked at Keith, or more specifically, his eyes. Lance really didn’t understand how purple eyes were natural, or if they weren’t, why Keith wore contacts everyday. Yeah, the purple eyes were pretty, a deep shade of violet, shining brightly even under little light. Lance decided though, he liked Keith’s eyes.

“Take a picture, it’ll last longer.” Keith said as he took a sip from his water bottle. Lance coughed a little and awkwardly went back to eating his food.

Hunk’s phone went off and Lance, Keith and Pidge’s heads all shot up. “Is it Shay?” Lance asked, leaning over in his seat to try and read. Hunk’s face flushed and he moved the phone out of reach. “Yea, uh, yes it’s Shay.” Hunk looked at his phone and typed a quick reply to Shay before getting up to throw out his food scraps.

Lance grinned as Hunk sat down. “You guys gonna go on a date soon?” Lance asked and wiggled his eyebrows at Hunk. Hunk shook his head quick then shrugged. “I don’t, I don’t really know about things like that yet. And even if I did, I wouldn’t tell you.”

Lance pouted. “Awe, man. C’mon. I’ve been your friend for like, ever!” Hunk shook his head as the lunch bell rang and Pidge grabbed her empty grape-plate as Keith trashed the rest of his lunch. Lance and Hunk went to their sixth period classes while Pidge and Keith went to their second science class.

Since Pidge and Keith both excelled at science, they took a second science class, run by a more advanced teacher, Miss Haggar. Hunk had her too, but as a regular science teacher. Since both Pidge and Keith didn’t want to take a language class, nor an extra arts like Lance and Hunk, they took another science class.
Keith did take a regular art class, but that was taken instead of his global class, which he’s passed last year and no longer needed it.

Pidge and Keith entered their science room and took their seats just as the bell was finishing ringing for the second time. Keith sighed in relief as he took out his sketchbook. If you were late to Miss Haggar’s class, she would immediately slap you with detention. Always. Well, unless you were…

“I AM SO SORRY! I left my books in my homeroom class and didn’t realize it and---” Haggar cut off Lotor by making a sideways cutting motion.

“Lotor, it is alright. Take your seat and we’ll begin class.” Haggar motioned to his seat and the white-haired boy gratefully took it.

“Okay class. As you may all be working diligently on your projects…” Haggar droned on in the usual lecture and Pidge pushed a note to Keith. Keith slowly grabbed the note and unfolded it beneath the desk, looking down to read.

Rumors have it that Lotor is Miss Hagar’s and Principal Zarkon’s secret love child-P

Keith raised an eyebrow at the note but wrote back on it, pretending like he was taking notes for the class. He dropped it on the floor and side kicked it to Pidge. Pidge leaned down as if she was tying her shoe and grabbed the note.

Makes sense since she’s always babying him and neither of them care about the fact this is his seventh year in high school.-K

Pidge snorted at the note and she looked at Keith. ‘Right?’ she mouthed and he nodded.

Haggar turned and pointed a crooked finger at Pidge. “Katie! Answer this question for us!” Pidge wrinkled her nose at the name but looked at the board, were a few questions were written about earthquakes and how they have helped with the belief of a liquid outer core and a solid inner core.

Pidg scoffed and stood up, grabbing the chalk from Haggar. “Well, Miss Haggar. Studies show that
P-waves, or Primary waves can move through all states of objects, liquid, solid and gas. But S-waves, or Secondary waves, can only move through only solids. When objects go through liquids, they change direction. So as the secondary waves cannot move though the outer liquid core, they stop. Earthquakes station have….” Pidge trailed on and on, taking over Haggar’s class for the third time that week.

Keith crossed his legs and arms as he watched Pidge school the teacher in front of the class, pointing out flaws with her theory and suddenly the bell rang.

Pidge skipped back to her seat and Keith grabbed all his stuff too, packing up his sketchbook, which now had a picture of Pidge in her overalls at the front of the class.

Keith walked to his boring english class and fell asleep until his desk partner poked his face with his pencil. “Kogane.” Rolo whispered. And Keith yawned, sitting up and stretching.

“What?” Keith asked a little grumpily from being woken up from his slumber. Rolo laughed at his rage and pointed at the board. “The dance shit,” Rolo said, and Keith looked up at the board.

Information for the upcoming dance was written all over it, such as the cost, the time, when tickets would be sold and where you can buy them, the date and specifics about things you needed to know.

Keith shrugged. “What about it?” Rolo rolled his eyes at Keith. “Are you going with anybody? Or are you gonna play hookey and not go?” Rolo asked, leaning on his hand on his desk.

“I dunno. If i get asked, who knows. But i don't want to spend the last week around a ton of people i don’t like for hours.” Keith said and rested his head back down. “Can I go back to sleep now?” Keith closed his eyes and Rolo sighed.

“Yeah, yeah. Get your beauty sleep.” Rolo said all annoyed.

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Keith groaned as he stood up, stretching his arms back as he woke up fully from his sleep. “Hey, Rolo. can I borrow your notes?” Keith asked and Rolo nodded as he handed his a notebook. “Just because I’m your ex, by the way, doesn’t mean you can just borrow everything.” Rolo said.
Keith scoffed and rolled his eyes. “Hah hah. I’ll give ‘em to you during science tomorrow.” Rolo nodded and Keith grabbed his stuff, walking to his last class, and into a room he considered heaven.

Keith’s last class of the day was art with Mr. Harris, who was a very kind teacher, but don’t get him mad or he’ll blow.

The art room was filled with pictures and sculptures made by past students, a color splatched area on the floor for big paintings, big black square tables, an easel and a stool in the center of the room for still-life drawing, the ceiling covered in cut-out stars and dangling art works. The room always smelled like fresh baked cookies and the room was always a little warmer than comfortable. Smocks were hung up by the door but nobody ever used them.

Keith took a seat at one of the tables in the back, setting down his bookbag and walking up to the class portfolios and taking out a canvas he’s been working on.

Keith smiled at the picture and walked back to his table, Nyma, Rax and Lotor now all at their normal spots near him. Keith smiled at Rax and Nyma, but made a face at Lotor. God the guy got on his nerves.

Lotor was a guy, a few years younger than Shiro, who for some reason had made friends with Allura somehow. The jerk would come along with Allura and Matt to Shiro’s house and make a mess of everything. He lied and cheated, but Shiro kept going on about how maybe he was nice deep down or some shit.

Keith wasn’t buying it.

Keith set up his canvas on a mini-easel as he got out paints. Nyma leaned over a bit and smiled at the painting.

“Keith! It’s coming along great! You’ve been working on it for, what, three weeks now? It’s paying off!” She said, pigtails swaying as she tilted her head.

Keith smiled as he set down a few paintbrushes. “Thanks Nyma.” he said in almost mono-tone. Keith put in his earbuds and cranked up his music, smiling as Welcome To The Black Parade by My Chemical Romance started.
The class period was 50 minutes, but as Keith sat there, adding to his painting, lost in his music as he let his paint brush guide his hand, it felt like only a few minutes had passed and he had gotten only a little more done as Rax tapped his shoulder. “Keith, clean up time.” he said in a gruff voice and Keith nodded.

He pulled out his earbuds, when had Cool Kids started playing, and started putting away his paints. Mr Harris walked over and whistled in appreciation.

“Wow, Mr. Kogane, it’s really coming along. How much longer do you think you’ll work on it?” he asked and Keith smiled a very rare, proud-of-himself-and-is-ecstatic, smile as he started talking.

“Well, I still plan to add a few more things in the background before I work on the people, but since the background is the hardest and has taken me 16 days so far, so maybe, two weeks at most?” Keith said, turning back to look at his painting.

Mr. Harris nodded and clapped Keith on the back. “When this is done, do you think I could show it during the seniors art showcase? It would be the featured painting.” the teacher said and Keith smiled.

“Really? Of course!” Keith said and the bell rung. Keith’s eyes widened as he realized he had yet to clean up and still had to make it to the bus. Mr. Harris waved his hand. “Go on Mr. Kogane, I’ll clean up.”

Keith mumbled a thank you as he grabbed his bag, shoving his phone in his pocket as he ran up to the buses. He sat down in his seat, far way in the back, taking out his earbuds and putting one in, turning so he could lean and rest in his seat.

The bus was just starting to leave when it stopped upon seeing a kid running up. Keith sighed to himself as he saw Lance running, papers flying everywhere.

“I’m,....sorry sir....Miss...Santos held us in.” Lance managed out to the bus driver. He nodded as he pointed behind him, telling Lance to take a seat. Lance’s face paled upon seeing the only free seat was in the back, next to Keith.

Putting on a smile and wiping away sweat, he ran and sat in the seat next to Keith.
“Hey Keith, ma man. What’cha listening to?” Lance asked, picking up the other earbud. Keith slapped his hand as he moved to sit up. “Britney Spears, now leave me alone.” Keith muttered and Lance laughed.


“Okay, Britney, is like, the only person who should be allowed to sing pop music.” Keith said and Lance laughed again as the bus finally pulled out of the school’s driveway.


“Yuh-duh. Of course. They are like the only “band” created by Disney that had a good soundtrack and sounded great. Determinate or Breakthrough?” Keith asked and the two fell into conversation over disney songs and other country songs.

_Bum-dup_

Keith held his chest for a few moments while Lance was talking and shook his head as the two talked about normal high school things.

Then Kyary Pamyu Pamyu was mentioned and their conversation turned into “omigods” and laughter.

"Okay, but Shiro knows all the words to Pon Pon Pon.” Keith said and Lance choked on his laughter. “Omigod, that’s great.” Lance said, shoulders shaking as he tried to compose himself. They finally came to their stop and the two got off.
“Which way is your house?” Lance asked and Keith pointed forward. “It’s at the end of the street,” he said as he started walking. Lance started skipping next to him. “Cool, mine’s half-way. You gotta know where i live for tomorrow.” Lance said and Keith nodded as they walked.

It suddenly grew quiet, but not an omigod-they-won’t-talk-do-they-hate-me-now kind of quiet. More of a, hey-it’s-getting-late-and-I’m-kinda-tired quiet. At some point, Lance smirked and shoulder-checked Keith, pushing the raven haired boy into the grass.

Keith’s eyes widened and he kicked his legs out, hitting the back of Lance’s knees hard. Lance’s eyes widened as he knees buckled and he fell to the ground. The two stared at each other for a few seconds, eyes wide until they both erupted into laughter.

“Omigod, I didn’t know you’d fall in the grass.” Lance said as they stood up. “Well I did!” Keith yelled and slapped Lance’s shoulder. “Asshole!” he yelled and Lance laughed as they walked up to a blue house.

“Hey, this is me. See you tomorrow!” Lance said, and Keith nodded.

A girl with tan skin and dark hair in two long braids, wearing a soccer jersey with the number 14 and word “McClain” on her back, came running out. “Lance! Mario’s teasing me again!” she yelled, voice thick with a spanish accent. Keith walked slowly, watching out of the corner of his eyes.

“Mario! What did I tell you about teasing your sister?” Lance yelled, voice suddenly adapting to a spanish accent. Keith’s eyes widened slowly as he “dropped” his keys.

He bent down slowly, still watching out of the corner of his eyes. A boy, his face almost identical to the girls except for a small scar under his eyes, wearing a jersey with the number 16 and his last name also on the back, popped out from behind the door.

“But Maria was talking about how water isn’t wet! I’m telling you that’s bullshit!” The boy yelled, also with a deep accent. Lance sighed and picked up two blades of grass. “‘Wet’ is when anything is touching a molecule of liquid.” he started explaining.

Keith started tying his shoes. “When water is in a bowl, it’s touching multiple molecules of water. So, Mario. You are right about water being wet, but Maria is also right about it being not wet. Because if you had a single molecule of water, than it wouldn’t be touching anything, therefore,
it’s not wet.” Lance finished explaining and they walked in the house, the two siblings still fighting.

Keith stood up and speed-walked the rest of the way home. He flopped onto the couch after kicking off his shoes and stared at the ceiling. “Huh.” he said to himself.

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It was Friday and the school day had flown by, Coach Sendac had almost killed Keith and Pidge with over exercising in gym, Rolo had lost his notes right after Keith gave them to him, and Keith had gotten further along on his painting. So, a normal Friday.

Keith sat in his room, getting his textbooks and stuff ready as he pulled on his shoes. Keith walked down the street, the daylight dimmed a bit.

Keith knocked on the McClain door and the door was thrown open by a small boy. The boy looked up at him with bored, light blue eyes. Suddenly he smiled as he looked up at Keith and turned around. “LANCE!” the boy yelled, almost shattering Keith’s eardrums.

The boy stood in the doorway as Lance ran down. “¿Qué pasa, Qué pasa?” he asked his brother, than looked up at Keith. “Oh! Keith, come on in.” Lance said, pushing the ten year old out of the doorway.

Keith walked in and looked around Lance’s house. Their living room was huge, multiple family pictures hanging up around on the walls. Two couches that had been pushed together were in the middle of the room, a small table in the center of the living room and a t.v. hung on the middle of the wall, stairs were in the back, leading to upstairs. A kitchen was in the middle of the living room and the stairs emptied out into it.

A woman was in the kitchen and Keith raised an eyebrow. Lance sighed. “My sister Rosie is still here, yet I have to watch the kids.” he said, raising his voice intentionally.

“Hey, I have to study for finals.” Rosita said. Lance rolled his eyes. “Rosie, One, we’re studying for finals. Two, you’re twenty one and don’t go to school.” Rosie shrugged and Miguel laughed as he opened a cabinet, grabbing out some oreos.
“Anyway, ¡Rápido! C’mon, go get studying!” Rosie said, pushing Keith and Lance up the stairs. Lance held her arm to stop her. “Rosie, Keith and I can walk on our own.” he said.


Lance grabbed Keith’s wrist and pulled him the stairs into his room, closing the door.

“So hey, that was my sister Rosie.” Lance said and Keith laughed. “I could tell.” he said and Lance motioned at Keith’s bag. “Just, let’s get studying. What do you want to study today?” he asked.

Keith thought for a moment. “Global. I stopped taking that course last year so I need to like, refresh on it.” Lance nodded, spinning in his desk chair. “Okay. So, American history or the Ancient world?” Lance asked.

Keith thought again. “Ancient history. That’s less fun and I want to do the less fun first…..if that makes sense.” Keith said and Lance laughed, kicking off from his desk, pushing his chair across the room in circles.

“Okay. So, Ancient Greece. Artwork was ‘Idealistic’ and was more, realistic.” Lance began, still spinning around in the chair.

Lance continued on with Ancient Greece until he fell out of the chair. And by fall out of the chair, that means Keith kicked one of the wheels as he was spinning past and fell on top of Keith. Lance’s hands were on either side of Keith’s head, his legs over on the outside of Keith's. Both their faces flushed and Keith pushed Lance off him.

Bud-dum

Suddenly, Rosita came in with a plate of cookies. “Hey, hey. Guess who was a good sister and made you some fresh cookies?” she said and Lance rolled his eyes, red face disappearing. “Rosie, those are oreos.” he stated.
She raised an eyebrow and looked at the plate. “Oh, would you look at that, they are.” she said and placed the plate on the floor, walking out. Lance rolled his eyes and turned to Keith.

“So, anyway. Ancient Rome used Greece as like, a rough draft of what their civilization should be. And…” Lance waved his hand in front of Keith’s face. “D’you wanna take a break and go get some real food?” Lance asked and Keith realized he had been zoning out.

Keith nodded, standing up and shaking out his legs.

“Sure.” Keith answered and the teenagers let the room, walking downstairs into the kitchen where Perro Fiel had just finished playing on the radio. There was silence on the radio for a few moments as they switched to the broadcasters.

Maria and Mario walked through the door, Maria carrying her shin pads and a soccer ball while Mario had a bag over his shoulder. The two’s hair were messed up and they had dirt covering themselves.

Lance looked up at them. “How was the game?” he asked as he got out two plates. Lance took out some sandwich meats and gestured for Keith to make his own sandwich. Keith nodded as he put some bread on his plate.

Maria sighed heavily. “We won, barely.” she added and the twins slumped onto the couch. Lance leaned over the counter. “What was the score?” he asked. Maria sighed and Mario answered.

“28-24. He stated and Lance nodded as he started getting his sandwich ready. He nodded to Keith. “By the way guys, this is Keith. I’m tutoring him.” Lance said.

Suddenly the twins faces lit up and they looked at Keith. “Keith?” they said in unison. Lance nodded, glaring right at them. “Is it Keith as in,” “That Keith?” Maria finished for Mario.

Lance’s ears turned red. “Not anymore you two. I told everyone that, but does anyone listen?” Lance huffed, slamming a piece of cheese on top of his meat mountain sandwich.

Keith raised an eyebrow and looked from Lance to the twins. “Am I missing something?” he
asked. The twin 15 year olds smirked. “You’re missing something huge.” Maria said. The radio came back on and started playing Bailando by Enrique Iglesias.

Lance smirked as he threw his head back dramatically. “Yo te miro,” Lance started loudly and Keith looked at him. “Se me corta la respiración. Cuando tú me miras se me sube el corazón.” Lance continued in fast spanish and Keith could hardly understand what he was saying.

Nevertheless, Keith was amazed by how fluently Lance spoke the language, how easily his mouth seemed to form the words and how his voice immediately held a thick spanish accent as he sang.

While Keith had been thinking, Lance had gotten to the chorus, Mario joining in with him.

“Bailando!” Lance sang and Mario repeated.

“Bailando,” “Bailando!” “Bailando.”

“Tu cuerpo y el mio llenando el vacío.” The two sang out and Maria sighed, slamming her hand on the radio, turning it off. The two McClains frowned at her and Keith laughed as he put the top piece of bread on his sandwich.

“Idiots.” Maria muttered, walking up to her room. Keith laughed again as he took a bite of his sandwich and Lance made a face. “LANCE!” Rosie’s voice came from upstairs and Mario fled the room.

“¿¡Que pasa!? ” Lance yelled back. “¿¡¿Donde esta me maquillaje?!?” She shouted and Lance’s face flushed as he prayed to every god that Keith had no clue what she asked or what he was going to say.

“¡Esta en me dormitorio!” Lance yelled back. “¿Por qué?” she asked and Lance could hear her moving around upstairs.

“Hacé el maquillaje de Rebecca.” Lance called back and he heard her moving stuff in his room. Rosita came stomping down the stairs holding a bag full of something. “Gracias Lance. Uh, speaking of Rebecca, she should be home from Claire’s soon.” Rosie said and Lance nodded.

Rosie smiled at Keith and then looked at Lance. Lance’s eyes widened and Rosie smiled wickedly,
turning to Keith. “Wanna hear something embarrassing about Lance?” she asked.

Keith smiled. “I’m all for embarrassing.” he said and she laughed. “Lance likes to borrow my makeup.” She said. Lance’s face flushed. “I was doing Rebecca’s makeup. I just told you that!” Lance yelled and Rosie sighed and looked at the ceiling, than at Keith.

“Did you hear him say he did Rebecca’s makeup?” Rosie asked. Keith shook his head, grinning. “Nope, not once.” Lance smacked the back of Keith’s head.

“Because, Dumbass. I said it in spanish. I swear to Jesus, I’ll kill you both.” Lance said. Rosie smiled and winked. “But Keith first, right?” she asked and Lance was ready to smack her too until a young girl grabbed onto his leg.

“Hermano!” the girl shouted happily. Lance’s expression softened and he picked up the tan, bald girl. “Hey Beckie. How was Claire’s?” he asked, holding her so her hand were on his shoulder and he looked up at her.

Keith watched as Lance turned into a person he didn’t know, but wanted to. The girl smiled a big, front toothless smile. “We watched Frozen again. And she was asking me to teach her spanish.” She said. Lance smiled as he now spun in circles with the girl.

“Really? What did you teach her?” Lance asked. “I taught her how to say, ‘Claire es muy bonita.’ After I taught her how to say it properly, she asked me what it meant.” Rebecca said. Lance smiled a proud smile. “Did you tell her?” he asked.

Rebecca nodded. “She said thank you and now we have friendship bracelets.” Rebecca held up her arm to show a strand of multi-colored string wrapped around her wrist with an ‘R’ in the center.

Lance smiled and turned to Keith. “Hey, Beckie. This is Keith. He’s gonna let you braid his hair.” Keith’s face flushed as the attention was turned on him and he waved at the young girl. Rebecca smiled and her eyes lit up.

“Your hair is so pretty, Keithy,” she said and Keith smiled at the eight year old. “Thanks.” Lance smirked at Keith. “Yeah, Keithy, your hair is amazing.” Lance said and Keith immediately shot daggers at him. Lance placed Rebecca on the floor.
“Keith. I think we’re done studying for the day.” Lance said and Keith nodded as Rebecca started climbing his legs. “Okay.” Keith said and picked the girl up. Rebecca’s hands flew to Keith’s raven-black hair and she started twisting half his hair at amazing speed.

Before Keith even realized, Rebecca was reaching towards Lance, holding the end of Keith’s hair. “Hair tie, por favor.” she asked and Lance grabbed one off the counter. Keith suddenly realized that Rosie wasn’t there anymore.

Rebecca tied off the end of Keith’s hair and did the same to the other side. When she was done, she smiled and fluffed Keith’s two braids.

“Bonita!” Rosie said, suddenly appearing again. Keith jumped and almost dropped Rebecca. Rebecca smiled widely.


Rebecca pulled on Keith’s pant leg. “Keithy.” Rebecca said and Keith looked at her, ignoring the telepathic sibling fight Lance and Rosie were in.

“Yes?” Keith asked, squatting down. Rebecca smiled and pointed at his eyes. “Why are your eyes purple?” she asked and Keith tilted his head and smiled softly at her. “It’s a thing I have. It’s called Alexandria Genesis. It makes my eyes purple.” He said and patted her on the head.

Rebecca giggled a bit and reached up, grabbing his wrist. “It’s cool! I want it!” she said. Keith laughed at the girl, not realizing Rosie had left the room, again, Lance watching him and Rebecca. “I was born with it. It normally forms sometimes after six months of birth. But hey, your eyes are pretty.” Keith said.

Rebecca smiled. “Really? Claire said they are the prettiest, greeniest eyes she’s seen.” And the girl smiled up at him.

Keith laughed gently and nodded. “They are.” he answered. Suddenly, his phone in his pocket vibrated and he took it out.
Shiro: Keith, come home, mom and dad are going out and they want us both home. You can invite Pidge over if you want

Keith: Okay. I’ll start heading home.

Keith stood up after texting Shiro and patted Rebecca’s bald head. “Hey, I gotta go home now, but see you next time, okay?” The girl smiled and nodded as Keith walked back to the room and got his book bag. He turned and saw Lance in the doorway.

“You’re nice, you know.” Lance said as Keith pulled out the hair ties, running his fingers through his hair to get it back to normal. “Yeah? How?” Keith asked. Lance shrugged and moved out of the doorway to let Keith pass. “You just….are.”

Bud-dum

Keith nodded slowly and walked out before Lance grabbed his arm. “By the way, I think we should study here from now on, Beckie seems to like you, a lot. Also, are those really your eyes?” Lance asked and Keith raised an eyebrow at the question.

“Uh, yeah. Did you think I was wearing contacts everyday?” Keith asked.

Silence.

“Omigod you thought I was wearing contacts everyday.” Keith said and Lance shrugged. “I didn’t know purple eyes were a thing.” Lance said honestly, the two walking down the stairs. Keith shrugged. “Well, they are. So deal with it.” Keith said and Lance snorted.


“Okay, okay. Whatever. Adios Shakira.” Keith said and he walked out the front door.
As Keith walked down the sidewalk back to his house, he found himself smiling at his feet. When he realized, he quickly ran a hand over his face. “That’s weird.” he said to himself as he walked into his house.

Keith flopped onto the couch as Shiro started a movie. “They already leave?” Keith asked his older brother. Shiro hummed in response as he texted someone.

Keith smiled and leaned over his shoulder, face lighting up at the contact name. “Who’s ‘Princey’?” Keith asked and Shiro jumped, face flushing.

“Oh, it’s um, the pizza guy? From Prince’s Palace?” Shiro offered and Keith shook his head. “Ask Matt if Pidge can come over.” Keith said and Shiro’s ears turned bright red. “I uh, I dunno what you’re talking about.” Shiro said.

Keith scoffed and fast as lightning, grabbed Shiro’s phone out of his hands. “Keith!” Shiro yelled as Keith ran to his room, locking the door behind him.

He opened to the chat again and started typing, reading what he wrote out loud.

“Hey, Matt!” Keith yelled, loud enough for Shiro, who was trying to open Keith’s locked door, to hear. “Can you bring Pidge and come over? Keith and I are having a movie night. IT’LL BE FUN.” Keith yelled the last part as loud as he could as he pressed send.

There was a moment of silence and Shiro paused in trying to open the door. “Don’t send it…” Shiro said and Keith chuckled to himself. “Too late.” he said and he heard Shiro kick the door.

Keith tsked to himself and put his hand on his hip, opening the door. “Shiro. C’mon man. If you give yourself some time alone with Matt and Allura, and it’ll be easier for you to decide who you want. This way, you get some time alone with Matt, without Allura being there too. You can hang out with Allura tomorrow if you want.”

Shiro, who was sitting on the ground with his legs crossed, looked up at Keith. “Why are you better at this love stuff than I am? You dated like, what, three people before?” Shiro asked. Keith shrugged. “Four. You’ve dated one person and that was Nyma, who, may I remind you, is like, eight years younger than you.”
Shiro rolled his eyes. “Yeah, but all of your boyfriends have broken up with you, I broke up with Nyma.” Shiro stated. Keith shook his head. “Okay, conversation, over. Now.”

Shiro’s phone vibrated in Keith’s hand and Keith looked down, a grinned spreading across his face. “Best news. Well, for me. Maybe not for you. Matt said he’s coming over but Pidge is over at Hunk’s so I’m not going to third wheel or anything, I’ll be in my room watching Netflix.”

Shiro groaned and put his head in his hands. “Fine. Go watch your Supernatural or Stranger Things while I suffer!” Shiro growled out and Keith laughed as he gave Shiro his phone back.

“Hey, I’m just trying to help.” Keith said and walked back into his room. “You’re making me suffer.” Shiro said sarcastically, walking back downstairs.

Keith slid down his door and looked at his hands.

“You’re making him suffer.”

Keith felt a slow tear fall down his face as he wrapped his arms around his knees. “I know.” Keith muttered.

Chapter End Notes

so, just an f.y.i., chapters do take very long to write, but i’m just re-uploading this so i’m uploading new chapters every now and then. i’m currently writing chapter six already and...yeah.

anyway, i’d appreiate if you followed me on Tumblr or Instagram (Tumblr: l-the-art-nerd) (instagram: l_the_art_nerd) but like.... you dont gotta or anything.

well, uhm, say hello to the "Voice" because he's not leaving anytime soon.

AND THANKS TO MY WONDERFUL EDITOR AAREN, ILYSM!!!!!

~L
Keith woke up the next day, groaning as he stretched out his limbs. He sat up, shaking his head a little and wiping away some random dried tears. He forced himself out of his warm bed and trekked down the hallway to get some food. As he passed the living room, he smiled, stopping to look at the sight before him.

Shiro and Matt sat on the couch, both asleep. Shiro’s arm was around Matt, pulling the other boy close to him. Matt’s head rest between Shiro’s shoulder and chest, his arms crossed on his stomach. A blanket lay on them loosely, falling off the couch, the T.V. still on, flashing a Geico commercial. Keith smiled softly, tiptoeing in. He moved the blanket to cover both the adults and turned off the T.V. before walking out.

He went into the kitchen, smiling at Kotoko, or, Mrs. Shirogane. She smiled softly at him then nodded towards the living room. “They’re cute, aren’t they?” She asked and Keith laughed, nodding as he sat at one of the bar stools.

She set a bowl down in front of him, sitting in the seat next to him as she started eating her own breakfast. Keith looked down at the tamago kake gohan and picked up his fork, picking at the egg in the center.

After poking at it for a short while, he slowly stuffed the egg into his mouth and Kotoko smiled. “You and Rolo were cute too.” she stated and Keith almost choked on the egg. “Wha-what?” he asked, downing his glass of water that he didn't notice before.

Kotoko laughed gently, her soft, plump features lighting up. “I’m just kidding, kid. I just, I wish to see you happy like that again. You had this-this aura, around you that made you glow. I want you to be happy like that again.”
Keith felt his face heat up but Kotoko was distracted by Matt walking in, his hair messed up and he was rubbing his eyes. Keith smiled softly upon seeing the older boy’s slightly pink face. “Hey-a, Matty.” Keith said and Matt jumped, turning to the raven haired boy.

“Hey, Keith. Did you-uhm, did you see….?” Matt trailed off and Keith smirked, giving Matt all the answer he needed. “Yeah, that’s what I thought.” Matt mumbled as he pulled out a chair. Kotoko smiled, getting up and pulling a plate and setting it down in front of him.

“Kati-Pidge, sent over this plate yesterday for your breakfast. She said, ‘to heat it up and stuff it in your face’. Her words, not mine.” Kotoko said and Matt smiled brightly, laughing gently.

“Pidge’s a great sister.” Matt said as he walked to the microwave, shoving the italian styled breakfast casserole into the machine and punching in three minutes. Matt slid into the seat across Keith and smiled at the high schooler.

“Soooo, Lance is your tutor, huh?” Matt asked and Kotoko turned, a smile lighting up her gentle features. “Lance, as in, ‘Lance-the-complete-but-kinda-cool-nerd’, from last year, Lance?” she asked and Keith shook his head.


Keith nodded and Matt only smiled more. “You do know he used to have a crush on you, right?” Matt asked and Keith’s face flushed. “Wha-no, there’s no way Lance ever had a crush on me.” Matt laughed. “Just ask him and see how he reacts. It was what, like, ninth grade I think. How could you not notice? Oh, right.” Matt smiled.

“You were dating Rolo.” Matt said. Kotoko smiled. “How about you stop teasing my son about some boy who had a crush on him. How about we talk about your obvious crush on my other son, Matt?” Matt’s face flushed as she talked to him and just then, Shiro decided to walk in.

“Hey Shiro!” Matt said nervously, trying to hide his red face. Kotoko smiled as she got up and handed Shiro a plate.

“How was your sleep?” Kotoko asked as Shiro grabbed the offered plate. He shrugged. “Normal, a
lot more comfortable, though.” He said and Kotoko smiled while Keith winked at Matt, who’s face flushed ten times more than before.

Shiro looked at him and rested his hand on Matt’s shoulder as he sat down next to him. “Hey, Matt, are you okay? Your face is all red.” Shiro said softly and Keith let out a laugh. Kotoko smiled softly as she got up and left the kitchen, getting ready for work.


>You would know.

Keith swallowed harshly as he shoved rice into his mouth.

Matt rolled his eyes. “Keith, shut up.” Matt said, his face still red. Keith swallowed hard again.

>Yeah, shut up Keith, no one wants to hear you.

Shiro looked at Matt, realization coming onto his face and quickly he drew his hand from Matt’s shoulder, his own cheeks flushing slightly and he turned his head.

“Oh-I uh, I trust your fine, Matt.” Shiro said awkwardly. Matt nodded and the two turned slightly away from each other, faces flushed when someone knocked on the door. “I’ll get it!” Keith said happily, jumping up from his chair and walking to the door, still in his pyjamas, which included red flannel p.j. bottoms and a loose MCR t-shirt.

Keith flung open the door and groaned when he saw Pidge, along with Lance, standing at the door.

“Come quick, it’s getting too awkward.” Keith said to Pidge and she smiled, skipping into the kitchen after kicking her shoes off. Keith motioned for Lance to do the same. “It’s a traditional japanese thing.” Keith said and Lance nodded, kicking his sneakers off and he followed Keith awkwardly.

Kotoko walked past them and Keith stopped her. “Mom-ish, this is Lance.” Keith said and Kotoko
smiled at Lance, shaking his hand and winking at Keith. “Call me mom, Keith. I’ll be back around five.” she said and hurried off.

Lance and Keith entered the kitchen, Pidge eating the rest off Keith’s food. Keith rolled his eyes, pulling up another bar stool for Lance, sitting next to him. “Did you just call her ‘Mom-ish’?” Lance asked and laughed softly.

Shiro nodded. “He says it doesn't feel right calling her Mom, since she technically isn’t his.” Shiro stated, face slowly returning to its normal color. Lance turned questioningly to Keith. “You’re adopted?” he asked and Keith shook his head.

“Uh, no, actually. I’m a foster child. When the Shiroganes decide they’re done with me, I’ll go to another family, until they give up on me.” Keith said. Shiro sighed. “Keith, like I said, Mom’s not going to ‘get tired of you,’ as you said last time. You're fine, we love you, my mom loves you, you’ll stay.” Keith shrugged, ignoring Lance staring directly at him.

“Every family says that.” Keith muttered, too quiet for Shiro to hear, but loud enough for Lance. Lance was about to say something back, but Matt interrupted. “So, Lance, Keith doesn't believe me when I tell him you had a crush on him.” Matt said, leaning on his hand, all the redness gone from his face.

Except it seemed to move to Lance’s face as Lance turned a deep scarlet. “Why would you tell him that?” Lance growled out. Matt cackled out loud and looked at Keith, whose ears were now red. Keith turned to Lance. “He wasn’t lying?” Keith asked, skeptically.

Lance rolled his eyes, trying to will his blush away, ignoring the hysterical Pidgeon next to him. “Yeah, okay. In like, tenth grade, I thought you were awesome, but then you got all douchey and started that weird rivalry between us.” Keith laughed. “You started that rivalry, Shakira.” Keith motioned to himself than turned to Lance. “Why?” he asked sarcastically. Lance tilted his head and shrugged. “I dunno, that was a while ago.”

“Whatever, that’s in the past.” Lance said. “The rivalry or the crush?” Keith asked, smirking. Keith’s ear turned bright red again. “Both!” He shouted and Matt and Pidge cracked up. Keith nodded. “M-hm. I can’t believe that Shakira here had a crush on this mess.” Keith motioned to himself than turned to Lance. “Why?” he asked sarcastically. Lance tilted his head and shrugged. “I dunno, that was a while ago.”

Keith smiled and poked Lance’s forehead, his finger burning from the touch. “Whatever, just don't fall in love with me again.” Keith said jokingly and Lance stuck his tongue out. “I won’t, promise you.” Lance said and Keith just laughed, ignoring how his heart hurt the slightest at those words,
though he didn't understand why.

“Well, you guys can stay here, Ima go change.” Keith said and Shiro nodded. “Yeah, you go do that.” Shiro said and Keith walked down the hall.

Pidge watched Keith walk down the hall and the moment she couldn’t see him anymore, she turned to Lance. “You sure you're not going to fall in love with him?” he asked, not a hint of joking in her voice. Lance turned to her and rolled his eyes.

“Piece of cake.” he said and she rolled her eyes, ruffling his hair. “Whatever, Lonce.” She said teasingly and Lance stuck his tongue out. Shiro stood up, putting his plate in the sink. “Yo, I’m going to change too. Matt, you should too.” Matt nodded, standing up and followed Shiro to his room.

Lance turned to Pidge, who was smiling as her older brother followed Keith’s. “So, are they like dating or something?” Lance asked. Pidge looked at him. “Matt and Shiro?” She asked and Lance nodded. “I fucking wish, but Shiro’s too bisexual to girls that he doesn’t know how to figure out that, no, he doesn't like Allura, he likes Matt. But no, he just has to convince himself to be straight. Stupid bisexuals.” Pidge muttered.

Lance gasped mock-offended. “I’m bisexual, excuse you.” Lance said. “You are?” Keith asked, re-entering the room. Pidge and Lance turned to see Keith wearing a Twenty One Pilots shirt with a red flannel tied around his waist. He had on black skinny jeans—the only ones that weren’t ripped—and his usual red beanie along with his black fingerless gloves. He had a necklace with the Supernatural anti-possession symbol on it.

Lance looked at Keith’s eyes, his totally shouldn’t be purple eyes, and nodded. “Yep, bisexual all the way, though, I mostly prefer girls.” Keith nodded, sitting back down and Lance pointedly looked at Pidge. Keith nodded, though Lance didn't see.

“Well, no need to hide it, though I don't like girls.” Keith said and scrunched his nose. Pidge grinned. “I absolutely love girls, girls are great, and pretty. And nice, like Nyma.” Pidge added and Lance turned. “Hey, don't steal my girl.” He said offendedly.

“Dude, she was never yours.” Keith said and Pidge cackled, making Lance pout. “You guys are mean.” Lance whined as Matt and Shiro walked back in, Matt wearing a galaxy print shirt that had the words, “Wanted By NASA” on it, with light loose jeans and Shiro wearing a black tank top that showed off his muscles along with loose dark purple pants.
“Well, Pidge is pretty evil.” Matt commented and Pidge stuck her tongue out. “So, do you guys want to call Hunk and I’ll call Allura and we can all go out for lunch?” Shiro asked. Everyone nodded, all noting the way Matt deflated a little on the mention of Allura.

“Where’re we going?” Pidge asked, trying to lighten the mood. Shiro smiled. “There’s this new chinese place called QQ Asian Bistro that opened up downtown, we could check that out.” Shiro suggested and Pidge whooped.

Keith, Lance and Matt nodded and Shiro pulled out his phone, shooting Allura a text. “I’ll text Hunk. Because I’m his best friend.” Lance said, pulling out his phone. Pidge rolled her eyes.

“You can keep telling yourself that but team Punk for the win man.” Pidge said. Keith chuckled. “Just the other day you were trying to kill him.” Keith retorted and Pidge rolled her eyes. “That’s in the past.” She said and Keith and Matt laughed.

The two laughed, both of their laughs gentle and soft and neither of them noticed the pair of eyes on them. They didn't, but Pidge definitely winked at Shiro and Lance knowingly.

Soon after, Hunk and Allura arrived at the Shirogane household, both ready to go.

Shiro smiled at Allura, but something was off. It was a different smile, one of those sort of smiles you're supposed to give for a class picture. Not a genuine smile. Keith raised his eyebrow but didn't say anything.

They all went out and split up into two groups-Pidge, Hunk, Matt and Shiro all in Shiro’s truck and Allura, Keith and Lance all in Allura’s jeep. Keith and Lance fought over shotgun, Keith winning in the end by pushing Lance into the dirt.

Keith sat in the shotgun seat while Allura drove and Lance sat in the back pouting. Allura followed Shiro’s truck and turned on the music, wrinkling her nose in disgust as ‘Despacito’ came on.

“Nope.” She muttered, changing the channel. Lance pouted even more. “Awe C’mon! That’s my song.” he shouted and Allura shook her head, flipping channels until one radio started playing KPop. She left it on that, mumbling along and Keith frowned.
“What is ‘Boombayah?’ What? Like, they’re in the middle of singing about dancing at a party and just stop and sing ‘boombayah.’ What sense does that make?” Keith asked, looking at Allura. Allura froze and turned the radio down, turning to him.

“Keith you understand korean?” she asked excitedly. Keith shrugged. “Most of it. When… before my parents…uhm… When I was younger my… Parents were korean and it was the first language I learned. So I understand it, yeah.”

Lance tilted his head and leaned forward, looking at Keith over the car seat shoulder. “What happened to your parents? You never talk about it. I didn't even know you were a foster kid.” Lance said.

Keith balled his hand up into a fist, staring at his fist with cold dead eyes.

*How about you tell him?*

*Tell him your parents ran away from their own lives because of you.*

*They didn't.*

*But they did, didn't they?*

“I don't like to talk about it.” Keith growled out, clenching his teeth and Lance put his hands up. “‘Kay, whatever man, I didn't mean to pry.” Lance said and Allura turned the music back up, Lance shrieking when he heard the song. “Is this like a foreign radio station?” he asked as Bailando came on.


“I’m not singing.” Keith said. Lance pouted. “Please?” he asked, clasping his hands together, Allura laughed and Keith turned to her. “Don't encourage him!” he shouted and Lance smiled.

“Pwetty pwease Keef?” Lance said in a baby voice, pressing his face to the back of Keith’s seat.
“Don't say my name like that, and no. Besides, I don't even know the words.” Keith argued. Lance frowned.

“Fine, but one day, one day, I’m getting you to sing.” Lance said softly, pressing his face against the shoulder again so Keith could hear him. Keith felt his heart flutter at the cuban boy's soft voice but he turned his head and chuckled.

“Are you joking?” He asked and Lance shook his head. “Nope!” Keith rolled his eye but smiled softly. Allura smiled as she pulled into the restaurant's parking lot. “No fighting you two.” She said and Keith stuck his tongue out at her, and she did the same right back, smiling.

“Be careful, he’s gay.” Lance said and Keith turned around, punching his arm. “Shut up.” He said and got out of the car. Allura laughed at the two, also getting out and walking over to Shiro’s group.

“HUNNNNK!” Pidge yelled and Hunk bolted into QQ Asian Bistro. Pidge growled and chased after him. Keith raised an eyebrow and looked to Matt for an answer. “Hunk started teasing Pidge about her crush on… Nyxa, Nyma? Something like that, and she told him to stop and well…. He’s been around Lance to much.” Matt answered.

“I heard that!” Lance complained as they all started walking in. “I think that was the point, Dumbass.” Keith said and Lance punched him, only for Keith to punch him right back, but hard. Lance whined and held his shoulder, where Keith punched, and acted as if it was broken.

“Keith! You need to carry me now! I’m too useless like this!” Lance wailed, leaning onto Keith. Keith pushed him off as they entered. “I hit your arm, not your leg.” Keith argued but Lance draped himself on Keith so that Lance’s arms were over Keith’s shoulder and his face was pressed into Keith’s back.

“Carrrrry meee.” Lance whined out and Allura and Matt giggled at the two, making Keith’s face heat up. “No.” Keith said again but this time it was less stern.

Bud-dum.

Isn’t this going to be fun?
Keith.

Keith felt his heart swell up and he turned to Lance, grabbing the taller boy by his shoulders and pushing him away from him, into Allura, who caught him. Lance turned around and pouted, upset from being pushed away. Keith turned and went to where Hunk and Pidge were waiting, face red and heart beating fast.

However mad Pidge was before, that all was removed when she saw his face. She snickered loudly and hid her smile behind her hand. Keith bit back the urge to slap her, she was like his sister after all, and sat down in one of the seats.

Pidge slid into the seat across from him, Hunk sitting next to her. Matt and the others walked over. Shiro sat next to Hunk and after a very intense silent conversation and staring contest between Allura and Matt, Allura slid into the seat next to Shiro.

Lance made a big show of sitting next to Keith and Matt sat in after, smiling at Shiro across from him.

A medium height girl with black hair and glasses came over and took their orders, telling them it would be ready soon.

Lance grinned and turned to Keith. “So, Keith, buddy, have you figured out who you're taking to the dance yet?” Lance asked. Keith shrugged. “I dunno, but I hope I find a date because Pidge wants to do this thing where she finds a girl in our grade, than I go with her and she goes with my date, but when we get there and everyone thinks we're straight, we switch dates.” Keith replied.

Pidge nodded. “Imagine that, everyone will be like, ‘woah, but I thought they were gays?’ and then BAM! ‘Oh, yeah they are.’” Everyone at the table laughed. Lance nodded. “Sounds fun.”

Pidge turned to Hunk. “Have you asked Shay to go with you yet?” She asked and Hunk turned bright red. “I-I mean, no-no, not yet. But, I will. I’m just...waiting for the right time.” Allura smiled.

“Awe, Hunk! That’s so sweet!” Allura cooed. “I think it’s nice that you found love with the person
you’ve had a crush on for so long! I want to find love like that one day! Especially if they’re nice like—” Matt cleared his throat loudly, interrupting Allura’s speech and the whole table went silent as Allura glared at the older Holt.

Everyone stared at the two except Shiro, who just shifted uncomfortably in his seat. Lance looked at Keith briefly before clapping his hands, everyone’s attention turning to him.

“So! I also have yet to find a date.” Lance said and Pidge laughed, it was a little forced, as if she was trying to get everyone’s attention away from Allura and Matt, which, uh, duh, she was. “Well duh. You’re you.” She said as the girl set down their drinks on the table. They thanked her as she walked off to get their food.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Lance asked offhandedly. Hunk laughed as the food was set down. “Well, I mean, you’re not exactly the ‘date-able type’, if you know what I mean.” Hunk said, picking up one of the chopsticks and digging into his fried rice.

Lance shook his head. “No, I don’t know what you mean.” Lance said as everyone else started digging into their food. Allura shrugged. “Well, you’re a little narcissistic.” she supplied and Lance gasped.

“Only a little?” Matt asked and laughed with Pidge. Shiro shrugged as he bit into his pork egg roll. “Well, I mean, like, you do talk about yourself a lot. Girls, and guys, don’t like that.” Shiro said. Lance rolled his eyes.

“Whatever.” he retorted.

“You’re annoying.” Keith added as he picked up his salmon sushi. Lance turned to him, eyes going soft like a puppy’s and his lower lip jutting out. “I’m not annoying.” Lance said quietly and Keith turned his head away, shoving the sushi in his mouth. Pidge snorted at the action, almost choking on her crab Rangoon.

“Maybe if you stopped showing off so much and if you were kinder to people, people would be willing to date you?” Matt suggested as he shoved some fried rice into his mouth. Pidge nodded as she stood up, pressing down on her Ramune top to open it. She cheered when the glass marble fell into her drink, making it fizz up.

Lance pouted as he did the same to his own drink, taking a long sip from it. “You guys are mean.”

“Well, I’m glad you are.” Shiro said and everyone made a small ‘aw’ noise, making Shiro’s cheeks flame up.

Hunk suddenly jumped up in his seat, turning to Keith and Lance. “Are you two going on the senior’s trip this week?” Hunk asked and Shiro looked at Keith. “Keith is, I’m forcing him too.” Pidge looked at everyone confused.

“Wait, what? What senior’s trip?” she asked. Matt smiled. “Towards the end of the year, all the seniors go on a camping trip and sleep over in cabins over Friday night. They go home late on Saturday.” Matt answered. Pidge nodded and looked at Lance.

“That sounds fun.” she said, but there was no feeling in her voice. Lance shrugged. “I’m going, too. But it’s mostly just ‘cos Rosita asked me too.” Lance said, his voice briefly adapting a Spanish accent as he said his sister’s name.

Allura, Matt and Shiro looked at Lance. “Wait, Rosita McClain is your sister?” Allura asked and Lance nodded. “Dude! She’s like the coolest ever!” Matt said and Lance turned to look at him.

“What?” he asked and Matt pulled out his phone. “She’s awesome at special effects makeup and take really good pictures, see?” Matt tilted his phone and Lance nodded.

“Oh, okay. Yeah, she’s been practicing special effects for as long as I can remember. She wanted to be a Hollywood makeup person or something but she dropped out of college to start other work.” Lance said, biting his lip a little. “Uh, how do you guys know her? She’s like, three years younger than you guys.”

“She was in my special effects class. Where we learn how to add CGI and special effects to video.” Allura started. “She was really cool at figuring it out and everything. She was a pro at it but I was a newbie.” Everyone nodded as they all slowly finished up their food.

“I wanna meet Rosita!” Pidge exclaimed. “Nope! Nopity-nope-nope-no.” Lance exclaimed, looking at Pidge. “You and Rosie are to never meet. I’d rather be in Hell.” Lance said and Keith laughed as their waiter dropped off the check. Both Matt and Shiro split up the money, Allura giving the woman a tip as she left behind a handful of fortune cookies.
“Now I really want to meet her.” Pidge said as she reached to grab a fortune cookie. She broke it open and tore out the piece of paper, handing the cookie to Hunk. “You will get what you need, in the end. Well that’s not helpful.” Pidge complained as she flipped it over to read the lucky numbers.

Hunk opened his cookies and ate the wafers before reading his note. “You have everything you need, why would you need more?” Hunk reads and shrugs.

Lance, Keith and Matt all reached for one as well and cracked open their cookies. “Your most wanted possession, is yet to be known. What the Hell does that mean?” Lance grumbled as he shoved the broken cookie in his mouth. Keith shrugged and opened his.

“Your home is another’s arms. What? No, I don't like people touching me.” Keith said as he tossed his cookie halves to Hunk. Lance turned to him. “You sure you don't like people touching you?” He asked as he opened his arms.

“Nope, no, don't do it. Don't'-STOP!” Keith cried out laughing as Lance wrapped his arms around Keith’s waist, pulling the other boys chair close to his. “See? Hugs are the best!” Lance said as Keith pushed his off, hiding his red-ass face.

Matt looked at Pidge with a knowing look than back at Keith, who flipped him off. Matt opened his cookie and read the fortune.

“Your most loved will soon open up their heart.” Matt read, face flushing as he shoved the cookie halves in his mouth. Shiro looked at his knees, opening his cookie along with Allura.

“Your confliction can lead to disaster.” Shiro read and handed his cookie to Hunk. Keith gave a pointed stare at Shiro, who mouthed ‘I know.’ Allura ate her cookies before reading the piece of paper.

“You will find something in the end, you didn't wish for at the beginning.” Allura read and rolled his eyes, glaring at Matt. “They’re just cookies, they can’t tell us our real futures.” She said as she stood up out of her seat. “Let’s just go back. I’ll take Hunk and Pidge this time.”

Shiro shrugged. “Guess I’m taking Matt, again, and Lance and Keith.” Shiro replied as they all slid out of the booth. Pidge skipped to the car, winking at her brother before getting into Allura’s jeep.
Matt sat in the front of Shiro’s truck, Keith and Lance getting in the back. Keith pressed himself far up against the car door and leaned his head back. Lance sat somewhat in the center so he could lean forward between Shiro and Matt.

“So, that was fun.” Lance said and Matt shrugged. Lance looked at him. “Why did Allura keep looking like she would kill you every five seconds, man?” Lance asked and Matt’s cheeks flushed and he turned away.

“I dunno.” He replied and Lance nodded, leaning back, than turned to Keith. “So, Keiiith.” Lance said as he tilted his head back. Keith made a point of ignoring Lance. Lance pouted and laid across the seat, resting his head on Keith’s crossed legs.

Keith jumped in surprise. “What do you want Lance?” Keith asked, feeling his legs burn where Lance’s head was. “Pay attention to me, I’m bored!” Lance whined and Keith pushed Lance’s head off his lap.

“Fine, when’s our next study session?” Keith asked, not looking at Lance. Lance huffed. “I dunno, whenever you’re free I guess. I’ll charge you less this time, only eight dollars per hour.” Lance said.

Keith rolled his eyes and looked at Lance. “Wow, so generous of you.” Keith said sarcastically. Lance smiled and the car was filled with an awkward silence again. Lance sighed and leaned forward once more, turning the radio on and flipping through radio stations.

“--oung dumb and broke. Young dumb, young dumb a---heart’s a stereo, it beats for you so listen close---and today one of the worlds best home runs we---you, ayy, I wanna be with. I wanna be with you---taking the time on my ride,” Lance was about to change the song again but Keith grabbed his arm and pulled it away.

“Nope, I like this song, leave it.” Keith said as Ride by Twenty Øne Piløts continued playing in the background. Lance wrinkled his nose and went to try and change it anyway but Shiro smacked his hand away.

“Just let it play, Keith won’t let any of us live if we don’t.” Shiro claimed. Keith nodded and Lance huffed, leaning back into the seat as Keith started to sing along.
The raven haired boy’s lips stretched into a smile and he closed his eyes as he sang along to the lines, smiling as the chorus ended. “I’d die for you, that’s easy to say, we have a list of people that we would save.” Keith sang out.

“A bullet for them, a bullet for you, a bullet for everybody in this room.” Matt joined in singing.

“But I don't see many bullets coming through, many bullets coming through. Metaphorically I’m the man, but literally, I don't know what I’d do.” Matt and Keith now sang in unison.

Lance watched as Keith sang, his purple-grey eyes opening as he sang, filled with a strange light and Keith’s cheeks were a light pink from over joyment. Lance felt his heart pick up in speed but he didn't understand why.

He chose to ignore it and turned to look at Shiro, whose face was bright red as he looked at Matt singing. Lance laughed out loud, interrupting the two’s singing and Keith glared at Lance.

“What? Don't like my singing?” Keith asked offended. Lance shook his head. “No, no, just,” Lance leaned over the seat to whisper in Keith’s ear as Matt continued singing. “Look at Shiro’s face.” Lance whispered and Keith looked in the car mirror, laughing at his not-brother’s red-faced expression.

Shiro looked in the mirror and glared at Keith as he drove into the Shirogane’s driveway. Shiro almost ran out of the car, Matt raising an eyebrow as he climbed out of the car. Pidge fell out of Allura’s jeep laughing as Hunk chased her around the yard. Keith and Lance shut the door as they walked into the house.

After going to the restaurant than coming back home, the seven of them all played games and watched movies until the rest of the group had to go home.

Shiro smiled softly as he and Keith picked up the blankets off the floor and all the food crumbs. “What's smiling about?” Keith asked and Shiro turned to his younger not-brother. “Nothing.” Shiro said softly as they dumped the blankets in the hall closet.

“M-hm.” Keith hummed in response, returning to his room. He closed the door and let a small smile fall onto his lips as he sat on his bed, going over the day. It had been fun, they’d gone to QQ Asian Bistro and Lance had tried to hug him, which Keith wrinkled his nose at as he remembered. They had driven home and sung to songs, Lance pointing out that Shiro had been blushing was
funny, Keith thought as he leaned backwards on his bed, closing his eyes.

They had watched many movies and shows, like Power Rangers, which Pidge had thought was ridiculous, especially the whole color-coordinated-fighting-aliens thing. Lance had made a joke about how he was definitely Billy or something, which had started a whole fight over who’s who.

Then they’d been eating snacks and they had all fought over what to eat, each one claiming a different snack was better. Keith smiled even more when he remembered Lance’s surprised face when he’d tried one of Kotoko’s jam cookies.

The cuban’s boy’s eyes had lit up in excitement and he had laughed softly about how great they were, turning to Keith and smiling softly. It was a nice look on the other boy, since he was normally wearing a cocky expression and Keith found he liked it.

Suddenly, it was as if time froze when Keith’s eyes popped open, his smile wiped off his face and now replaced with a scared frown. Keith sat up, running his hands through his hair. “No, no, no, no, not again, no.” Keith muttered, bringing his knees to his chest.

“No, I don't-no, I don't like him.” Keith muttered over and over again to himself as he ran his fingers into his hair full of knots.

After a few minute of trying to convince himself, he started to realize things he’d noticed about Lance, such as the way Keith’s heart seems to get louder or faster when around the cuban, or how he can be really kind, like with Rebecca, when he wants to. Or how when Lance makes a joke, Keith can find himself laughing along even if it sucks.

“No….” Keith muttered, feeling his heart rate pick up. Keith closed his eyes, counting backwards from ten as he inhaled slowly.

*He doesn't like you.*

*He never will.*

*How could he?*
Keith’s breathing started to pick up again and his eyes widened. “Shiro?” Keith called out, his voice cracking and he shut his eyes and covered his ears.

He’s not going to come.

He doesn’t care.

Shiro came running into the room and saw Keith curled up on his side now and sat down next to him on the bed. Shiro wrapped his arms around his not-brother. “Keith, calm down. Remember what I taught you, in, and out. One, in, Two, out.” Shiro said, rubbing circles onto Keith’s back.

Keith breathed shuddered out and he took one last deep breath before sitting up. “What caused it this time?” Shiro asked, moving a little away so Keith had space. Keith bit his lip and looked at Shiro.

“I think….I think I like Lance.” Keith muttered softly. There was a beat of silence before Shiro let out a soft chuckle. “Well no shit, Sherlock. We could all tell, Pidge pointed it out first though.” Shiro said and Keith’s face turned a soft pink and he punched Shiro’s arm.

“Shaddup.” Keith muttered, crawling under his covers. Shiro just watched as he stood up. “Yeah, whatever. Lance is too dumb to realize it though. Just, you should tell him at some point, okay?” Shiro said, stretching his arms.

Keith sighed annoyedly. ‘I’ll tell him when you pick Matt or Allura.” Keith muttered and Shiro let out another chuckle. “Fine,” Shiro said and ran his hand through his hair.

“Good night Keith.” Shiro said before walking out. Keith nodded and closed his eyes, his face still red as he slept.

~

Week 2
Keith woke up on Sunday around 1 p.m, getting up to sketch for a few hours while eating snacks. He doodle random things in one of his notebooks, making a mental not to buy a new sketchbook soon.

Around 4 o’clock, Shiro left to go study at a nearby library so Keith moved to the living room, turning on Cartoon Network and smiling as Adventure time came on.

“Sorry I don't treat you like a goddess, is that what you want me to do? Sorry I don't treat you like you're perfect....” Marceline sang on the screen as Keith idly sang along, on his phone surfing through Tumblr.

“Holy shit, you have a Tumblr blog?” Pidge asked, leaning over the couch. Keith let out an unmanly shriek and turned startled, looking at his best friend. Pidge cackled as she sat next to him.

“How THE HELL DID YOU GET IN HERE?!” Keith yelled, flipping the T.V. off. Pidge pressed a finger to her lips and winked. “It’s a secret~” she sang and Keith rolled his eyes, standing up.

“Could you give me a warning next time though?” Keith asked, checking the time to see an hour had already passed since he came in the living room and Regular Show was playing now.

Pidge smiled and started nodding her head. “Nope!” she said and Keith sighed. “What do you want?” he asked and Pidge hummed happily as Keith walked into the kitchen.

“Wwllll, a certain Shiro-bird told me you’ve finally realized your crush on ol’ Lancelot.” Pidge said innocently and Keith shut the fridge door, whipping around to face Pidge with wide eyes.

“What? I don’t--no, Shiro made that up.” Keith stuttered out, sitting at a bar stool and grabbing an apple, taking a huge bite.

Pidge laughed, sitting across from him. “It’s okay! Now we can plot how we’ll get you together...together.” Pidge said, rubbing her hands together. Keith swallowed his apple and looked at her. “No, if Lance likes me, he can tell me, we’re not going to do any scheming.”

You forgot to mention the part where Lance doesn't like you.
Keith swallowed hard, taking a bite of his apple again and Pidge huffed out. “Fine, fine, I’ll leave him alone. But if he tells me or Hunk that he likes you, scheming time!” she sang, getting up and walking around the table. Keith rolled his eyes.

“Fine whatever.” He said and ruffled her short hair, making the fifteen year old smile brightly. “So… are you going to study with him soon?” she asked. Keith shrugged. “Maybe, maybe not, I won’t tell you.” Pidge frowned. “Fine, be that way.” she said and smiled, walking out the house.

Keith sighed and threw the mostly uneaten apple away. “Whatever.” he muttered and went to bed, despite it only being six o’clock.

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Keith woke up on Monday, grabbing his clothes and bag and running out the door. He was late, again. As he finished pulling on his red jacket, he had made it to his bus stop, panting and holding his weight on his knees.

Lance looked at him concerned and kneeled down to face the other. “Did, did you just run the whole way here?” Lance asked and Keith nodded, still breathless.

Lance let out a low whistle. “Dude, that’s like, two and a half blocks.” Lance stated and Keith shrugged, standing up. “Overslept.” Keith said breathlessly. Lance raised an eyebrow and reached into his own bookbag, pulling out a sandwich.

“I’m guessing you didn't have breakfast than?” Lance asked, holding out the sandwich. Keith stared at it before pushing it back to Lance. “No, dude, that’s your lunch.” Keith said, ignoring how his cheeks heated up.

The bus came into view, at the end of the road now, approaching them. Lance sighed, unwrapping part of the sandwich and almost shoving it into Keith’s mouth. Keith pulled back away and looked at Lance, raising an eyebrow.

“Eat the sandwich, if you don't you won’t be focused enough for class. Trust me.” Lance said and offered the sandwich again. “I have money, I can buy lunch, just eat it or I will force feed you.” Lance threatened as the bus pulled up to the stop.
Keith rolled his eyes and took the sandwich. “Fine, whatever. Thanks.” Keith said and took a bite of the sandwich as he walked onto the bus. Lance smiled a blinding smile and Keith felt his heart rate pick up.

Keith plopped down in his usual seat and Lance sat across from him, watching as Keith ate the sandwich. “Ey, uh, by the way. We could study tomorrow after school. Mario and Maria are supposed to have soccer practice and Rosita is going out with Rebecca and Miguel for the day.” Keith nodded as he took another bite of the sandwich holy shit this is good, and took out his phone.

“What time?” he asked after swallowing. Lance shrugged. “Well, uh, right after school ‘til whenever we stop?” Lance asked and Keith nodded, shifting his his seat a little.

“Sure, sounds good.” Keith said and there was a beat of silence as someone passed down the aisle, taking a seat in the back.

“So, uh, quick question, how do you get your money? I mean, I get mine from tutoring, but you don't work, I don't think.” Lance said and Keith smiled, taking one last bit of the sandwich before balling up the plastic and putting it in his bag.

“I draw.” Keith said and Lance tilted his head. “I draw for people. I do things called commissions and people pay me to draw things. I also do animations which I also get paid for.” Keith responded and Lance nodded.

“Well now I really want to see your art!” Lance whined and Keith stuck his tongue out. “You or Rebecca, that was the option.” Keith said and Lance rolled his eyes.

‘Yeah, yeah, whatever.” Lance said and the rest of the bus ride they spent talking about how Keith sold his art and about the animation contest Pidge signed him up for. Lance watched as Keith’s face lit up, talking about why he loved animating and how much it was worth it in the end to watch the fluid motion of a video, even if it took weeks.

Lance smiled at Keith who stuttered in his talking and turned his head away briefly, though Lance didn't understand. When the bus pulled into the school, Keith grabbed his bags and ran to his math class with Mr. Ulaz.

Keith entered the classroom and sat at his desk, suddenly realizing he had to go back to his locker.
Keith rose his hand and Ulaz just nodded. Keith walked down the hall, opening his locker and sifting through the millions of papers to grab his math textbook and notebook.

Suddenly, someone poked his back and he turned to see two cuban kids, a guy and girl and the girl was holding a soccer ball against her waist. “Oh, hey guys, I kinda forgot you went here.” Keith said to Maria and Mario.

Mario shrugged and smiled. “Eh, whatcha gonna do?” he said and Maria slapped the top of his head. Keith closed his locker and looked at the twins. “So, what did you guys want?” he asked and the twins shared a look, almost like they were having a silent conversation.

Maria pouted, sighing and turning to Keith. “So, you're going to study at our house tomorrow, right?” she asked, her twin braids bouncing as she talked. Keith nodded and she smiled. “No one’s going to be home so feel free to do whatever.” she said and winked and Keith’s face flushed and he flicked the younger girl. “That’s enough out of you!” Keith yelled and she laughed, dropping her soccer ball to protect her head from Keith.

Mario picked up the soccer ball, bouncing it from knee to knee. “You should totally come see one of our games with Big Bro sometime.” Mario said, bouncing the ball onto his head now. Keith watched as the boy bounced the ball from limb to limb to head to limb. “Uh, sure, I guess?”

Mario smiled at his sister and they nodded. “‘Kay, we have a game this Saturday if you want to come, Lan’s already coming.” Maria said, smiling and Keith raised an eyebrow. “Lan?” he asked and Maria shrugged.

“We all have our different names for him, mine’s Lan, since it’s shorter than Lance.” she claimed and the bell rung. The twins waved goodbye to Keith before running off to their class and Keith walked to his, smiling softly.

*Lan, huh.*

Chapter End Notes

Hi
The Voice And The Truth (Shakira, Shakira)

Chapter Summary

Keith tells Lance some things. And Pidge's a demon.

Week 2

Keith woke up on Tuesday, absolutely hating the world. He groaned and sat up in his bed, running his hand through his hair and frowning when it got stuck on a knot. Tugging his hands out of his hair, he stood up, stretching his arms behind his head.

He grabbed his phone and rolled his eyes when he saw Pidge blowing up his phone about trying to sneak her into the Senior’s Camping trip at the end of this week. Keith sighed as he put on his clothes, not really caring about his outfit as he ran his fingers through his hair to try and get the knots out, wrinkling his nose as he reached for his red plastic brush.

He sat on his bed, groggily as he ran the brush through his hair. He had no clue why he was so tired, he was pretty sure he’d gotten enough sleep last night. Despite that fact his entire body refused to move and his eyes didn’t want to stay open. He groaned out as he forced himself to his feet, pulling his converse on before walking out of his room.

Shiro greeted him by handing him a plate with Pop Tarts on it. “Mom got called into the hospital early today, something ‘bout some kid with leukemia or something, needed a check-up. So, you're stuck with my famous Pop Tarts.” Shiro said, grinning at his not-brother.

Keith chuckled, taking the plate from Shiro. “Thanks, but they’re not yours, or famous,” Keith replied as he took a bite of the warm s’more pop tart.

Shiro shrugged, sitting on one of the bar stools. “Matt would argue you on that.” Shiro claims, biting into his own Pop Tart as Keith sat across him, raising an eyebrow. “Just Matt? Not Allura?” Keith asked and Shiro’s face flushed slightly.

“She, she doesn't sleep over a lot. She’s a girl after all.” Shiro pointed out and Keith nodded smugly. “Sure, let's go with that.” Keith said and frowned suddenly, making Shiro look up.
“Is it…?” Shiro trailed off, not really knowing what to say next as Keith looked up and nodded a little, tapping the side of his head. “Uh, yeah, won’t shut up.” Keith said quietly.

Keith, after a few months of living with Shiro, had told the older boy about the ‘voice’ inside his head, the voice that always brought him down. Shiro had suggested going to a therapist or something because having a voice in your head that wasn’t yours isn’t normal, but Keith refused because he felt weird around people he didn't know.

Shiro had suggested it a few times again after that but Keith always refused. Shiro looked at Keith and tried to smile reassuringly. “Just make yours louder.” Shiro said and Keith nodded, turning his head to look at the time.

“I got to go.” Keith said, frowning again as he found it hard to smile. Shiro smiled though, gently, at his not-brother. “Try and have a great day.” Shiro said and Keith just waved him off.

Today was going to be a hard day, Keith thought to himself. It always was when he woke up, the voice yelling at him about how horrible he is and how he isn’t loved. It was always one of the longest days, going by slowly while Keith suffered.

Keith dragged his body to his bus stop, tightening his grip on his book bag strap as he leaned against the stop sign, taking out his phone. After a few moments, Lance ran up to him, slinging an arm around Keith’s shoulder smiling brightly at Keith, who only attempted a smile back.

“So? We on for studying later still right?” Lance asked, pulling away from the other boy. Keith stood up straight, shifting in his black sweatshirt. “Duh, finals are next week.” Keith said, smiling a little and, oh that was weird.

Lance smiled a toothy grin. “Great! Because we’re doing Modern History today!!!” Lance said and Keith rolled his eyes, groaning exaggeratedly. “Fiiiiine.” Keith said and slouched forward a little. Lance chuckled slightly and Keith smiled a little more, yet the voice was still screaming in his head.

Don't forget he’ll never love you.

You're useless he couldn't love someone like you.

Yet Keith ignored it because right now, he was talking to Lance, and he didn't want the other boy to think him weak.

The bus pulled up and Keith sat in his normal seat, though Lance plopped right next to him, rather than sitting in the seat across the aisle like he usually does and Keith felt his ears heat up.
“Are you going to show Becca your sketchbook today?” Lance asked and Keith raised an eyebrow. “Your twins siblings said no one would be home.” Keith said slowly and Lance rolled his eyes.

“Well, I mean, like, no one should be home, but it’s supposed to rain later so Maria and Mario’s practice might get canceled. Beckie is hanging out with the neighbor’s kid, Claire,” Lance explained. “But the two might come back to our house to hang out. Besides, Becca really wants to see your art.” Lance said.

Keith picked at his sweatshirt sleeve. “Why are you so obsessed with that?” Keith asked and Lance turned, smiling that toothy grin as Florona got onto the bus. “Because she thinks you’re amazing! Duh.” Lance said.


Keith smiled, but he could physically feel how fake it was, though Lance didn’t say anything. “That’s only because she has you as a brother.” Keith flicked the center of Lance’s forehead, making the other boy laugh a little.

“Anyone’s awesome compared to you.” Keith claimed. Lance then pouted and made puppy eyes, looking at Keith. The raven’s ears turned red again and his eyes shifted to the side. Lance suddenly dramatically draped himself across Keith’s lap and Keith flinched.

“What are you doing?” Keith asked, a little annoyed. Lance curled up on the bus seat, moving so he was laying comfortably on Keith’s lap. “You hurt my F-eew-ings.” Lance claimed, talking in a baby voice. Keith rolled his eyes and snorted. “Dude, stop.” Keith said, ears burning.

Lance shook his head. “Nope, this is a bonding moment.” Lance said and Keith rolled his eyes, moving his one hand so it was cradling Lance’s head. Keith looked down at the cuban’s face and smiled the slightest. “Why are you like this?” Keith asked and Lance just smiled even wider. “Shut up, everyone loves it.” he said and turned into a more comfortable position. “Now, I am going to sleep because Maria and Mario’s practice went way overtime and they would not calm the fuck down so deal with me.” Lance said and closed his eyes, almost immediately falling asleep.

Keith ignored the burning of his ears and adjusted Lance’s sleeping position so he was cradling his head almost. Florona’s head popped over the edge of the seat in front of him and she smiled at the two.

“He’s like a child.” she said and Keith snorted, looking up at her. “By the way. Mr. Harris showed your painting to the class and it looks amazing so far.” She said, smiling brightly. Keith smiled back at her. “Thanks, but I still have a lot of work to do on it.” he retorted. Her eyes widen.
“How!?” she asked in surprise and almost went flying backwards as the bus pulled into another stop. Zerith held in a laugh as Florona sat up again, glaring at the other girl.

“Anyway, it’s really amazing.” she said and Keith nodded. “Thanks.” he said again and took out his earbuds, putting on some music and making sure Lance didn’t fall off the bus seat, though that would be funny to watch.

Keith closed his eyes after a few songs, letting Take Me To Church blast in his ears as he drifted into unconsciousness.

Keith was awoken by someone shaking him and taking in the fact Lance was still asleep in his lap, it was not the cuban. The first thing Keith noticed before he realized who was shaking him, was that the voice decided to be just a little louder now, yelling seemingly random insults at him, but Keith ignored it, turning to whoever was shaking him.

“Almost at school.” Blaytz said and Keith nodded, mumbling a ‘thank you,’ before trying to shake Lance awake.


_No one wants to listen to you, Keith._

_You're just annoying him._

Keith’s laughter died in his throat and he shook Lance a little more forcefully as he saw their school coming into view. “Lance, please wake up.” Keith asked a little more sternly. Lance opened his eyes slowly, sitting up and Keith’s legs suddenly felt cold.

“What year is it?” Lance asked and Keith suppressed a laughter. “Still 2018.” Keith replied and Lance rolled his eyes, moving so he was sitting normally. “We’re at school.” Keith said as the bus pulled to a stop.

Lance stood up. “Time to get ready and die!” Lance said cheerfully and there were a few groans of agreement as everyone filed off the bus. Lance and Keith ran into Hunk and Pidge and the four of them talked about random shit like they do every morning until their homeroom bell rang.

Lance and Pidge waved goodbye to Hunk and Keith as they walked to Coran’s classroom. “Can you pleeeeeease sneak me on the trip?” Pidge asked for the eighth time that morning. Lance rolled his eyes and ruffled her hair.
“Pidge, for the last time. No, we are not going to sneak you to the camping trip.” Lance said as they entered their classroom, taking their seats. “But it would be so easy!!” Pidge whined, flopping her head on Lance’s desk.

“No,” Lance said as Coran walked in. “Pleeeeeease?!” Pidge wailed, catching Coran’s attention. “What does she want this time?” he asked jokingly. Lance smirked. “She wants me to sneak her to our camping trip.” Lance claimed and Pidge’s head shot up.

“Wha-no!! That’s absurd! I would never ask my dear friend to do something that could possibly get him in trouble! I would never!” Pidge argued and Lance laughed at her.

Coran smiled. “Well, that’s too bad. Because if you did want to come to the trip, since I’m your homeroom teacher I could make it happen. But,” Coran smirked at his student. “If you don’t want to I mean--” “No!” Pidge interrupted. “I wanna go! Please?” Pidge pleaded and Coran smiled.

“Weeeeell,” Coran flipped a few papers on his desk. “You are my favorite student…” Coran trailed off and there were a few complaints around the room. “So why not?” Coran said and Pidge whooped.

Lance stared in disbelief before pointing in front of him at Pidge. “She’ll blow us up!” he claimed and she stuck her tongue out at him. “Nu-uh!” she argued and Lance rolled his eyes.

“If we die, it’s Pidge’s fault!” he claimed a few murmurs of agreement were heard. Pidge pouted. “Is not!” She paused for a moment. “Probably.” she added and the bell rung, signalling that it was time for class to get started.

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Lance sat down in his seat once again for free period, chatting with Hunk and Nyma about the horrible decision Coran made inviting Pidge while said girl pouted and complained and yelled at them for being jerks.

Keith came in like he normally does, carrying a notebook with him a bright smile on his face. Coran saw this and pulled up a chair at his desk for the other boy to sit at. Lance watched as Keith flipped open his notebook, talking about something he couldn’t hear.

The smile on Keith’s face was huge, almost lighting up the room and he talked excitedly to his teacher, pointing at his notebook occasionally and making huge gestures with his hands while he talked.

Pidge snapped her fingers in front of Lance’s face snapping the cuban boy out of his thoughts. He looked at her and she smirked. “What’cha looking at?” she asked teasingly and both Hunk and
Nyma looked at him now. “Nothing.” Lance muttered, resuming the conversation while Pidge teased him.

Once the period was over, Hunk, Pidge and Lance all walked to the cafeteria, grabbing Keith after he’d gotten his bag and everything and they sat at their usual table. Pidge slammed her hands on the table, making them all jump as they took out their lunches.

“Coran’s letting me go to the camping trip!” she shouted cheerfully and Keith smiled. “Fun!” he said and then suddenly realization came onto his face and he frowned. “Wait, no, not fun. You're going to blow us up or something.” Keith claimed and Pidge whined.

“I’m nooooot. Stop saying that!” she complained as she ate her garlic bread. Keith laughed as he ate his peanut butter and jelly sandwich. “But, it’s true.” He said after swallowing and she made a fake crying sound and Hunk laughed.

“You guys are so mean!” she whined. And the three of them all laughed as they continued eating their lunch.

Yeah, Keith, so mean about everything.

You should just leave them alone.

They don't want you here anyway.

Keith’s laughter died suddenly and Lance looked at him with concern. “You okay?” Lance asked and Keith shook him off. “’M fine.” he muttered and now Pidge looked at him concerned, having known about the ‘voice’ in his head.

She frowned. “Uhm, is, did someone say something?” she asked, trying to use some sort of code because she knew Keith didn't like people knowing about it, heck, she found out by accident.

“Yeah, and they don't shut up.” Keith replied and Hunk and Lance watched the exchange. “Who?” Lance asked and Keith waved his hand around. “Doesn't matter.” he muttered and they continued on with their lunch.

The rest of the day continued on really quickly and Keith was finally almost done with his picture, maybe two more days and he’d be done. He told Mr. Harris this and he smiled. “Great work Keith! Hope New York accepts you.” he said and Keith smiled. “Thanks.” he replied.

He met up with Lance and the two took the backseats, Lance, once again, sitting next to Keith on the seat instead of across him. Keith looked at him out of the corner of his eyes as he turned on his
music. After a few moments, Lance ripped Keith’s earbuds out, making the raven turn.

“Hey! What the--” Lance just smiled brightly, making the words die in Keith’s throat. “We’re going to study modern history today!” Lance claimed as the bus pulled out of the school. Keith frowned and picked up his earbuds which Lance had tossed to the floor.

“Is that all?” Keith asked, pursing his lips. Lance just shrugged. “I guess, but it’s rude to tune out someone who’s sitting next to you.” Lance claimed.

Yeah, don't be rude Keith.

Keith swallowed and rolled his eyes. “Not if it’s you.” Keith claimed and Lance made a whining sound in his throat. “That’s ruuuuuude, Keef.” Lance whined, draping himself across Keith’s lap again, looking up at the raven.

Keith deadpanned. “The fuck you just called me?” he asked, glaring slightly at the cuban boy. Lance smirked and sat up. “Oh, Keef? Yeah, that’s my new name for you, Keeeef.” Lance teased and Keith could feel his ears turning red and felt the warmth crawl up his neck.

Kith just scoffed and smirked, looking Lance in the eyes. “Really, Lan? Gonna make fun of my name?” he asked and wanted to laugh at the face Lance made, which was an expression between embarrassment and anger.

“Really Maria?” Lance muttered to himself and Keith laughed at Lance’s reaction again, the other boy facing the seat in front of them and pouting. “Whatever. Keef is still a better name.” Lance teased and Keith huffed. “Whatever. Modern history, right? So like, Hamilton and shit?” Keith asked and Lance nodded.

Keith smirked. “Can I blast the Hamilton soundtrack while we study?” he asked and Lance’s eyes widened. “No! Nope none of that musical shit inside the McClain household. Do you know how many months I had to listen to the Hamilton soundtrack after Maria discovered musicals. And Heathers. Dude, that shit was annoying.” Lance complained and Keith smirked.

“You just don't have good taste in music. Hamilton was a sick ass rapper.” Keith said and one of the kids in front of him turned and gave him a strange look. She had bright red hair and long brown roots, along with green eyes. She stared at the two debating between saying something before she put an earbud in her ear and turned around again.

Lance laughed at the girl’s reaction before looking at Keith. “Dude, no. Just, no. In my house we listen to classic spanish music. Like Enrique Iglesias, who is a god by the way. Spanish only, thank you very much.” Lance said and Keith rolled his eyes.
“Please don't tell me you listen to Dame Tu Cosita, because if so, I’m disowning you as my tutor.” Keith said and Lance laughed. “Oh God no. No thank you, if I did, Miguel would sing it on repeat and while I love his singing, no thank you.” Lance replied and the bus made a sharp turn, making Lance grab the front of the seat to stop himself from falling.

Still though, he was pressed against Keith’s side and Keith felt warmth spread throughout his body starting from the spot where Lance’s side pressed against his.

Lance sat up and smiled while Keith turned to look out the window. “But, expect Shakira to be blasting the whole time.” Lance said, as if nothing had just happened and Keith nodded as the bus pulled up to their stop. Lance stood up, slinging his book bag over his shoulder and Keith followed.

As the two walked down the aisle, the dyed red head stopped Keith. He looked down at her and she smiled. “Are you Aaron Burr sir?” she asked and Keith smiled. “That depends, who’s asking?” he replied and she smiled a bright, braces filled smile, turning to the person next to her, who had short, light brown hair and glasses.

The girl talked to the person next to her as Keith got off the bus with Lance. Lance rolled his eyes when Keith told him what happened. “You’re lucky there are other nerds in the school.” Lance said and Keith laughed, pulling his hood over his head as it had started to drizzle, as Lance predicted.

“Naw, I'm just lucky there's normal people out there.” Keith retorted as they walked down the sidewalk. “Maria and Mario are already home.” Lance noted as he opened the door. “Why?” Keith asked. “I mean, why don't they take the bus?” Keith rephrased as he walked into the house.

“They have friends with cars who drive them. Meaning they get to sleep in and shit and get home earlier.” Lance whined a little as he closed the door. They dropped their book bags in the living room and Mario entered in. “Sup Keith.” Mario said and Keith waved at him as he sat on the floor.

Maria popped her head into the room and smiled. “Hi Keith! Sorry you're stuck with us. Practice was canceled.” she pouted at the end, walking fully into the room. Keith shrugged as Lance sat next to him, pulling out his notebook from his book bag.

“Guess that sucks.” Keith said and Mario nodded for his sister. “Yes, it does. We have a game on Sunday and the other school is a beast. We need all the practice we can get.” Mario whined as Keith took out his own notebooks. Lance waved at the two in a shooing motion.

“Get outta here you two. Just cos today was your last day, doesn't mean that you can bother those who need to study.” Lance complained and the two twins stuck their tongues out in unison.
“You’re just upset because we’re younger and have less tests.” Maria argued. “Yes, yes I am. Now leave.” Lance whined, crumpling up a piece of paper and throwing it at Maria, who squealed as she tried to dodge.

“Fine, fine, we’re leaving you two alone.” Maria said, winking at the end before grabbing her twin’s arm and dragging him upstairs. Lance turned to Keith with a small smile and held up his notebook.

“Starting with George Washington?” Lance said and Keith nodded, flipping a few pages in his notebook.

Two hours later, Keith found himself sprawled out on the floor, notebooks and papers surrounding both of them. “So, the difference between the two Roosevelts was….?” Lance asked and Keith glared at him for the eighth time that afternoon.

“Franklin Roosevelt was the 32nd president, he was in charge during the Great Depression and Theodore was the 26th president and he was the one who’s on Mount Rushmore with those other hoes.” Keith answered and Lance held back a laugh. “Okay, who were those other ‘hoes’ on Mount Rushmore?” Lance asked, looking at Keith.


“Okay, pop question than from our last study session. Who was Martin Luther?” Lance asked. “He’s the dude who fought for black rights.” Keith answered. Lance rolled his eyes. “No, that was Martin Luther King Jr., I asked Martin Luther.” Lance corrected and Keith groaned, laying back down.

“Uh, he’s the dude who, give me a second.” Keith said, holding up a finger. “Oh, he's the dude who opposed the sale of indulgences. He wrote the 95 Theses and like, spread them all around. Started the Protestant Reformation which ended religious unity throughout….?” Keith trailed off, trying to remember where the dude lived and Lance laughed.


Keith sat up again, rubbing his head. “Can we take a break? My head hurts from cramming in information.” he whined and Maria and Mario entered the kitchen with Miguel. “Sure.” Lance said
and leaned back a little to see what his younger siblings were doing.

“What are you guys doing?” he asked, curiously. “Miguel wants to bake again, so I offered to supervise since you’re tutoring.” Maria said. “And I offered to be a taste-tester!” Mario added. Miguel pointed to a sugar bag and flour bag in the cabinets and Maria grabbed it down for the ten year old.

“Is he even old enough to cook?” Keith whispered to Lance. Lance nodded. “Unlike Rosie, he actually makes great food.”

“Yo necesito una cuchara y un bol,” Miguel said to his sister and she nodded, twin braids flapping around her face as she skipped over to another cabinet, grabbing down a huge orange bowl and red plastic spoon.

Miguel continued asking for things that his older sister got for him as Mariosat on the counter. Mario reached over and turned the knob on the radio, his and Maria’s face lighting up as they recognized the intro music and Lance smiled too as the twins moved to the living room.

Lance turned to Keith who watched in confusion. “Just watch.” Lance said and Mario grabbed Maria’s hand.

“I never knew she could dance like that, she makes a man wanna speak spanish”

As the lyrics played, Mario lip sang, rolling his hips, in a very mature way, with the music and pointing at his twin, who stayed motionless staring at the ground.

“Como se llama? Bonita. Mi casa, es su casa.”

Mario did a dramatic foot kick before sliding to the left dramatically and Maria picked her head up, smiling brightly and placing her hands on her hips.

“Oh baby when you talk like that, you make a woman go mad”

Maria lip sang and did a slow turn by pushing her foot on the ground, circling her hips as she did so. Keith tilted his head curiously.

“So be wise, and keep on,”

Maria dramatically flipped her hair and shook her hips.
“Reading the signs of my body”

As she lip sang, she ran her hands from her hips straight up into the air and sunk her hips slowly. Keith let out a light gasp. “Dude,” he muttered to Lance who smiled, proud of his siblings.

The twins continued dancing to the song, both shaking and rolling their hips to the beat of the music, Mario occasionally break dancing and Maria doing a ton of dramatic twists and spins.

The song ended and the two bowed, both breathless and Keith clapped lightly. “You guys dance better than I ever could and I’m eighteen.” Keith said and Maria let out a breathless laugh.

“Thanks, but I bet you dance better than Lance.” she said and Mario nodded, heading back to the kitchen to help Miguel.

Lance let out a dramatic gasp, putting his hand on his chest. “I can dance!!! I mean, my name does rhyme with dance.” Lance argued. Maria laughed again.

“You dance like a thirty year old dad at a school dance with his kid.” She said and Keith laughed at that. “Do not!” Lance argued and Maria nodded. “Do too!” she replied before walking into the kitchen to supervise her brothers.

“Anyway, since you want a break from studying, do this simple thing,” Lance said, pulling out his notebook and writing something on it. “Just, state the opposites of these.” Lance said, handing his notebook to Keith. Keith looked at it and what was written.


“Did you seriously just rick roll me through paper?” Keith asked, crumbling up a piece of paper and hitting Lance. Lance laughed and held up another notebook to block the paper. “You’re the one who fell for it!” Lance argued. “You’re really gullible.” Lance said and Keith threw his pencil at him.

Lance pouted as it hit his cheek. “Rude!” Lance said but he was laughing as he spoke and Keith felt his ears turn red.

Ah, thought you were having a moment, didn’t you?
Keith froze, his expression blanking and Lance raised an eyebrow. Keith bit his lip and shook his head, trying to ignore the voice that was now back in his head, yelling at him. “I’m not rude, McLame.” Keith retorted, faking a smile.

Lance looked at him for another moment before a smile filled his face. “Sure thing Mullet.” Lance spat back and Keith laughed. “You’re just jealous because my hair is beautiful.” Keith said and before Lance could say anything, the door opened and Rebecca came running in, a pink hat placed on her bald head and she smiled at the two boys.

She ran over to Keith, enveloping the boy in a hug. “Keithy!!! You're here!” she cried out happily and Keith laughed, hugging he much smaller girl back. “Yeah, wassup?” he asked and she pulled out of the hug, pulling something out of her overall-dress front pocket.

“They made me a charm!” she squealed, holding out a little bead with a cursive ‘R’ on it. Keith smiled. “Claire’s a good friend I guess.” Keith said and Lance nodded. “The girl makes like, everything for Becca.” Lance said.

Rebecca smiled brightly. “Yep!!! She’s the bestest in the world. ‘Cept for Lannie! Lannie’s the bestest at being the bestest!” she said, pointing at Lance, who smiled a small smile. “Thanks Beckie! You're the bestest too!” he replied.

Lance sat up straight. “Keith, show her your art!” he said and Keith rolled his eyes. “You draw!” Rebecca asked, tugging at her hat and Keith nodding turning towards his bookbag and grabbing out his sketchbook. “You bet.” he said.

He angled his body so he could show Rebecca without anyone, namely Lance, seeing. He opened it up and showed her a few pictures, though the first few were mostly just anatomy practice pictures. Still, Rebecca squealed with delight, petting the pictures after he turned a new page.

“You’re amazing!!” she said and looked at the raven haired teen. Keith shrugged. “There’s better artists out there.” he claimed and the young girl pouted. “Like who?” she asked, stomping her foot a little.


*But you'll never be as good as the others.*

Keith plastered on a fake smile. “Well, thank you, Rebecca.” he said and she smiled. “Your welcome!” she said and there was a loud beeping sound. “Brownies are done!” Miguel called out and Maria took the pan out of the oven as Rebecca ran over.
Lance stood up too, waving for Keith to follow.

“They still need to cool.” Maria pointed out. “Put ‘em in the freezer for a few minutes.” Lance suggested and Keith scoffed. “But if we leave them in too long, they’ll just be cold.” Mario pointed out.

“Then don’t leave them in too long.” Lance said and he hoisted himself to sit on the counter. Keith leaned against the corner next to him. “I’ll put them in for three minutes, exactly.” Maria said, setting a timer quickly. Miguel walked over to Keith, also smiling. “I hope you’ll like them.” Miguel said, though his voice said a little strange, as if he were forcing the english out.

“I'll definitely like them.” Keith said and ruffled the boy’s hair. Maria whistled. “Dudes nice to you and your siblings? No wonder you liked him.” Maria said and Lance’s face flushed and Keith felt his ears turn red again.

“Did you tell everyone about that?” Keith asked and Miguel nodded. “Sí.” he answered and Maria nodded too. “He ranted about how amazing you were and how you’d never love him but he got over you after like, what, two months?” Maria asked and Lance hid his face in his hands.

“Shut up.” he groaned out and Keith laughed.

Ah, he’s over you. He doesn't like you or want you

The only reason you're even here is because you're paying him

Keith swallowed and almost choked on his laughter and Lance side-eyed him through his hands. “You okay?” lance asked, voice muffled a bit and Keith nodded. “Yeah why wouldn't I be?” Keith asked and Maria’s timer went off. She turned around, opening the freezer and smiling when she felt the pan was still warm.

“Brownies~” she sang out, placing the pan on one counter and cutting them up into squares. She handed a big piece to Keith. “Miguel’s special recipe, handmade, made entirely by him.” she said proudly.

The McClain’s watched as Keith took a bite and he smiled down at Miguel. “These are amazing!” he complimented, taking another big bite and Miguel smiled, face flushed with happiness.

“Gracias!” Miguel said and the front door once again opened.

“Niños! Ven ayudarme!” A man’s voice called out and Keith turned to look. Maria, Mario, Miguel,
and Rebecca all ran to the front door, Lance following slowly behind.

“Papa, Keith está aquí.” Keith heard Maria’s voice say as he turned his head to see a man with grocery bags on his arms, which the kids were slowly taking off of his arms.

The man looked up and saw the other boy and smiled.

“Keith! Hola! I’m Juan, their father.” the tan man explained and Keith nodded. “Uh, I’m Keith, as they said.” Keith said a little awkwardly. “Ah yes, I’ve heard so much about you recently.” Juan joked and Keith looked at Lance.

“Not from me, Mullet.” Lance said. Maria and Mario smiled. “From us and Rebecca. You're pretty cool. Plus I saw one of your paintings the other day at school. The blue angel one.” Maria said.

Keith nodded. “Thanks I think.” Maria laughed gently as she made her way to the kitchen, placing the grocery bags on the counter as her siblings followed suit. Lance looked at Keith. “Help us put this away, please?” Lance asked and Keith nodded as the six of them all started packing stuff away, Juan watching his kids and Keith.

“So, Lance is tutoring you, is that right, Keith?” Juan asked and Keith nodded. “Yeah, wanted to be prepared for finals and sh-stuff.” Keith cut himself off of cursing in front of the younger kids but Juan caught it, laughing to himself.

“Well, you're still welcome anytime, you don't need to only come over for tutor sessions.” Juan invited and Keith shrugged as he put the jug of milk away and the other kids balled up the grocery bags, putting them underneath the sink with the garbage bags. Keith raised an eyebrow at that, the Shiroganes normally didn't keep grocery bags, out he said nothing.

“I dunno. I mean, if I don't have to look at that,” Keith pointed at Lance who pouted. “Than I'd probably come over more.” Juan laughed and Lance pouted even more.

“Ah yes, unfortunately, Lance wasn’t given the git of natural beauty like me and Mario were.” Juan said and Mario smiled while Lance stomped his foot. “Dad!” he whined and Juan laughed again.

“I'm joking son.” he said and Keith felt his phone vibrate. “Awe sh-crap. Shiro wants me home now, something ‘bout mom-ish going to work early again? I gotta go.” Keith said, walking towards his pile of notebooks, Lance following. Juan followed the two with his eyes. “Did you call your mother ‘mom-ish’?” he asked.

Keith shrugged as he shoved his notebooks and sketchbook into his bag. “Yeah, she’s not my,
she’s not my biological mother.” Keith said. Juan tilted his head. “You’re adopted?” he asked and Keith shook his head. “Uh, no. I’m a foster kid. This is like, the twenty third family I’ve been with and that’s not even an exaggeration. People don't like me.” Keith said jokingly.

Yeah, no one likes you Keith

Juan shook his head. “We like you. Well, see you next time you come to study Keith.” Juan said and tried to split up the argument Maria and Miguel started having about who got to scoop the peanut butter first.

Lance turned to Keith. “Next time, is Thursday good? We’ll study english.” Lance said and Keith rolled his eyes. “Whatever. And yeah, Thursday’s good” Keith said as he handed Lance a small wad of cash. “See you next time.” Keith called over his shoulder and Lance waved as the rave let himself out.

As Keith walked down the sidewalk to his house, he smiled softly to himself.

They’re great people right?

Too bad they don't like you

Couldn’t you tell?

They were just faking it for Lance’s sake

Though Lance doesn’t even like you anymore

I mean, they did say it, didn't they?

Keith closed his eyes, trying to will back the tears he could feel threatening to fall. He breathed in a shaky breath, wiping at his eyes and plastering on a fake smile as he opened his house door, kicking off his shoes.

“I’m home Shiro!” Keith called out, dropping his bag by the front door. “We're in here!” Kotoko called out from the living room.

Shiro was smiling brightly when Keith walked in but Kotoko gave him a look that said be quiet. “Keith, I have to leave early tomorrow in the morning for extra work, but uhm, something came in the mail this morning after you left.” She said, handing her kinda-son an envelope.
Keith grabbed it and turned it over, eyes widening when he saw the title. “Whe-but I didn’t--”
“Pidge signed you up, like you asked, apparently, is what she told us.” Shiro said and Keith opened up the envelope.

“Congratulations! Your entry has been accepted into the King Arts Animation Contest! We look forward to seeing your new work next week at Goucon! Please have a new work ready for that date!!! Thank you Keith Kogane and have a great day!”

Keith smiled at Shiro. “Which of my animations did she even turn in?” he asked and Shiro opened his laptop. “She sent it to me before, wanting to make sure you’d be okay with it, but this one,” Shiro said, turning the computer screen around to show Keith a small clip of an animation to the song “I Don't Fucking Care” by Blackbear.

“That was… but that’s just a meme animation I made! I didn't think something like that would get accepted.” keith said, purple eyes wide. Shiro shrugged. “Well, talent surprises people.” Shiro said and Keith smiled even brighter.

“I'm texting that bitch right now.” Keith said. “Language.” Kotoko replied and he nodded as he ran up to his room, pulling out his phone.

**Emo-McNugget:** bitch

**Pidgeon:** DID YOU GET ACCEPTED???

**Emo-McNugget:** yes, but why would you enter that animation??

**Pidgeon:** it’s the only one i have saved besides the Dirty Mind one you made

**Emo-McNugget:**

**Emo-McNugget:** well then that’s fine. I gtg now. I’m tired af

**Pidgeon:** fine, see you loser!!!

Keith flopped backwards on his bed, smiling as he stared at the ceiling. What animation could he do? There were a few he already had almost finished. Suddenly, he sat up, running to his computer and drawing tablet, searching to find the one animation he’d been working on a while ago.

His smile widened so much when he found the animation, clicking on it to see how much of it was
“Okay, I’ll work on this tomorrow.” Keith said to himself happily as he ran and jumped onto his bed, burying himself in his blankets, grinning widely into his pillow.

You're not going to win you know.

Immediately that smile was wiped off his face and he bit his lip, pressing his face into his pillow harshly.

You probably only got accepted because they didn't have enough people signing up

They were probably forced, maybe Katie paid them

You're not talented.

Keith inhaled sharply, pulling his blankets over his head and curling up. He could feel tears fallen on his cheeks, could tell his eyes were red. It was hard for him too breathe, but he just stayed in his position until he fell asleep.

When Keith woke up on Wednesday, he wasn’t surprised to find he had to wipe away dry tears. He grabbed a random jacket off the floor and a shirt from his dresser. He pulled on a pair of black pants before walking out the door.

He ran a hand through his hair quickly and bit his lip as he walked out into the living room. Shiro was once again cooking in the kitchen, if you can call shoving waffles into a toaster cooking. Keith plastered on a fake smile when he saw Shiro.

Shiro waved at him and smiled. “I looked up some shit about Goucon, right? And turns out there’s going to be a ton of representatives from colleges and newspaper people will be there. You’ll get a lot of recognition for just even being in this contest. Plus, if you do win, which I know you will, the prize is a scholarship. So you’ll totally get in, even though you already would have without a scholarship.” Shiro ended his speech by placing a plate of waffles in front of Keith.

Keith let a small, genuine, smile take its place on his lips. “Thanks Shiro, but I doubt I’ll even win.” Keith said and Shiro frowned, slamming his hands on the counter, making Keith jump.

“If it’s telling you that, it’s wrong.” Shiro said, eyes wide as he looked at his not-brother. Keith looked at him, eyes widened a bit but they returned to normal as he turned his head. “S’fine Shiro.” Keith said, grabbing the waffle and getting his bag.
“It’s not fine, though. If it's telling you shit like this, if it’s-it’s making you feel bad inside you really need to get help.” Shiro tried to say and Keith bit the inside of his cheek.

“You know they’d just send me to a mental hospital, right? Normal people don't have a random voice in their head telling them they’re horrible, to ki--” Keith cut himself off, eyes widening as he turned to face the door. “To what?!” Shiro asked, worry laced in his voice and Keith pressed his lips together, trying to hold back tears that he thought he’d run out of.

“To kill myself, Shiro. It tells me to kill myself.” Keith said quietly. A beat of silence passed between them before Shiro wrapped Keith up in a hug. “Hey, don't-don't listen when it says that, okay? You have many people who care about you and would miss you if you did do that. Pidge would, Lance, Hunk, Mom. As your brother, I would be upset.” Shiro said.

Keith pushed Shiro away. “You’re not my brother.” Keith muttered before walking out the door. Keith stomped down the sidewalk to his bus stop, glaring at the ground as he did so, try to steady his breathing.

*Way to go, the only person who even slightly cared about you, you just yelled at.*

*Good job, he probably hates you now, like everyone else.*

Keith inhaled. “Not now, not now, not now.” Keith muttered to himself and once he got to his bus stop, he leaned against the stop sign, trying to calm himself. If he didn't calm down soon, everything inside him was going to burst, he felt.

Keith felt as if he was trapped in darkness, the darkness suffocating him and dragging him down, pressing him into a compressed ball. Keith felt as if he were choking and he clutched his chest, feeling his heart racing.

Suddenly, an arm was wrapped around his shoulder and he was snapped out of it. Keith looked up, purple eyes meeting bright blue ones and now his heart was racing for a new reason. “Hey Lance.” Keith said and frowned when his voice came out shaky.

Lance didn't notice, or didn't care, because he just smiled even brighter. “Maria and Mario’s friend can’t pick them up so they have to ride the bus today.” Lance said, jabbing his thumb at his siblings who were walking over to them.

Keith noted that they were both wearing an identical t-shirt that said “Number one player,” and Keith smiled a little at it. Maria had her hair up in a ponytail instead of her usual braids and she was kicking her soccer ball as she walked, Mario trying to kick it away from her.

Keith waved at the two, who waved back. Lance smiled. Maria walked over to them, kicking her
soccer ball up and catching it in her hands. “‘Sup dude?” she said and Keith smiled. “‘Sup.” he said
and Mario walked over too.

“Lannie made us breakfast.” he said and smiled, holding up half an omelet. Maria nodded, pulling
out a small box. “I saved some for my new favorite person.” she said and handed the box to Keith,
who took it smiling.

“You cook?” Keith asked, looking at Lance. Keith’s ears turned red when he realized Lance’s arm
was still around him. “Yeah! Everyone in the McClain house can cook. Even Rosita, she just
doesn’t like to a lot.” Lance said.

Maria nodded. “But Lance is the best ‘cause he woke up super early to make us food. He’s a great
brother.” Maria said and Lance smiled. Keith frowned to himself, biting his lip harshly and Lance
looked at him.

Keith just nodded. “Yeah, brothers are the best.” he muttered, voice breaking at the end but before
any of them could say anything, their bus pulled up to their spot and Keith moved away from
Lance’s arm, missing the warmth that it had provided.

The rest of Keith’s day was full of fake smiles and hidden tears. It seemed everyone wanted to talk
about how amazing their brother’s were, or how great their family was. Even in english, Kolivan
made them all write a paper on their families.

Keith even had to leave then, going to the bathroom to cry for a few minutes. he worked on his
painting the next period in art, trying to take his mind off of his entire situation, but as he painted a
small family in the background, he couldn’t find himself to not think of it.

On the bright side, he only need around one more day to work on his painting, if you could call that
a bright side.

On the bus ride home, Keith let Lance talk about some random show he’d seen the other day.

Keith wasn’t really listening though, staring at his hands as he let his thoughts wander and let the
voice yell at him.

When they pulled up to their bus stop, Lance and Keith got off, Maria and Mario not there because
they had after school practice.

As they walked, a silence passed between them before Lance broke it. “Hey man, are you okay?”
Lance asked and Keith looked at him. “What do you mean?” Keith asked, forcing his voice to not
show any emotion.
“You've just been, really quiet. And everytime I look at you, you look like you're about to cry. Pidge asked me to talk to you to make sure you're okay.” Lance stated, looking at Keith as he stopped walking. Keith stopped too and looked at him.

“You wouldn’t understand.” Keith muttered and Lance tilted his head. “Try me.” Lance said and Keith had to old back tears he’s been fighting everyday. “I got into a kinda fight with Shiro and I- I told him he wasn’t my brother.” Keith muttered and Lance sighed.

“What was the fight about?” Lance asked, taking a step forward towards Keith. “It was stupid. He was just trying to help me but, I told him-told him he wasn’t my brother. He isn't though, he doesn't need to care about me as much as he does. He probably hates me now.” Keith said, voice breaking a little.

Lance took another step forward and hugged Keith. “Hey man, Shiro’s still you're brother, real or not. He cares about you and just wants the best for you. And If I know Shiro, he doesn't hate you, I bet he’s been waiting for you to come home so he could make up with you. You don't need to think he wouldn’t care about you.” Lance rasured and pulled back from the hug.

“Besides, we all have our moods, he understands.” Lance said with a blinding smile that Keith felt himself smiling back at. “Sure.” Keith muttered and turned to continue walking. “Shiro’s a good brother, okay?” Lance said, skipping next to him. Keith nodded.

“Yeah.” he muttered and Lance departed, entering his own house. Keith continued walking and entered his own house, kicking off his shoes. The moment he put his backpack down, Shiro wrapped him up in a hug.

“Omigod, Keith, I’m sorry about our little spat. I didn't mean I wanted you to get sent to mental hospital, I’m sorry that I keep pushing you to tell someone. I’m just, I worry.” Shiro said and Keith felt the tears he’s been holding back pour out of his eyes as he hugged his not-brother.

“I’m sorry I refuse to listen to your advice about shit, I’m sorry I told you you weren’t my--I’m sorry.” Keith mumbled.

Shiro laughed through his own tears. “Look, we’re a mess together.” he said and Keith laughed too. “Can we, do you wanna go out for ice cream?” Shiro asked and Keith laughed again, wiping his tears away.

“Omigod, you're such a dad.” Keith said and Shiro laughed. “I know.” he replied and Keith bit his lip. “Unfortunately though, I have to say no. I need to finish up that animation by Saturday.” Keith said and Shiro nodded. “Then we can go out on Sunday?” Shiro said and Keith nodded. “Yes. ‘Brother’ time.” Keith said, making quotations with his fingers. Shiro smiled. “Bonding time.” he said and Keith smiled. “Bonding time.” he agreed and walked to his room, getting his drawing tablet set up as he turned on his computer.
For the next few hours, Keith worked, making a new panel, adding there, saving everything he did and he swore if he heard the word ‘boys’ one more time he might scream as he put together his animation.

He sat back now, at 8 o’clock, watching the animation so far. “I was busy thinking ’bout boys. Boys, boys. I was busy dreaming ’bout boys. Boys, boys. Head is spinning thinking ’bout boys.” Keith smiled at the animation dancing on the screen, satisfied with the work he’d done and he crawled into his bed. Closing his eyes and drifting into sleep.

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Keith swears if he has to wake up to Pidge poking his face one more time, he’s going to murder her, no matter how much he loves her. Keith opened his eyes, glaring at the short figure smiling at him.

“Sup Sunshine.” Pidge sang and Keith wanted to strangle her. “So…. I was watching the animation you made and it’s great.” Pidge complimented and Keith sat up fast.

“You went through my shit!?” he screeched and Pidge laughed. “Only a little bit I did.” Pidge admitted and Keith hit her with his pillow, making her squeal with laughter. “Your mom made us breakfast. And, Allura’s here.” Pidge said the last statement a little quiet and Keith groaned, shoving his face into his blanket.

“I’m actually going to kill Shiro if he doesn't make some decisions soon.” Keith mumbled and Pidge nodded. “Agreed.” she said and tossed Keith some clothes. “C’mon, get your ass up.” she said and walked out of his room.

Keith looked at the clothes and smiled at the outfit. The shirt was a dark gray shirt that was covered in paint, but it looked artistic. He’d ruined it a while ago but still wore it tons. He had black loose jeans in the pile too, his fingerless gloves, and his leather jacket. Pidge knew him well enough, he decided.

Once he was dressed, he walked out to the living room and his senses were filled with the smell of chocolate waffles and eggs. Keith smiled and took his seat at their actual table, where Matt and Allura had pulled chairs over too.

Keith smiled at his not-dad, who was back from a work trip for the weekend. “Hey,” Keith said and Ryuzaki smiled. “Hey Keith. How’s school been?” he asked, taking a sip of his tea as Pidge and the other uninvited guests set the table.

“Good, I’m finishing up an animation. Got a tutor, there’s a school dance coming up soon.” Keith said and Ryuzaki smiled. “Gonna ask any guys to go with you?” he asked and Pidge sat next to Keith.
“No, he’s too wimpy to.” she answered and Keith flicked her forehead. “Shut up.” Keith murmured and Pidge laughed as Matt set down a hot bowl of egg casserole. “How about you ask Nyma out already before you tease others, Pidgeon?” Matt teased and Pidge crossed her arms.

“I’m scheming.” she replied and Keith raised an eyebrow. “I’m pretty sure that’s not what you’re supposed to say when you’re trying to ask someone out.” Keith claimed and Pidge stuck her tongue out at him.

Shiro set down a small bowl of rice while Allura set down a plate of homemade french toast. The two took a seat, separate sides of the table as Kotoko brought over a pitcher of chocolate milk.

Kotoko sat on one end of the long table, opposite from her husband. Shiro sat to her right, then Matt, then Keith. Diagonally next to Keith was his father, then diagonally next to Ryuzaki was Pidge, then Allura.

Kotoko, Ryuzaki, Shiro and Keith all clasped their hands together and the three guests followed suit. “頂きます” (Itadakimasu) The Shirogane and Keith all murmured in unison while Allura, Matt and Pidge all remained silent.

Everyone started grabbing and serving themselves food, having light conversations with each other and talking to Ryuzaki who talked about his work trip.

Soon though, Pidge and Keith had to leave for the bus. Keith grabbed a piece of bread while Pidge grabbed four slices of bread and they walked to Keith’s bus stop.

“So,” Pidge said through a mouth full of food. “Lance is on your bus, right?” Pidge asked and Keith felt his face involuntarily flush. “Yeah.” He muttered and Pidge smiled, shoulder bumping him. “So, how close do you guys sit? Like, do you guys sit one in front, or do you sit behind him in the aisles? Or do you do that thing where you avoid your problems and you sit in the back?” Pidge asked.

Keith coughed a little, moving his container that held his bread from one hand to another. “Actually…” Keith trailed off a little as they paused at their bus stop. “We sit next to each other.” Keith muttered and Pidge nodded. “So talk across the aisle?” she asked.

Keith bit his lip, about to open his mouth when a strong force hit his side. “Lance!!! What the fuck?!” Keith yelled as he was pinned to the ground by Lance. Lance sat up, making Keith groan as the cuban was on his stomach.

“‘Sup?” Lance asked nonchalantly and Keith glared at him. “Oh, you know, nothing much, just getting tackled by my tutor. Same ol’ same ol’.” Keith said, voice dripping with sarcasm. Lance just laughed and turned his head, looking at Pidge. “‘Sup Gremlin?” Lance said.
Pidge waved a little, holding back laughter and trying not to choke on her food. “You know, just, dying,” she said through her laughter, finally swallowing her bread piece. “Had breakfast with the Shirogane's.” she said.

Lance turned to Keith. “Ooh, what did you guys eat?” Lance asked and Keith rolled his eyes.

“Food. Get off me.” Keith groaned again, but Lance ignored him. “Hey, Rosita’s going to be here after school again, but not until way later, but Rebecca and Miguel are hanging with Miguel’s friend, Michael. She might bother us again if we see her.” Lance warned.

“You’re bothering me. Get. Off.” Keith snarled out and finally took in the position they were in.

Lance sat on his stomach, legs on both sides of him. Keith’s arm was pressed against his side, trapped under Lance’s leg and Lance pinned Keith down by holding the other.

Keith felt heat crawl over his face, but he tried to will it down as he glared at Lance. “Get. Off.” he growled out more viciously and Lance laughed, holding his hands up in surrender. “Fine, fine. I’ll let you be.” Lance said, rolling off Keith and standing up. He held out his hand for Keith to grab, but Keith ignored it.

“You’re an idiot.” Keith growled out, clutching his food container. Pidge walked over to him, slinging her arm around his shoulder, making him bend down a little. “Says the person who’s paying e to teach them.” Lance retorted and his face suddenly lit up. “Keith called some of our dear presidents hoes the other day.” Lance said to Pidge, who laughed in response. “Yeah, that sounds right.” Pidge replied and Keith was going to argue with her but the bus pulled up and Keith rushed to get on.

Pidge sat in the seat in front of him, something she always does, and Lance sat in the booth with Keith. Pidge’s face lit up with realization and she gave Keith a knowing smile, one he glared at her for.

“Uh, like Pidge said before, my mom made breakfast so,” Keith shoved his food container towards Lance, who’s face lit up. “Here.”

“Aw! Thanks man!” Lance said and took the container. Pidge smiled and looked at Keith, winking. The bus started moving forward and Pidge almost fell off the seat, turning back around as Keith laughed.

The rest of the day went pretty fast, nothing too exciting happened, well, I mean, Pidge did trip four times as she skipped backwards, but she told us not to mention that.
In art class, Keit felt like an entire weight had been released from him when he finished his picture. He gave the painting to Mr. Harris to inspect and Mr. Harris immediately told him it was going to be the featured item, making Keith smile.

“You worked hard and this is a masterpiece.” Mr. Harris said. Keith gleamed. “Thanks!” he said and the bell rung, signaling everyone to get out of the class.

Keith walked out and was stopped by Lotor, who smiled sheepishly. “Hey, uh, man. I know you're kinda like, close to Allura and shit so uh, could you like,” Lotor looked at the ceiling, inhaling slowly before looking at Keith. “Could you like, put in a good word for me or something?” Lotor asked and Keith tilted his head.

“You like Allura?” he asked and Lotor nodded. “Yeah… kinda.” he muttered and Keith thought for a second. “Sure, but I think she likes someone else, though I’m not saying you don't have a shot.” Keith answered and Lotor smiled.

“It’s Shiro? Right? Yeah, well. I think he likes Matt so I figured, why not give it a shot?” Lotor suggested and Keith realized how long he’s been talking with this guy and also remembered how much he hated him. “Yeah, but Shiro’s conflicted right now. Anyway, see you.” Keith said, speed walking away from the older boy.

Keith plopped down in one of the backseat seats and Lance smiled as the other boy sat next to him. “Hey what took so long? Normally I’m the lat on the bus.” Lance claimed and Keith just shrugged as the bus started to leave.

“Lotor held me up.” he said and Lance’s nose twitched, which Keith would say made him look really cute. “I hate that guy.” Lance muttered and Keith nodded. “Agreed.” Keith murmured. Suddenly Keith jumped up in his seat with excitement, turning to look at Lance, who’s eyes slightly widened at the sudden excitement. “Guess what!?” Keith said than coughed awkwardly at his own outburst.

Lane smiled softly though. “What?” he asked. Keith smiled. “So, a painting I’ve been working on is going to get featured in the senior art showcase that they’re gonna show during graduation.” Keith said and Lance chuckled. “That’s great man.” Lance said and Keith smiled, feeling his heart race.

“Bud-dum, bud-dum, bud-dum”

“What did he want?” Lance asked again. Keith sat back in his chair. “He wants to date Allura. So I kinda figured I would try to help him out. I mean, if Allura’s taken then Shiro can’t be that conflicted? But I don’t want to see him sad at the same time so I’m kinda stuck.” Keith said and Lance nodded in agreement.

“Yeah, I can see how that’s a problem.” Lance said and a short silence passed between them.

“Okay, maybe, let’s just…. Let’s just let Shiro figure this shit out? unless, you know, he wants to just go poly and date them both?” Lance suggested and that earned a strange look from the guy next to them who had light brown hair.

‘I mean… I know Shiro would go for it but….Matt and Allura kinda, well, totally, hate each other.” Keith said and Lance hummed. “Yeah, okay, then, let’s just let him be. I mean, you wouldn’t want Shiro meddling in your, non-existent, love life. Would you?” Lance asked and Keith stuck his tongue out, involuntarily blushing.

“No, nor do I want Pidge.” Keith said and Lance tilted his head. “What’s that s’posed to mean?” Lance asked but Keith ignored the question. “Hey, how do you plan to study for English?” Keith asked curiously and Lance pouted slightly at him ignoring Keith.

“Well, like, studying literary terms and practicing writing theme and shit? I guess?” Lance said and the boy in the booth next to them sat on his seat, turning around and saying something to the red dyed hair girl, which made her punch him then hug the person next to her.

Keith smirked at the scene before turning back to Lance. “That’s easy enough, I guess?” Keith said and they heard some girl from the back yelled “Penis” at the top of her lungs, making the boy with brown hair laugh.

Keith held in his own laugh as they pulled to their stop. They got up from their seats and walked off and onto the sidewalk.

“This is becoming a really normal thing now, isn’t it?” Lance commented as they walked into Lance’s house. Keith just shrugged as he set his backpack down. “Yeah, I guess.” Keith said.

“So, English?” Lance said, plopping down next to Keith criss-crossed

Keith shrugged. “It’s kinda easy. I like it the most because you’re right as long as you find evidence why. Which could be anything.” Keith said, pulling out his notebook. Lance shrugged. “Eh, I like math the most because you’re either wrong, or you’re right. There’s no argument.” Lance said and Keith just shrugged.
“So, first, let’s work on literary terms. What’s an onomatopoeia?” Lance said, stumbling over the word a bit. “That’s like, the sound effects of something, right?” Keith said and Lance nodded, grinning. “Can you give an example?” Lance asked and Keith glared a little at him.

“Like,” he paused. “‘Buzz’ or ‘pow’ or something.” Keith murmured, face flushing out of embarrassment and Lance laughed.

“Okay, so what is the definition of Soliloquy?” Lance asked, opening his notebook. Keith furrowed his eyebrows together in thought. “That’s…. That’s the thing that’s like a monologue…. But it’s not.” Keith said, slightly confused and Lance laughed slightly.

“A monologue is like, a really long speech spoken to someone and a soliloquy is said to themselves. Like, uh, the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet. When Juliet’s talking to herself at the beginning?” Lance offered and Keith snorted. “You think I read that crap?” he asked and Lance shrugged.

“I mean, who knows? Anyway, a soliloquy is like, someone’s inner monologue, them speaking to themselves.” Lance explained and did the same for the next hour or so while Keith wrote notes, annotated practice articles and answered made up questions.

Lance pulled out a new article and placed it in front of Keith. Keith bit his lip as he stared at the title. “My Amazing Family.” Keith inhaled slowly, Lance watching him as he annotated the passage.

“And today, momma brought over a friend. She shouldn’t share her shoes though. That’s what momma said. The girl was as stiff as a stick……” Keith continued reading, highlighting literary elements such as the alliteration he just read and the similes.

Keith frowned more and more as he read on about this girl with her family, about how the mother loved her for who she was and the father was always there to play with her. At some point, Keith could feel the pencil starting to break in his hand but he ignored it, trying to focus on the questions.

Keith was snapped out of his concentration when he felt a hand on his own. Keith looked up, heart racing, into blue eyes. “You okay man? You're kinda freaking out right now.” Lance noted and Keith bit his lip, locking down at the paper, hair covering his eyes.

“I’m fine,” Keith muttered.

"That’s exactly what unfine people say, the voice taunted. Keith bit the inside of his cheek before sighing. “It’s… This stupid story.” Keith muttered and realization suddenly dawned on Lance.
“Omigod, Keith. I totally forgot, I’m sorry I shouldn’t have-” “It’s fine.” Keith interrupted, sinking back a little, bit his lip harshly.

A beat of silence passed. “Do you…” Lance moved so he was sitting next to Keith. “Do you think you could tell me what happened?” Lance asked carefully.

Yeah Keith, tell Lance why you’re an orphan

Tell him how you made your parents run away from their lives.

Tell Lance how you made your parents kill themselves.

Keith could feel the tears pricking at his eyes but he ignored it, looking a little at Lance. “They,” he paused and swallowed, Lance waiting patiently. “They killed themselves.” Keith muttered and Lance’s eyes widened.

“You don't have to tell me why if you don't--” “I want to.” Keith interrupted again and Lance nodded smally, leaning back and looking at Keith.

“It’s….It’s kind of a long story. I was ten. It was when I….. when I figured out I was gay.” Keith muttered and Lance’s eyes widened again. “I… at the time had started to develop depression and anxiety too. My parents told me I was a mess. I was ‘Unfixable.’” Keith made quotations with his fingers.

“I-I told them that, that I liked guys and only guys and…they thought I was trying to stop the family. That I didn't want them to have grandkids and… we fought and they both left me home, going to the store or something. About a few hours later though,” Keith paused again, feeling the tears he’d been trying to hold back, falling down his cheeks.

He wiped a few away before continuing. “A few hours later, I got a call from my uncle who said that my parents were found at a bridge. Dead. They-they jumped. I don't think they could handle such a-such a messed up kid, that didn't even like girls. It’s just,” Keith buried his face in his hands. “It’s my fault. I’m the reason two lives were taken from this Earth. Oh God.” Keith broke into heavy, uncontrollable sobs.

Warmth enveloped him and he found himself melting into the affection, tears flowing more freely now. “Hey, Keith, dude, it’s not your fault. Besides, even if they didn’t…. If you were still with them, you wouldn’t have gotten to meet Shiro, or Pidge, or Hunk and the oh-so fabulous, me.” Lance said, attempting to make Keith laugh.

“You wouldn’t have had the freedom to date guys and you probably wouldn’t even be the same
person. I’m sorry your parents felt that way, but even if they were.. Were still here, I’d have to slap them.” Lance finished and Keith let out a soft chuckled through his tears. “Yeah, I guess. But, that’s still two people who--” “Who were idiots and God punished them.” Lance interrupted this time.

Keith looked at him through the hug. “Do you believe in God?” Keith asked, trying to change the mood. Lance pulled back a bit, but not so much that Keith wasn’t still in his arms. “I mean, my whole family does but, I guess I don't really understand that concept? It seems weird. But, I do believe in reincarnation. Being reborn. I believe I was a swan in my past life.” Lance said and Keith smiled a bit.

“You were probably a pathetic little ant.”

Keith looked at him through the hug. “Do you believe in God?” Keith asked, trying to change the mood. Lance pulled back a bit, but not so much that Keith wasn’t still in his arms. “I mean, my whole family does but, I guess I don't really understand that concept? It seems weird. But, I do believe in reincarnation. Being reborn. I believe I was a swan in my past life.” Lance said and Keith smiled a bit.

Lance grinned. “I believe you were a lion.” Lance said and Keith wrinkled his nose. “Like our mascot? Why?” he asked and Lance smiled. “Because, lions are the kings of the wild, right? They are in charge of everything and makes sure nothing bad happens to their little… community of lions. They’re strong and shit. They kinda look out for other lions.” Lance stated and Keith snorted

“Okay, first, it’s called a ‘pride’, not a community. And I’m like that how?” Keith asked and Lance smiled. “Because, you look out for your friends. When Pidge gets drunk at parties and shit, like uhm, a few weeks ago, you take care of her and make sure Matt doesn't find out. You helped Hunk with advice about Shay. You try to make sure nothing bad happens to your new family. You're pretty strong too from what I’ve seen.”

Keith snorted, rolling his eyes.

**Was he supposed to be describing you?**

**He did a bad job of trying to do so.**

“Plus you remind me of Scar.” Lance added and Keith slammed a hand to cover his mouth as he let laughter spill out. “Omigod, you did not just compare me to a Lion King character! Excuse me!?” Keith sputtered out, trying to hold in his laughter, though his and Lance’s laughter drowned out the voice in Keith’s head, yelling about how Scar killed Mufasa and he killed his parents.

Keith looked at Lance, eyes shining. “If I’m Scar, you're Simba. Impulsive and thinking of yourself.” Keith claimed and Lance gasped.

“Excuse me?! Simba was not selfish or anything!” Lance said, voice cracking as he screeched.
Keith chuckled. “Dude, he left the pride after Scar killed his dad, leaving his entire pride in control of someone evil.”

“He thought he killed his parents!!! He thought he’d be shamed and everything!” Lance argued and despite how close the topic of conversation hit Keith’s backstory, Keith and Lance’s laughter drowned out anything bad the voice or Keith himself could think.

“Whatever. Still not a good reason, though.” Keith said, finally breathing normally from his laughing fit. Lance beamed. “Whatever.” he said though his tone didn't match his expression, as he was currently smiling widely at Keith, glad to see the other boy smiling again.

“Let’s get back to studying, I’d like to not fail.” Keith said, though there was still traces of a smile on him. Lance nodded, shifting so he and Keith were sitting next to each other. Lance gave Keith a different packet, them both ignoring the other.

They continued writing and annotating and correcting for a few more hours until Keith yawned, making Lance yawn then glare at him. “Sorry, just, lots of shit going on.” Keith muttered. Lance nodded, understanding, and he pulled out another packet, though this one he kept in his hands.

“Pop quiz. I’m going to read out some literary terms and you have to tell me the definition.” Lance said and Keith nodded a little sleepily.

“Okay, Soliloquy.” Lance read. “An internal monologue that no one else hears except for the speaker and audience.” Keith recited slowly, eyes drooping a bit.

“Good! Now, what is dramatic irony?” Lance asked, feeling his own body start getting sleepy.

“When there’s something only the audience knows. Like, when Juliet faked her death but Romeo thought she was actually dead.” Keith said and Lance grinned.


“Dude, stop that.” Lance muttered. Keith rubbed his eyes. “Sorry, long day. ‘M tired.” he murmured, leaning a little against Lance.

“Well stay awake, it’s only,” Lance pulled out his phone. “Oh, wow, it’s only nine o’clock.” Lance said, surprised. “Where’s your family?” Keith asked, looking around at the still empty house.
“I…. don't know.” Lance said a little confused but he waved his hand in the air.

“Anyway, moving on. What is personification?” he asked and stifled his own yawn, not caused by Keith. “When like,” Keith furrowed his eyebrows, biting his lip to stop from yawning. “When you give like, human characteristics or something to an inanimate object like, the sun beamed down at the bird. Or the grass danced in the ground or some shit like that.” Keith muttered.

Suddenly Keith leaned his head on Lance’s shoulder, making the other boy jump. “Dude what are you--” “I’m too tired to focus.” Keith said, closing his eye and ignoring his racing heart. “But you need to study.” Lance tried to argue, despite them having been studying for hours on end. “Nope. I’m too tired.” Keith mumbled before drifting into unconsciousness.

Lance stared at Keith for a few moments, trying to debate between moving the other boy before fatigue overwhelmed him and he, too, fell asleep.

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Keith woke up, leaning against something warm with a fluffy blanket wrapped around him. Keith slowly opened his eyes and almost jumped when he realized he somehow curled into Lance.

They had, at some point, moved around so that Keith’s head was resting on Lance’s chest, Lance’s arms wrapped around his waist.

Keith pulled back slowly, trying not to wake Lance up and the moment he freed himself, he used in packing up his books. He opened his phone to find that not only was it two in the morning, but Shiro and Pidge had blown up his phone with questions as to where he was, but Shiro’s stopped suddenly while Pidge was still blowing up his phone.

He sent her a quick text saying ‘leave me alone’, before packing up his stuff quickly and putting his shoes on. He opened the door and someone spoke from behind him, almost making him jump into the door.

“Finally woke up, huh?” Rosita said, leaning against the wall, arms crossed, smirking. Keith turned around to face her. “We fell asleep studying.” Keith blurted out. Rosita let out a small chuckle and nodded, looking in the direction of her brother. “Yeah, I can tell.”

Silence.

“I haven’t seen him that happy in a while.” Rosita remarked and Keith felt his ears turn red.

“What-what do you mean?” he asked. Rosita looked back at him, her own striking blue eyes
looking into his purple ones. “Well, ever since Beckie...since she got sick, he hasn't smiled a lot. He’s been more reserved. So thank you.” Rosita said, smiling.

Keith raised an eyebrow. “But I-uhm, I’m not doing anything.” Keith muttered and Rosita smiled. “I know,” she commented before walking away. Keith stayed in the doorway a few more minutes before walking out the door.

He furrowed his eyebrows together as he walked, trying to think about what Rosita said, though no matter how many ways he looked at it, he couldn't see how he was doing anything to help.

He shook the idea out of his head as he walked home in the darkness. He opened the front door and saw Shiro, who was sitting on the couch on his phone.

“What took you so long?” Shiro asked, eyes not moving from his phone. Keith pouted a little. “I fell asleep.” he mumbled and Shiro smiled, turning his phone to Keith.

“So this isn't photoshopped?” he asked and there, in the middle of Shiro’s screen, was a picture of Keith and Lance cuddled into each other on the floor with a blanket around hem. Keith felt his face flush and he tried to take Shiro’s phone, though Shiro just shoved it in his pocket.

“How’d you get that?!” Keith screeched out and Shiro laughed. “Rosie sent it.” Shiro said and Keith pouted. “It’s just a picture.” he mumbled, dropping his bag on the floor with a thump. Shiro smirked and rolled his eyes.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever. Go to bed.” shiro said, walking to his own room. Keith obliged and collapsed on his bed, though it wasn’t as warm as it had been curled up with Lance. Keith was too tired to even try and chase those thoughts away right now.

He buried himself in his blankets, bringing his knees to his chest and closing his eyes peacefully.
Camping (We Shouldn't Have Brought Pidge)

Chapter Summary

That's a suspiciously large bag you got there Pidge,...... hope it doesn't...... blow up, or anything.

Also, Rolo, why don't you just..... stand over there? And like, never talk to Keith again?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Week 2

Shiro poked Keith’s cheek to try and wake him up. Keith twisted his face and turned in his bed, pulling his blankets over his head. Shiro sighed out. “Keith, man, you need to wake up. Your trip is today.” Shiro pointed out.

“Nooooo,” Keith groaned and Shiro chuckled. “Keith, really, you need to get out of bed and pack.” Keith turned around and opened his eyes slowly, looking at his clock on his nightstand, then glaring at Shiro. “It’s 4 a.m. Shiro.” Keith whined, his black hair pressed against his face as he sat up slowly, rubbing at his face.

Shiro chuckled. “Well, yeah. Your bus trip leaves at five today and you still need to pack up. If you hadn’t fallen asleep at Lance’s, then maybe you’d get to sleep a little longer.” Shiro teased and Keith felt his face flush. “Get out of my room.” Keith whined, covering his face and ponting at the door.

Shiro laughed and stood up, smiling as he left the room. “Sure, whatever. Get packing.” Shiro said and Keith nodded slowly.

After he felt his face cool down, Keith stood up, walking around the his bed and kneeling down, pulling out a red suitcase from underneath his bed. He threw it onto his mattress and opened it, walking to his closet to look for clothes while his mind wandered about.

_Were things going to be awkward at school today? Did Lance even realize they ended up… like that? What if Lance intentionally put us in that position?_
Keith tried to shake his thoughts away, focusing on trying to find something he could hike in. Though he only found skinny jeans and he knew that was going to be a pain to hike in. He grabbed an old t-shirt and threw it on his bed before going into Shiro’s room.

“Can I borrow a pair of pants?” Keith asked and Shiro looked at him from his desk in surprise. “What?” he asked and Keith sighed, running a hand through his un-brushed hair. “We’re hiking and I only have skinny jeans. Can I borrow one of yours?” Keith asked again, slower.

Shiro opened his mouth but closed it, choosing to smile instead. “Sure, uh, don't know if any will fit you but there are some old ones in the closet.” Shiro said, pointing behind him and turning back to his notebooks.

Keith nodded and walked over to his not-brother’s closet, opening it and looking through the clothes towards the back. After a few minutes, he finally found two pairs of relatively dark, loose jeans that were his size. Keith fixed Shiro’s closet and closed the door. “Thanks,” he muttered and left the room, throwing the pants on his bed.

Keith picked out his sleepwear and another shirt, along with a sweatshirt for when it got cold. He threw in socks and underwear too, before folding everything and putting it in his suitcase.

He changed into one of the outfits, pulling up Shiro’s old pants and tugging an old t-shirt over his head. He picked up his hair brush and ran it through his hair. Once Keith was done, he shoved his feet into his shoes, grabbing his phone and grabbing the suitcase. He made sure he had everything he needed before shoving a blanket into his bag and leaving.

“See you Shiro!” Keith called out and he heard his not-brother say his own farewell.

It was four fifty-five when Keith got to his bus stop, Lance already there with his own suitcase. When Lance saw him, he waved, trying to wake himself up. Keith noticed the drowsiness in Lance’s eyes and smiled. Lance beamed at the raven when he was close. “When did you leave? I passed out and when I woke up, you were gone.” Lance said and Keith forced back the blush wanting to surface on his face.

“Yeah well, I had to get home, obviously and you looked peaceful, for once, so I didn't wake you.” Keith lied and Lance chuckled as Zerithd joined them in waiting, her own, normally fierce, eyes drooping with tiredness. “Aw, did you take a picture?” Lance teased and Keith rolled his eyes.
“Of you? Nah.” Keith replied and their bus pulled into the stop, slowly as if it too were tired. Keith and Lance took their normal spots, the kids that were already on the bus, sleeping. The bus ride was generally quiet, even Lance had the manners to be quiet for once. Keith listened to his music through his head phones, leaning against the window as he slipped into unconsciousness.

Lance woke him up once they got to the school. They needed to check in with their teachers then get into their camping groups. Keith went over to his homeroom class, Mr. Ulaz checking them all in to make sure they were ready.

Mr. Ulaz tapped his clipboard to get their attention and everyone in this class faced him. “Okay, so, we’re going to be in section B of the camping area, along with Mr. Slav’s and Coran’s class. Okay?” he yelled and everyone nodded.

Slav and Coran, those were Pidge’s, Hunk’s and Lance’s teachers. Keith smiled despite himself and smiled at Rolo, who was grinning. “We’re with the gang.” Rolo commented and Keith laughed. “Yeah, the ‘gang.’” he retorted as they were ushered onto one of the three buses open for their classes. Keith took a seat and Rolo sat next to him.

After Mr. Ulaz’s class was on, Coran’s class ambushed the bus he was on, Pidge and Nyma sitting in the seat behind Keith and Rolo, Lance sitting in the one in front of him. Slav’s class was let on next and Hunk sat with Lance, who beamed at him as they talked.

The bus started, pulling out of the school parking lot and the once before tired seniors-and sophomore- were now all a talking mess, too excited to be quiet as they drove to their destination.

As Lance was talking to Hunk, the unmistakable sound of Keith and Rolo’s laughing was heard from behind him and for some reason, that didn’t sit well with Lance. Hunk noticed the change in his friend’s mood and touched his shoulder. “You okay man?” he asked gently and Lance shrugged.

“’Course. Why wouldn’t I be?” he asked and continued his conversation with Hunk.

Keith grinned at Rolo as Rolo told some story about why his older sister wasn’t allowed at the movie theater anymore. “-But when the guy asked where she was from, she responded with ‘I dunno!? Where’d your hair come from!?!’ before she pulled some scissors out and cut off his ponytail.” Keith burst into laughter along with Rolo for what seemed to be the eighth time that morning.
Pidge, who was leaning over the seat to talk with them, rolled her eyes. “How the hell did she sneak scissors into a movie theater?” She asked suspiciously and Keith grinned widely. Rolo just chuckled slightly and looked at Pidge. “My sister once snuck our cat to school, you’d be surprised by how easy it is to sneak scissors into anywhere.” Rolo answered and Keith laughed again.

“Hey, you know what, I just had an idea.” Rolo said, smirking. Lance looked over his seat, glaring down at Rolo, though no one noticed it. Nyma looked over her chair too. “What?” She asked and Rolo grinned at Keith before looking at her.

“I vote, instead of saying Mother-Effer, we say Oedipus.” Rolo said and Keith and Nyma laughed, even Pidge let out a chuckle. “That’s fucking great.” Keith said through his laughter and Rolo smiled.

Lance scoffed. “That doesn't even make sense, Rolo.” Lance argued and Keith looked at him, still smiling brightly and Lance didn't know why the simple sight took his breath away. “’Cause Oedipus married his mom and had two children with her. So he's literally a Mother-Fucker.” Keith explained and Lance nodded.

“Oh.” he said before sinking back in his seat. Hunk looked at him strangely but didn't say anything. The rest of the trip to their hiking area was filled with Rolo’s chatter and Keith’s laugh, making Lance get angrier each minute, though he honestly didn't understand why.

Once they pulled into their starting area for hiking, they all loaded their suitcases and bags they wouldn’t need into a car, that would drive to their camping area. Keith grabbed one of the bags that Shiro had given him the night before, that had water bottles and snacks for him before the car drove off.

Suddenly, a tan blur passed by Keith, with the sound of Lance shouting at him. “Race ya!” Lance yelled and Keith grinned, grabbing his bag before pushing himself forward.

They didn't need to wait for Coran, who was their chaperon, Slav and Ulaz taking a vacation instead, because the path was marked to where their camping grounds would be. They could go off in groups without worrying about getting lost, meaning Keith didn't have to worry about Lance going in the wrong direction.

Keith managed to catch up to Lance real quick, but once the Cuban boy noticed his presence, he just ran even faster. Keith let out a soft laugh at his tutor as he pushed himself even further uphill.
Lungs bursting, feet stomping on ground, climbing upwards, Keith felt elated. Here he was, out in a forest, worries left behind at school and his house. But here, in this forest, he didn't have to worry about anything. All he had to worry about was accidentally letting the boy in front of him out of his vision.

Except, he wasn’t in front of him anymore. Keith immediately stopped in his running, tripping over a rock in the process and falling on the ground. Keith ignored the scrape on his hand and looked around him, sweat dripping down his face and breathing out heavily. “Lance?” Keith called out and he felt a huge force knock him over back to the ground.

“Lance!” Keith cried out, laughing as he wrestled the other boy. Lance laughed too, struggling to pin Keith down as the other tried to push him off. Finally, Lance managed to pin Keith’s arms next to his head and Keith let out a breathless laugh, looking at Lance.

Keith’s face was flushed from the running, hair sticking to his forehead, purple eyes shining as they looked up at Lance. And suddenly, for some reason, Lance forgot how to breathe. Someone walked up behind them and they heard a cackle. “Why is it I always find you two like this?” Pidge asked, smiling widely and Lance rolled off of Keith.

“Because Keith is too weak to push me off.” Lance claimed and Keith rolled his eyes, standing up slowly. “Yeah, pretty sure that’s not why.” Pidge said, sending a pointed look at Keith, who waved her off.

No, It’s because you're too weak, right Keith?

Keith bit his lip and smiled, though Pidge could tell it was fake and her face filled with concern.

“You okay, dude?” She asked, looking in his eyes. Keith nodded. “Fine,” he lied and she narrowed her eyes a bit as someone came running up to them, clearly out of breath.

“You… guys,” Hunk said, trying to catch his breath in between gasps. “How can you….. Run up……a mountain… gosh .” he tried, and failed, to catch his breath, leaning against a tree and Lance laughed.

“Nimble, baby!” Lance said as an answer and Hunk just nodded, closing his eyes as he sank to the forest floor. Pidge ignored them looking at Keith once more before turning to them. “By the way, we’re like, ten minutes, walking distance, from the camping site. You guys ran a forty minute hike
in five minutes, *uphill.*” she claimed and Keith’s eyes widened.

“Wait, are you serious?” he squeaked out, still trying to catch his own breath. Pidge nodded and looked at Lance, who’s face paled. “Coran told me to catch up and make sure you guys paused, to wait until they caught up to us.” she claimed and Keith nodded, sitting on a half buried boulder nearby.

“Wait, how did you catch up to us so fast?” Keith asked and Pidge smiled. “That’s a secret.” she said, putting a finger up to her lips. “She…. she climbed the trees…… and jumped… like a frog.” Hunk said over by the tree and Keith looked at Pidge, who just shrugged.

“I really question you sometimes.” he said incredulously and she smiled, sitting on the leafy ground next to him. “I’m a mystery, it’s what makes me such a catch.” she said and Lance let out a laugh as Keith took off his bag, going through it and tossing a water bottle to Hunk, who caught it and took a huge sip out of it. Keith preceded to hand one to Lance and Pidge after, both of which took it gratefully.

Keith took a sip from his own before dumping the rest of his bag onto the forest ground, letting a dozen snacks or so fall out and two more water bottles. “Anybody want a snack?” Keith asked and Hunk walked over, grabbing one of the bags of chips before sitting down. Lance also moved over to their small circle and they all snacked on food in silence for a while.

“Has anybody gotten their college acceptance letters yet?” Lance asked and Hunk and Keith shook their heads. “Nope, but I think I’m gonna get mine soon.” Hunk said and Pidge looked at him. “What school did you apply to?” she asked, shoving a handful of Potato Stix in her mouth.


“Wait, what are you even going to college *for?*” Keith asked and Lance grinned. “A doctor, I want to help people like Beckie.” Lance said and Keith nodded. “It would suit you.” Keith said and Lance smiled, turning to Pidge.

“I applied for CUNY School Of Medicine..” He told her and Hunk looked at him. “They only have a 7% acceptance rate, right?” he asked and Lance nodded.
Pidge rolled her eyes and groaned. “You’re all going to New York. That’s, like, 2,504 kilometers away from here. You guys realize that right?” Pidge whined and Keith raised an eyebrow.

Keith smiled. “Well, hey, Shiro and Matt go to wherever they go--” “Tisch.” Pidge interrupted and Keith rolled his eyes. “Okay, Shiro and Matt go to Tisch School Of Arts, that’s also in New York, they still visit a lot.” Keith pointed out and Pidge whined.

“We’re lucky they ended school. They just finished testing last week.” Pidge said, emptying the rest of her bag into her mouth before crumpling it up and shoving it into Keith’s bag. “Why are you guys lucky?” Lance asked, putting an oreo in his mouth.

“’Cause Keithy-boy’s dealing with some crap and I need Matt to help me get over you guys fucking leaving me for two years, you fuckers.” Pidge growled. Lance looked at Keith concerned. “What are you ‘dealing’ with?” Lance asked, using air quotes. Keith rolled his eyes.

“Nothing.” he lied again and turned to Pidge. “And of course we have to leave you, what, do you expect us to be held back two years?” he asked jokingly. Pidge looked him dead in the eyes. “Yes,” she said as serious as she could muster and Hunk laughed.

“I’m surprised you’re not graduating early.” He stated and she shrugged. “I’m only ahead in math and science. Everything else, I’m average in.” she pointed out when they heard someone yell for them.

Keith stood up, looking for where the voice came from. “I think that’s Rolo.” he stated, looking through the branches, smiling. Lance rolled his eyes and muttered something Keith still couldn’t hear.

“Where are you guys?!” a higher pitched voice yelled now and Pidge jumped up. “That’s Nyma!” she claimed and went running into the forest, shouting out happily. Keith smiled as they waited for their two other friends to come and join them.

“’Sup.” Rolo said once he was in view and Keith smiled. “Nothing much.” he replied, grinning. The blonde just laughed as he came over to their small circle, sitting in the space in between Lance and Keith, making Lance mutter something else that Keith still couldn’t hear. Though Rolo seemed to have heard, turning to look at the Cuban strangely.

“How far behind is the rest of the class?” Hunk asked, turning to Nyma, who sat next to Pidge. “A few minutes, they’ll be here soon. Coran’s really impressed by how far you guys got.” Nyma said,
Lance smirked. “Woah, we went really far, had the whole class behind us.” he commented, flashing a smile at Keith, who promptly returned it. Rolo watched the exchange in silence.

“Coran said that the car with our stuff should be there by now, he’s trying to figure out who to put in what cabin.” Rolo commented and Keith turned to him. “How many cabins are there?” Keith asked and Rolo turned so his attention was fully on the raven haired boy.

“Six, two for each class, one for the girls and one for the boys for each class. Since we’re the smallest classes we get the least amount of cabins, which is why the Principal Zarkon put our classes together.” Rolo informed and Keith nodded. “There’s like, eight girls and ten boys, at most in each class, I think.” Nyma added and Rolo nodded.

Keith took one last sip from his water bottle before shoving it back into his bag. “So, either way, we’re all going to be crammed in one cabin?” Keith said and Rolo shrugged. “There’s ten beds in each room so we should be fine.” Rolo said and Florona skipped over to them.

“You guys!” she said and sat with them as the rest of their classes came into the small clearing.

“You guys are fast.” Zethrid commented and Ezor nodded.

Keith and the rest of the small gang of friends picked up their stuff before they continued hiking up to their camping grounds.

“You four are fast, I’ll give you that.” Coran said and Pidge smiled. “It’s called being ‘Nimble, Baby!’” she quoted and Lance kicked her, making the shorter teen laugh as she hid behind Keith. “Keith! Protect me from the terrifying Latino!” Pidge yelled and everyone simultaneously rolled their eyes.

“I’m not terrifying, I’m charming.” Lance argued and Ezor nodded at that. “He is charming!” she added, her multi-colored ponytail swinging behind her. Lance flashed her a smile, making Keith roll his eyes. “Omigod,” he whined, turning to Pidge.

The soon came to their camping area, which had six big cabins in a semi-circle around a big campfire area. Two barbeque grills were towards the end of the cabins and a restroom house was a few feet away, a dirt trail leading up to it.
A car stood, parked, towards the edge of the campsite and everyone walked over, grabbing all there bags out of the cramped car before it drove off. “Pidge, why do you have an alarmingly large suitcase, plus another one?” Lance asked and Keith turned to see what he was talking about, eyes widening at the suitcase as big as he was.

Pidge grinned, grabbing the handle. “No reason.” she said and winked before treading off to one of the girl cabins.

Lance and Keith shared a look before walking to their separate, assigned cabins. Keith threw his suitcase on one of the top bunks, Rolo immediately throwing his suitcase on the top bunk across from him. Everyone started unpacking their sleeping stuff, Keith and Rolo following suit.

Keith suddenly shivered, pausing in his unpacking and Rolo looked at him. “What’s wrong?” he asked and Keith shook his head. “It’s just…. I feel like something bad’s gonna happen.” Keith said, crawling up into his bed to lay out his sleeping bag.

Rolo smiled and walked over, looking up at Keith as the other worked. “I think you're just concerned about Pidge’s suitcase.” Rolo commented. “Looks like she was plotting murder or something.” Keith nodded in agreement before he finished setting up. Keith moved to sit on the edge of his bed, looking down at Rolo.

“If we die, we get to blame her.” Keith said and Rolo snorted before the raven jumped down from the bunk. “We should go help get dinner ready.” Keith said and Rolo just nodded, following him outside.

Pidge skipped over to them, smiling widely. “I have something planned.” She sang out and Keith looked at her, taking a step back. “I’m concerned for my own well being.” he said automatically and Rolo snorted, walking over to Nyma.

Pidge rolled her eyes as Hunk walked over, also smiling. “Everything’s ready, so when it’s time we just have to bring the ‘stuff’ out.” he informed and she grinned. “Perfect.” Keith looked at the two. “Now I’m even more concerned.” he said as Lance walked over to them.

“Concerned about what?” he asked and Keith looked at him. “These two did something.” he claimed and Pidge pouted. “Noooo, okay, I’ll tell you if you keep it a secret.” She said and Keith slowly nodded. “We set up fireworks.” she said and the two boys eyes widened.
“What?” they shouted in unison and she immediately shushed them. “Don't worry, there’s only, like, twenty.” she said and their eyes widened even more. “What!”? they shouted again, attracting the eyes of a few other students.

“Shut up!” she hissed and turned to Hunk, before turning back to the two. “They’re just a few.” she said calmly and Keith sighed a disapproving dad sigh, something he’s perfected because of Shiro.

“Okay, Pidge, listen. What brand are these fireworks?” Keith asked and Pidge shifted her weight from one foot to the other. “Uhm, Boom-Bastic-Crackle?” she said and Lance’s eyes widened.

“Aren’t those banned in like, thirty states?” he asked and she nodded. Keith sighed again. “Is one of those states, Texas?” he asked and Pidge nodded again.

“Pidge, do I need to tell Matt?” Keith asked and her eyes widened. “Oh God, please do not tell him.” she pleaded and Keith got that feeling again, like something absolutely horrible was about to happen.

“Pidge, please, go put them away.” Keith said and looked down at Pidge. “Fine, Shiro.” she grumbled and Lance laughed as she sulked away to her cabin. Hunk frowned. “They’re just fireworks.” he argued and Keith nodded. “I know, it’s just, I feel like something bad’s going to happen.” he said.

Hunk shrugged. “Ruined our fun though.” he complained.

Keith The Fun Ruiner.

*Has a nice ring to it, don't you think?*

*Stop it.*

*Oh, you think just because we’re out here, away from school and home, that you can get rid of me? I’m inside your brain, Keith. You can’t get rid of me.*

Keith suddenly felt a shiver run through his body, the bad feeling creeping up on him when
suddenly an explosion sound was let out from one of the cabins, the one Pidge had just gone in, and a scream.

Pidge came running out of her cabin when there was another small explosion sound. “Pidge what the hell?!” Lance yelled when the roof of her cabin went flying off.

Kids started screaming and running away from the cabins as one of Pidge’s fireworks went shooting out of her cabin, hitting Hunk’s cabin, taking out the roof. More fireworks went zooming out, hitting the roof of one more cabin and creating small, glittering explosions.

Keith pushed the small group of them back as one of the fireworks came flying over the them, exploding six feet away from them, creating a small shower of glitter at their feet.

After a few seconds, everything went silent as the fireworks stopped exploding and everyone stopped screaming. After the moments of shock passed, Keith turned to Pidge. “Pidge! WHAT THE HELL?!?” he yelled and she shrugged, tears in her eyes from the shock.

“I was-I was trying to take them down but-but when I did, it-it like, rubbed against-against something and one-after one was set off, the others started to set off and I’m sorry!” she cried out, gripping Lance’s arm.

Keith exhaled slowly. “Okay, you’re alive. That’s, that’s good.” he decided and Coran walked around the group of teenagers.

“IS EVERYONE ALRIGHT?!” The orange haired man yelled, looking at his students. Everyone nodded and sighed, relieved, before Coran turned to Pidge. “I’m not mad, Pidgeon, we just need to figure out what to do now.” he stated.

“It’s too far to hike back and there’s no signal out here so we can’t call the car to come pick us up, so we’re stuck here until tomorrow. But three of the cabin’s blew up.” Coran said, loudly, for everyone to pay attention. “Any ideas on what we could do?” he asked, searching the crowd.

Acxa rose her hand and Coran pointed at her. “We could partner up for the beds?” she suggested and Coran smiled. “Perfect idea!” he said, breathing out in relief. “We’ll figure out who shares a bed with who after dinner. As for the suitcases, I need you guys to stay back as I check to see if you're guys’ suitcases are still fine.” Coran said, walking over to Hunk’s cabin.
There was a slight murmur around the crowd and few kids started to yell at Pidge, only for Rolo and Nyma to yell back insults, protecting their friend. Keith’s eyes followed Coran as their teacher moved from cabin to cabin, checking each one through the dust that was still left behind.

Once Lance and Pidge’s homeroom teacher came back, he sighed. “Only the people in cabin two’s suitcases are all fine, from what I can see. The rest are covered in debris and remains of the roof, seeing as how the roof collapsed.” Coran informed and Florona sighed in relief. “Good, I brought my tablet along and if that broke, I’d be pissed.” she sated and Pidge flinched a little.

“Hey, at least my stuff’s destroyed.” Pidge said in a small voice and a few students nodded in agreement. “Karma’s a bitch.” Keith stated, calmly. An awkward silence passed along the classes and Coran cleared his throat.

“Well, uh, let’s get back to preparing dinner!” he said. “Uh, can groups go gather some firewood sticks for dinner, the campfire and tomorrow. Uh, last name partners. I don’t want to loose any kids.” Coran said as he walked over to a cooler with their food in it.

Rolo walked over to Keith and grinned. “That’s us.” he said and Lance let out a strange noise. “What? What do you mean that’s you guys?” he asked and Pidge grinned, despite her situation. “Keith Kogane and Rolo Kyone.” Pidge stated. “They’ve been right next to each other for like, ever? Are you just noticing this?” Ezor asked, butting into their conversation.

Lance rolled his eyes and crossed his arms. “Sure, whatever.” he murmured, walking off with Ezor McCormick.

Rolo smiled at Keith as they walked over. “Guess you were right to have a bad feeling.” Rolo said and Keith nodded as they ventured into the woods, picking up a few, dry sticks. “If I had known she brought fireworks, I would have stopped her from even setting them up. Buuuut, we just have to deal, I guess.” Keith said and Rolo nodded.

A comfortable silence passed between them as they collected sticks in the forest. Keith looked around them after a while. “It’s getting dark.” he noticed and Rolo nodded. “Think we should head back?” he asked, tugging at his winter hat and Keith shrugged. “Sure.” he said.

“Where did we come from?” Keith asked, looking around and Rolo frowned a little. “Crap.” he muttered, looking around, also. Keith bit his lip as he felt a sense of fear wash over him. “Shit, shit, shit, shit.” he muttered, walking a few feet in one direction.
“How far did we fucking walk?” Keith asked, walking forward, Rolo close behind. “I dunno, I thought we were still close. It was only a few minutes.” Rolo replied and Keith bit his lip.

Little Keith Kogane.

Died in the woods

Because he couldn’t fucking remember where the hell he came from.

Nice headline, right?

Keith inhaled quickly, grabbing Rolo’s sleeve. Rolo looked down at him and placed his own hand over Keith’s carefully. “You okay, man?” he asked, cautiously. When they had dated, Keith had told Rolo all about the annoying voice in his head. Rolo had, after, treated him a little more carefully and cautiously.

Keith bit his lip and nodded. “Fine.” he lied again.

There strikes and YOU'RE OUT!!

Wow Keith. Lying to everyone lately, aren’t you?

Keith shook his head, scanning the forest around them again before noticing a red marker on a tree. Smiling, he tapped Rolo’s arm, pointing at the marker. “Oh thank God.” Rolo muttered. Keith rolled his eyes at his ex. “Oh thank fuck.” Keith muttered and speed walked over, Rolo close behind.

Once they got back onto the trail, they both became more relaxed, carrying their small stack of sticks as they walked on the trail. By the time they got back, the sun was almost out of the sky and Pidge ran up to them, smile back on her face, clearly now repaired from before.

“Where’d you two go? Where you making out or something?” she asked and Keith felt his ears turn red. “Pidge. No. We got lost.” Keith said and didn't notice Rolo winking behind him. Pidge smirked at him before walking with Keith to go drop off the sticks. “You guys got back in time for
“dinner.” she said as Coran handed out sub-sandwiches to everyone.

Keith let go of his bundle of sticks and grabbed a plate from Coran. “It got dark pretty fast.” Keith commented as he reached for a soda can. Coran nodded as he handed others their plates. “That’s the woods for ya.” he replied.

Keith and Pidge sat on a log by Lance and Hunk. Rolo and Nyma sat on the log next to them and they all ate around the campfire as Coran finished handing off food.

“I can’t believe you actually blew up three cabins,” Lance said slowly and Keith nodded in agreement. “I can’t believe fireworks were that powerful to blow up three cabins.” Keith added. “That’s why they’re illegal.” Lance confirmed and Coran cleared his throat, trying to get everyone’s attention.

“So, I have decided the sleeping arrangement for tonight. Since there are 24 girls and 30 boys, there is an even amount that no girls will have to sleep with any boys. Each cabin has only ten beds and there are over 50 of you so we will have to pair up. Majority of boys will be in Cabin 4, majority of girls will be in Cabin 6 and there will have to be a few in Cabin 5 together, but you can all change in the bathroom.” Coran paused and everyone sat at the edge of their seat in anticipation.

“Since we did last name partners for collecting logs, we’ll do first name partners for sleeping, but same genders.” Coran announced and Pidge cheered as Keith’s stomach dropped.

*Hey, how does the alphabet go again?*

G, H, I, J, K, L?

*This is gonna be fun!!*

“What?” Keith asked, eyes wide and he turned to Lance, who just shrugged. “Don't hog the space.” Lance said and Keith didn't understand why he wasn’t freaking out. How could he not?! They had to sleep together. Er-wait, not like that. They had to share a bed.

Pidge smiled and poked Keith. “Hey, dude. I got Nyma.” she said, eyes scanning around, mentally pairing up girls. Keith shook his head, took a deep breath and turned to her.
“How?” he asked and she grinned. “L, M, N, O, P.” She sang. “No girl has a name that starts with and ‘O’. I mean, there’s Oliver, but he’s a dude.” she commented and Keith pushed away all other worries for now, focusing on his friend.

“Well, that’s good for you, don’t make her uncomfortable.” Keith commented before taking a bite of his sandwich. Pidge rolled her eyes, grinning and then nudged Keith with her elbow. “Yeah, whatever.” She lowered her voice. “Have fun with Loverboy.” she muttered and Keith choked on his sandwich, making their small group look at him with concern.

He opened his soda and took a sip from it to help clear his throat before he gave a death stare to the smaller teen. Pidge cackled and the rest of the group, eyes still on them, raised an eyebrow. “You okay?” Rolo asked, voice laced with concern.

Lance let out a strange sound, almost like a growl. “Yeah, man, you just choked. Literally.” Lance added, a slight scowl on his face, though Keith thought he was imagining it.

“Yeah, fine.” Keith said and Pidge laughed again. They finished their dinner with a few mumbled chats, but otherwise, it was silent, everyone watching the fire in front of them in peace.

Once they all finished, Rolo mentioned the dance. “Are you guys going with anyone?” he asked, though he was staring right at Keith. Lance shook his head. “Nope, I’m trying to find the perfect person to go with.” he said, grinning widely, the fire illuminating his face.

Ah! Perfect!

So not you!

Keith shrugged, tuning out The Voice. “I haven’t been asked and there’s no one I have planned to ask yet.” Keith replied and Rolo smiled, nodding at the fire. “‘Kay.” he said and turned to Hunk. “How ‘bout you?” he asked and Hunk smiled.

“I’m gonna ask Shay!” he said proudly and Rolo laughed. “Well, wish ya luck. Nyma’s already planning to ask som–ow!” Rolo was interrupted by Nyma punching his arm. Pidge laughed at it and Rolo glared at the younger girl.
“I wasn’t gonna say who.” Rolo said in a strained voice. Nyma shrugged. “I didn't know that.” she said innocently, as if she hadn’t she attacked someone.

“S’MORE TIME!!!” Coran called out, gesturing to a table with fourteen bags of marshmallows, ten boxes of crackers and a huge stack of chocolate. “Go get sticks to roast your marshmallows!! Get partners!” Coran added as the fifty plus of them all went running for sticks.

Keith reached behind him and grabbed a long, thin stick from the ground. “Found one,” he stated and Pidge groaned. “Ya lazy.” she commented before getting Nyma to be he partner as they went searching for sticks.

Keith broke his stick in half and handed the other half to Lance, who was searching for a partner. “Hey. Shakira, here.” Keith said and Lance smiled, grabbing it. “Why thank you, Stefani.” Lance said in a prince-like voice, bowing elegantly and Keith snorted.

“Don't call me that.” Keith answered, standing up and walking over to the s’more station. Lance pouted as he stuck two marshmallows on a stick. “Fine, Keef.” Lance retorted and Keith elbowed him, walking back to his log. Lance plopped down next to him as they put their marshmallows over the fire.

They stared at their sticks as they hovered over the fire, fire wrapping them in warmth. Keith cleared his throat and Lance looked at him. “Why don't you like Rolo?” Keith asked, eyes still on the fire.

“Wh-I don't, what do you mean? He’s… cool.” Lance spat the last word out venomously and Keith laughed. “You’re not very convincing, Shakira.” Keith commented and Lance shrugged, making Keith turn to him.

“It’s-He’s annoying. I guess.” Lance mumbled, face red. It’s probably just the fire, Keith thought to himself. “No? He’s nice.” Keith replied and Lance shrugged again. Pidge came up from behind them and threw her arms around them, almost smacking them with her stick. “Were you two making out?” she asks and Keith can feel his face flush.

Lance would never put his face near you.

“No! Why do you keep asking that?” Keith asked as Nyma walked over to the s’more station. Pidge grinned and patted Keith’s hair. “Because you're my little gay boy and Lance is a useless
“I’m not ‘useless’, child.” Lance retorted, Pidge letting go of them. “Fine, whatever.” Pidge said and skipped over to Nyma, putting a marshmallow on her own stick. Lance turned his stick slowly as he roasted his marshmallow and Keith stood up to go get crackers and chocolate.

Lance grabbed his arm and Keith turned confused. “You’re going to leave when your marshmallow looks like that?” he asked, skeptical. Keith looked at his marshmallow, still white but almost falling off his stick.

“Yes?” he answered and Lance sighed. “Oh god, the center’s not even cooked.” he mentioned and Keith shrugged, pulling out of Lance’s grasp and putting his marshmallow on a cracker with chocolate.

He walked back to his spot and sat down, taking a bite. “Tastes fine.” Keith said, ignoring how his arm buzzed from where Lance touched him.” Lance rolled his eyes, focusing on his own marshmallow. By now, everyone was back, sitting with a marshmallow hovering over the fire.

Hunk was trying to be careful with his, but it kept catching fire and he would wave it around until it went out. Rolo did the same as Keith, roasting it until he thought it was fine. Nyma and Lance decided to be perfectionists and wait until it was golden and ‘perfectly melted’. And Pidge….

Pidge kept torching her marshmallows. Everytime she got one, she would shove it in the fire, turning the white puff into a black rock of charcoal. And the worst part was, she would pull it out and just stare at it as it burned.

“Why do you keep doing that?” Keith asked and she smiled. “I’m young, I can worry about intestinal issues when I’m fifty. For now, charcoal marshmallows!” Pidge cheered before blowing the fire out and smushing it between two crackers.

Lance wrinkled his nose at it before he put his own, perfectly roasted and golden marshmallow between two crackers and chocolate.

Keith just shook his head and took a bite out of his own s’more and looked at a group of rather noisy kids. The dyed-red head on Keith’s bus stood up dramatically with a way smaller…..girl? Keith couldn’t tell from this far but the person had really short curly hair.
In unison, the two people said, “We have started the sacrificial fire.” Keith raised and eyebrow and Pidge turned to watch the other teens too. “We must throw ourselves in.” The two said in unison again and one kid cheered “Do it!” while a few others just laughed.

“We have strange people in our school.” Keith commented, taking his eyes away from the group. Pidge nodded and stuck another marshmallow on her stick, shoving it into the bottom of the flames.

“Then again, I have strange friends.” Keith added and Lance snorted next to him, almost choking on his s’more and Keith grinned. After a beat of silence, Keith turned to him. “I think we need to train Pidge.” he said, low enough so said girl didn’t over hear.

Lance nodded. “If we don’t, she’ll keep doing stuff like this.” he replied, taking a bite of his s’more. “How would we train her though?” Keith asked, still quiet. Lance thought for a moment. “We could do that Pavlov thing. With the bells and whistles.” Lance said and Keith smirked a little.

“Yeah, we could. ‘Cept she’s human, Lance.” Keith said and Lance rolled his eyes, nodding his head towards Pidge. “Is she really though?” he commented before shoving the rest of his s’more in his face.

“We can’t dog train her, Lance.” Keith argued. “Dog train who?” Pidge said and the two jumped up, surprised by their friends appearance. “Uh, Sh-Shiro’s cat. Kuro. Yeah, she’s still at his aunt’s house but she’s been misbehaving lately.” Keith lied, averting his eyes.

Pidge stared intensely at him before shrugging and lifting up the edge of her shorts. “She attacks me every time, look I still have scars.” Pidge said and there were, indeed, faint cat scratch lines across her thigh.

“Oh, yeah.” Keith said awkwardly and Pidge nodded, walking away and the two teens let out a sigh of relief. “I thought she was going to kill us.” Lance mumbled and Keith nodded. Some of the kids around them started finding their partners and getting ready for bed.

Nyma stretched her arms over her head, leaning backwards a bit as she yawned. “I’m going to bed now everyone.” Nyma said and everyone looked at her. “Already?” Pidge asked, jumping up to her feet and Nyma nodded. “I’m a morning person, not a night person.” the blonde girl claimed and Pidge shrugged, turning to the group.
“I guess I’ll go to bed to, then.” Pidge claimed and everyone nodded. “The girls are weak, huh?” Rolo whispered and Hunk nodded a little. “I think they’re just gonna gossip all night though.” Hunk muttered and Lance smiled.

“Think any of the girls are gonna talk about me?” Lance asked excitedly and Hunk avoided eye contact. “Uhm….” Keith laughed and Rolo snorted, making Lance pout jokingly. “Guuuuys,” Lance whined and Keith laughed again as Lance threw his arms around dramatically.

Haxus walked over to their group and tapped Hunk on the shoulder. “We are sleeping partners for tonight and I would like to request that I get the wall side.” Haxus stated, standing up straight and Rolo snickered behind his hand, looking at Keith, who also laughed quietly.

Hunk raised an eyebrow. “Okay?” he said questioningly. Haxus rolled his eyes. “It’s only because you’d take up more space and push my off, no need to be rude.” Haxu said in the “prim and proper” way he speaks.

Lance stood up immediately, pointing a finger accusingly at Haxus. “Don't make fun of my friend, you dick. Hunk’ll sleep wherever and however he wants, understand?!” Lance yelled and Keith watched, amused.

Haxus narrowed his eyes but one of his friends pulled on his arm, pulling him away. Lance sat down and turned to Hunk. “Ignore him dude, he’s just a prick.” Lance said and Hunk smiled. “Thanks, Lance.”

Lance smiled at Hunk before stretching his arms over his head. “There’s not much to do now though since Pidge set sparks to the cabins.” Lance pointed out as he looked at the thinning crowd of teenagers. Keith rolled his eyes. “That is an extreme euphemism.” Keith said and Lance looked at him. “A what-emism?” Lance asked and Keith laughed.

“How are you, my tutor?” Keith asked and Lance shrugged. “Because-I dunno!” Lance shouted and the four of them all laughed, it dying off quickly.

Keith smiled softly as he set down his roasting stick, looking around the fire. Most of the teenagers had gone to bed, besides Keith’s group and the sacrificial fire group from before. Keith himself though was starting to get tired and he let it be known be yawning, effectively making Rolo and Lance yawn after him.
“Dude, what have I said about that?” Lance asked, rubbing at his eyes. “We should get to bed.” Rolo stated and everyone nodded smally, getting up and grabbing clothes, excluding Hunk who's clothes had gotten blown up.

Keith came back in an oversized Kurt Cobain t-shirt and baggy sweat pants while Lance was wearing an almost sport-like outfit. Rolo was wearing generally the same outfit he always did-loose t-shirt and black legging type pants, excluding his usual jacket.

When the four of them walked in, they noticed most of the beds were filled, most of the occupiers asleep or doing random crap.. Rolo and Hunk got into their assigned beds with their partner and Lance hopped up onto one of the bunk beds, Keith following after slowly. Lance and Keith both had their own separate blankets with them so they didn't need to share, because gods that would have been a thousand times worse in Keith’s book.

Keith made sure there were a few inches in between them and he faced the room, back to Lance. “Goodnight everyone,” Hunk said quietly like the sweetheart he is. There were a few mumbles of ‘goodnights’ around the room before it feel silent again.

*Having fun?*

**Goddammit.**

*Keith! Don't act so upset to see me! Aren’t I your favorite voice? I mean, c’mon! At least it’s not like your insane or anything! Oh, wait…*

**What the hell do you want?**

*Well, just wanted to remind you the usual. You know, how lame you are, how you’ll never be with Lance, how you’re an actual failure to humanity. Just some truths you seem to forget.*

Keith bit his lip, closing his eyes shut as others around him went to sleep. He should sleep too, maybe it’ll get rid of the voice.

*But it won’t. I’ll always be here, just, in your dreams; you can’t escape me as easily.*

Keith gripped at his blanket and felt Lance shuffle behind him, probably turning or something.
Someone was snoring, probably Hunk. Rolo was almost falling off the bed across Keith. Keith focused on everything around him, trying to ignore The Voice in his head.

You know, Shiro doesn't love you, right? He's just pretending. Soon they'll get soooo tired of you, they'll kick you out. You’ll probably have to move to another state again. Hey! Remember that one family that locked you in your room because you kept talking to me?

Shut up.

Me shut up? Keith, you need to shut up. No one ever wants to hear you talk, you know that right? They just stick around because they have to, so like, get over it. No one cares.

Keith accidentally let out a soft sob and covered his mouth, tear filled eyes wide until he realized everyone was in deep sleep.

Go ahead, Cry Baby. Cry, no one’ll hear, they’re all asleep, it’s the middle of the night. besides, even if someone was awake, they wouldn’t care.

NO ONE LIKES YOU KEITH!

Keith felt Lance move again behind him and he tried to hold in his tears and sobs, but he couldn’t. “Keith?” Lance asked in a soft voice and Keith wanted to kick himself. Of course Lance wasn’t asleep! Keith was next to him crying!

Keith closed his eyes tight, hand over his mouth as he tried to ignore Lance, but he could feel blue eyes boring into the back of his head.

“Buddy,” Lance said again and Keith almost sobbed again as he turned slowly. Lance took in Keith’s tear stained face and trembling lips before pulling the raven haired boy into a hug. Keith let himself be hugged as he broke down into more tears.

Lance rubbed Keith’s back, trying to calm the other teen who was trying to hold in his sobs. “Hey, Keith, it’ fine, It’s just me.” Lance said, soothingly.
You know he’s just pretending, right? He just wants to sleep and you’re here crying and interrupting his peace.

Keith let out another broken sob and pulled away from Lance a little. Lance looked at him, concern filling his eyes. “Keith, what’s wrong?” Lance asked and Keith felt more tears flow out of his eyes.

Everything? You? Lots of things?

“It’s-You don’t-” Keith closed his eyes again, trying hard to tune out the voice in his head. “I-” Keith turned around so his back was to Lance, trying to calm himself.

You can’t even get out a simple sentence, wow. Loser much?

“It’s a voice.” Keith said suddenly, surprising himself and Lance. “What?” Lance asked and Keith inhaled, gripping his shirt as he turned to face Lance. “I-there’s a voice….in my head.” Keith said quietly, avoiding eye contact with Lance.

“What does it say?” Lance said after a moment of silence. “I-it, it tells, it tells me to, it tells me stuff lik-like about how I’m a failure and how I can’t get anything done and how I’ll never succeed and how I don’t have friends an-and it-” a sob ripped itself from Keith’s throat and he hated how weak he seemed.

“Well, It’s lying.” Lance said and Keith looked at him, purple eyes watering and face tearstained. “Wh-what?” Keith stuttered out and Lance nodded, shifting a little closer in the bed. “You’re awesome at drawing, you got goals for what you want to do, you have amazing friends that would die for you, and you’re a fun person to be around.” Lance said, smiling at Keith.

He’s lying, you're worthless.

Keith swallowed thickly. “It-it says-” “It doesn't matter what it says, it matters what I say, because I’m right in this situation.” Lance said, smiling a little more and sticking his tongue out a little. Keith felt a warmth spread throughout him and felt the fluttering butterflies in his stomach.

He doesn't like you the same way, you know that , right?
“What if it’s right, though?” Keith whispered and Lance let out a low sigh. “It’s not. You're awesome, understand?” Lance said and Keith finally had the courage to look up.

Puffy, wet, purple eyes met intense blue ones and Keith felt his heart stop momentarily in his chest. Lance smiled softly at Keith, tan skin looking soft in the almost darkness. Keith could feel his heart racing in his chest as the two just stared at each other.

“Have you told anyone else about this?” Lanc asked softly, breaking the comfortable silence. Keith gave a small nod and Lance hummed a bit. “Who?” Lance asked, voice so soft it almost wasn’t hear.

“Pidge, Shiro and Matt.” Keith replied, just as quiet. “And Rolo.” Keith added after and Lance’s expression changed a bit, though Keith couldn’t tell why or what.

“Have any of them helped?” Lance asked, vice no longer soft. Keith shrugged a bit. “Shiro keeps telling me to see a therapist or whatever and Pidge comforts me sometimes but…. That’s about it.” Keith replied.

Lance nodded a bit before wrapping his arms around Keith. “Well, now I know, and you can come to me for help.” Lance said. “Whenever you need it.”

Keith laid stiff in Lance’s arms, unmoving as more tears were brought to his eyes. He let out one more sob before hugging Lance. Keith could feel Lance smile against his hair, but didn't comment, focusing on his breathing as he calmed himself down.

Lance rubbed at his back soothingly to calm him down and Keith let himself enjoy it, enjoy the warmth of Lance's arms around his body, let himself enjoy Lance’s soothing rubs. Because he wouldn’t ever get to do this again. And yes, while the thought made him sad, it also made him indulge in the moment more.

“Thank you.” Keith whispered and Lance smiled, nodding just a bit. “I’m here for you, man.” Lance said and Keith smiled, just a bit, pulling away from Lance’s warmth.

“I don't just leave, Keith, I'm never going to leave.”

“Yeah, it’s gone,” Keith said, smiling a little before turning on his side again, away from Lance. “That’s good.” Lance decided and turned around too, though his back was pressed against Keith’s. “Just remember, you're a pretty cool dude.” Lance said quietly.

Keith smiled to himself and tucked his chin under his blanket, smiling. Lance was there for him. Though he may not return his feelings, Lance was there, and that’s all Keith needed right now.

When Keith woke up in the morning, it was to a loud thump and Rolo screaming, waking up everyone and effectively making three boys hit their heads sitting up and one person fall out of the top bunk.

That person was Keith, who then yelled at Rolo and hit the blonde with his pillow until they both erupted into laughter.

Lance chucked a pillow down from his bunk, knocking Rolo in the head fiercely, though it just made the blonde laugh more. The boys all cleaned up the mess they had made and got dressed for the day.

They all walked out slowly, dressed and ready as they sat on the log around the burned out fire. Pidge skipped over to them, grinning happily as Nyma followed behind. “Heya guys! Nice morning, right?” Nyma said, smiling as she looked around the woods.

Pidge shrugged. “I guess it is kinda nice, You don't see this by our school.” Pidge commented. “I’m just super tired.” Hunk said and Lance nodded in agreement.

“Why are you two so energetic?” Keith asked, rubbing at his tired eyes. Pidge shrugged. “We did go to bed earlier.” she pointed out but Lance pointed around them. “No, it’s like you girls have some weird power, you all are energetic.” Lance pointed out as the others looked around.

A few girls were smiling brightly as they chatted, others playing games and some talking to the guys. One group was sitting in a circle on the grass, talking and yelling. Nyma shrugged, turning back to the group. “I dunno.” she replied and Coran walked out, smiling brightly as he brought out bowls and pots.
“So! For breakfast, we’re having oatmeal.” Coran announced, pulling out bags of grain. He also pulled out jugs of water and set them down on the side. “I’ll boil some water first before I serve dishes,” Coran added and everyone nodded.

“JESUS CHRIST JACOB!” Someone yelled and everyone turned their heads to the groups that was on the grass. A girl with glass and long black hair was holding a notebook up as she stood. She kinda looked familiar….

“Is that the waitress from the restaurant?” Pidge asked blatantly and Keith nodded. “I think.” he muttered as she sat down slowly, noticing everyone’s gaze. Keith watched amused as she attacked the boy next to her with her notebook. He shook his head a little, hair swishing a little in the air.

“Oh, Pidge, uh,” Keith bit his lip once the smaller girl look at him, concerned. “I told...Lance, about the thing.” He mumbled and Pidge brightened a little, leaning out to look at Lance, then back at Keith. “Really?” she asked and Keith nodded.

“Only, because...last night, I had an attack.” Keith mumbled, picking at his jeans a bit. Pidge’s expression softened and she rested her hand on his arm. “Did he help?” she asked softly and Keith nodded, side-eyeing Lance.

“Yeah, he did,” he mumbled, cheeks flushed a bit and Pidge grinned. “You are so in love.” she commented, a little louder than she intended. “Shut up!” Keith screeched, covering her mouth. Though everyone heard and turned. Hunk laughed a little, Rolo grinned, Nyma giggled a bit and Lance raised an eyebrow.

“What?” Lance asked and Keith kept his hand over Pidge’s mouth. “It’s nothing, she must’ve inhaled firework powder, or whatever the fuck it’s called. She’s delusional.” Keith said, tripping over his words. Rolo laughed a little and nudged Keith with his arm.

“You sure man? You seem to fall in love easy.” Rolo commented and Keith flushed a bit. “Yeah, I’m sure she just-” Keith cut himself off by letting out a short scream, pulling his hand away from Pidge and wiping it on his jeans.

“Pidge, What the fuck!?” Keith yelled and Pidge cackled. “You don’t just lick people, Jesus Christ!!!” Keith yelled and everyone laughed. Pidge stuck her tongue out, standing up as Coran called for breakfast. “I do when people put their hands on my mouth. Ask Matt, he knows better.” Pidge claimed and walked to the small fire Coran had going, grabbing a bowl.
Keith rolled his eyes, standing up and walking over to, others following behind. Rolo bumped Keith’s shoulder, grinning at him. “You definitely have a crush on someone.” Rolo commented and Keith could feel his face heat up as he bumped Rolo’s shoulder back, harder.

“Shut up,” Keith said, rolling his eyes. Rolo chuckled a little, slinging his arm around keith’s shoulder. “You gonna tell your ol’ pal who it is?” Rolo asked and Keith laughed again. “You’re not my ‘pal’, you're my ex.” Keith stated and Rolo laughed, removing his arms. “Why can’t I be both?” he asked and winked at the end as he grabbed a bowl of food.

Keith rolled his own eyes, grabbing his own bowl too, along with a small chunk of extra chocolate. “Whatever.” Keith decided, smiling as they walked back. Lance watched the two and pouted a little, grabbing his own bowl and sprinkling cinnamon sugar on his food.

“Hunk, I don't understand, why would Keith ever date Rolo?” Lance asked a Hunk grabbed his own food. Hunk looked at him, eyebrow raised. “What do you mean?” he asked. Lance signed dramatically, pulling Hunk to the side. “I mean , like, Rolo is just trying to get his attention with stupid jokes. It’s kinda annoying.” Lance claimed.

Hunk let out a short laugh. “Do you not remember you were considering going with Rolo to the dance?” Hunk pointed out, picking up his spoon and taking a bite of his oatmeal. Lance pouted again and rolled his eyes. “Yeah, well that was before I realized how annoying he is.” Lance claimed, starting to walk back to their group.

Hunk laughed a bit, following Lance. “Are you sure you're not jealous?” Hunk asked and Lance scoffed. “Why would I be jealous?” Lance asked. Hunk shrugged. “Maybe you're jealous Rolo has Keith’s attention and Keith is kinda ignoring you because of it?” Hunk asked and Lance stopped abruptly.

“What?” Lance asked, turning around to look at Hunk. Hunk shrugged a bit, lowering his bowl from his face. “Yeah, well, I’m just saying, you're kind of really close to Keith and everything and you seem to like talking to him. So maybe you're jealous of Rolo?” Hunk said, looking down at his friend. Lance stared at him, blinking a bit before turning around and stomping back to their group, plopping down next to Pidge.

Pidge snorted at him as he shoved a spoonful of oatmeal in his mouth. Keith looked at him strangely before turning back to his conversation with Rolo. “Uh, anyway. The animation contest is next Saturday, so we’ll see how I do. Though I doubt I’ll even get fifth place.” Keith claimed, eating a bit of his oatmeal.
Rolo rolled his eyes and smiled, elbowing Keith gently. “Dude, don't down yourself like that. You're really talented. I know you have a chance at this.” Rolo said and Keith looked at his bowl, tilting his head a little. “I dunno,” Keith mumbled, quiet enough so only Rolo would hear. Rolo scoffed a little, putting his bowl on the log next to him.

“You’re awesome, dude.” Rolo said, holding out his fist. Keith stared at it before laughing and fist bumping the other. “Sure,” Keith said and the two laughed.

And suddenly, Lance’s plastic spoon broke in half with a loud ‘snap!’ Pidge jolted in her spot and looked next to her at the broken spoon in Lance’s hands. “Dude what the fuck?” Pidge said, eyes wide and Hunk laughed on the other side of Lance, leaning over to whisper to Pidge.

“He’s denying he’s jealous.” Hunk explained and Pidge let out a loud groan. “You’re all dumbasses.” Pidge whined and everyone turned to her, curious. Pidge just shook her head though. “Nevermind.” she mumbled and they all finished their breakfast.

Once everyone was done, they had to go clean up and pack their stuff up to leave. They would walk for about ten minutes down hill before they met up with their three buses that would bring them home.

The boys all retreated to their cabin, having already packed up, they all just talked. Keith sat on the bunk bed, legs hanging over the edge as he talked to Rolo, who was sitting on the bed across from him.

It was mostly on Lance, Keith, Rolo and few others in the cabin, most were waiting for everyone else. Lance was talking, or, more fighting with, Haxus on the opposite end.

“Is it getting better?” Rolo asked, leaning back a little as he looked at Keith through his blonde bangs. Keith looked at him confused. “What?” he asked and Rolo tapped the side of his head and realization ame upon Keith’s face.

“Oh, that, it, uh, not, not really.” Keith stammered out, looking at his knees. “I think it’s getting worse.” Keith mumbled the last part, but Rolo still heard, his expression softening.

“Why do you think that is?” Rolo asked. “Maybe talking about it will help.” Keith scoffed. “God, you sound like Shiro.” Keith said and picked at his jeans again. “I think it might be like,
everything. The animation contest, graduation, the dance, the fact I’ll be going to college. Part of me is always worried that I’m going to get kicked out of the house again.” Keith admitted.

Rolo nodded, looking at the ceiling for a moment. “Well, I mean, it’s not like you're worrying for nothing. School is ending, all the people we were friends with for like, the past thirteen years are going everywhere. You're going to New York and I’m going to Florida.” Rolo said and looked at Keith.

“But,” he continued. “At the same time, you're going to make more friends. It’s going to be new experiences. Plus, once you go to college, you won’t need to worry about getting kicked out, because even if you do, then you’ll already be on your own.” Rolo points out.

“You're lucky.” Rolo said, leaning back onto his back, staring at the ceiling. “You're going to New York and so is Lance and Hunk. You're not going to be alone or anything.” Keith laid backwards too, staring at his ceiling.

“I don't know if I am going to New York yet, I’d have to win the animation contest. Which puts more stress on me. Like, I turned it in the other day, but what if it wasn’t good enough? What if there are better ones? If I don't win this, then I don't get the scholarship and I can’t go to college.” Keith rambled and Rolo scoffed.

“I’m sure Kotoko would pay for you, she’s already said she would, anyway.” Rolo pointed out. “Yeah, but like, if they kick me out, how am I supposed to pay for it then?” Keith replied. “She’s not going to. You don't need to worry.” Rolo answered.

“WE’RE LEAVING!” Lance yelled, interrupting their conversation and Keith sat up, hitting his head on the ceiling. “Ow,” Keith whined as he rubbed his head. He grabbed his suitcase and jumped down from the bed, Rolo doing the same across the aisle.

They walked out and Rolo rested his hand on Keith’s shoulder. “Hey man, if you ever need to talk about stuff,” Rolo said, grinning down at Keith. “I’m here.”

Isn’t this oddly familiar?

So many people “care” about you Keith~
They think they’re such kind people,

But they’re just helping you for their ego

Would it kill you to shut up for like, five minutes?

Probably not.

But this is more fun

“Yeah, sure.” Keith mumbled as the three classes all started their trek down the mountain. The ten minute hike was mostly quiet, everyone was too tired or bored to think of anything to say. A few groups were talking about the dance but that was it.

When they all finally met up with the buses, everyone piled in, not even bothering to put their bags away, settling for them to sit on the laps.

Keith yawned as he and Rolo took their seat, the same ones they sat in on the way here, rubbing at his eyes. Lance turned in his seat and grinned. “Not a morning person, Britney?” Lance teased and Keith smiled a little. “Fuck off, Shakira.” Keith mumbled and Lance cackled, turning back in his seat.

Keith stifled another yawn, eyes tired from hardly sleeping last night, leaning back in his seat. Rolo smiled at him gently, running a hand through his blonde hair. “Hey man, if you need to sleep, you can.” Rolo said.

Keith smiled a bit and shrugged. “Didn't get much sleep last night is all.” Keith mumbled and Pidge’s head popped over the seat. “Lance didn't let you sleep or something?” she asked, teasingly.

Keith rolled his eyes and flipped her off. “No,” he turned and tapped the side of hi head. “Someone else didn't.” Keith mumbled and Pidge nodded a little, reaching her hand over and ruffling his hair. “It’s okay, we’re here for you.” She said before sinking back down.

I know you are
No, they aren’t Keith.

Why would you lie to yourself?

You’d be better off without them, if you just were a loner. No one to bother you.

You should abandon them

I’m not going to do that

But you should.

“I’m going to sleep.” Keith said out loud and Rolo nodded. “You can lean on me, or whatever.” Rolo said like it was nothing, playing Candy Crush on his phone. Keith just shrugged and leaned his head on Rolo’s shoulder, fatigue taking over as he dropped into unconsciousness.

Lance looked over the seat top as the bus pulled out of the woods—finally, Lance was sick of trees at this point—and frowned at the position Keith and Rolo were in. Lance turned back to Hunk.

“Why didn’t Keith sit next to me? Like, hello, I’m your friend too, we sit next to each other every day on the bus. Why change that now?” Lance muttered angrily and Hunk looked at him, a little offended.

“You don’t want to sit next to me?” Hunk asked and Lance looked up. “No, that’s not what I meant,” Lance reassured. “You’re awesome Hunk. I’m just saying, why does Keith have to sit with,” Lance lowered his voice. “Him?”

“I am right here.” Rolo said from behind him and Lance jumped, turning in his seat to stare at Rolo behind him, body hanging out of the aisle. “I know,” Lance replied, though he was unaware that the blonde could hear him.

Rolo just scoffed, turning phone off and leaning against Keith, looking at the other with a soft look
in his eyes. Lance frowned, though he didn't move as Rolo rested his head on top of Keith’s, closing his eyes also.

Lance sat back in his seat, about to talk to Hunk, but noticed the other boy was busy looking out the window.

Lance huffed and looked around on the bus. Lots of other kids were sleeping, some were on their phones while others talked quietly. Lance rolled his eyes, resting back in his seat, pulling out his own phone.

There were a few texts from his family and one made him frown. He unlocked his phone and went to the chat he and his siblings made.

Mario (7:15): hey hey, Big Bro, so we had to take Beckie to the doctors because they called her in. Papa should be home by the time you get home but Rosie’s seeing some friends or something?!?!?! So she’s not being home til later

Rosita (8:39): so, update Lance, tell Keith his brother and Matt are idiots. He’ll understand why when he gets back, but i’m home now so see you whenever.

Lance raised an eyebrow at the last one, deciding to ignore the pain he felt while reading the first one.

Lance (8:48): what did they do?

Rosita (8:48): well…..

Lance continued to text Rosita, laughing as Rosita told him what had happened, until they got to the school. Nyma shook Rolo awake, who woke Keith up as everyone grabbed their stuff and got off the bus.

Lance looked at Keith, his hair disheveled and eyes droopy, as he got off the bus. Many kids were getting into cars or walking off while others, like Keith and Lance, were getting onto another bus.
“Sleep well?” Lance asked, a little harsher than he intended as they sat in the back of the bus. Either Keith didn't notice or didn't care because he just shrugged, blinking a few times before sitting up. “Not really, actually.” Keith commented and for some reason, that answer made Lance smile a bit.

“Hey, so, Rosie told me to tell you your brother’s an idiot.” Lance said and Keith raised an eyebrow. “I mean like, I knew that already, but why?” Keith asked as their ‘home bus’ pulled away from the school. Lance smirked. “You’ll find out when you get home,” Lance said ominously and Keith quirked an eyebrow.

“Scared,” Keith commented and Lance laughed a little. “Anyway, did you know Shiro didn’t know who Britney Spears is?” Keith said, and Lance gasped dramatically, making a few kids turn with concerned looks. One girl, he thinks it’s a girl, with short curly hair, just laughed at him. She looks smaller than Pidge….

“How could he not?” Lance shrieked, looking away from the small teen. His loud voice attracted more looks and Zethrid telling him to shut up. “He’s old.” Keith replied matter of factly and Lance snorted. “He’s only what, like, seven years older than us?” Lance said, rolling his eyes.

“Six years.” Keith corrected but froze, eyes wide. “Uh, no, no no, I meant seven, yeah you were correct,” Keith’s words came out fast and almost incoherent and Lance raised an eyebrow.

“Why’d you say six years?” Lance asked and Keith rubbed at his arms, biting his lip nervously. “N-no reason.” Keith said, averting his eyes. Lance leaned back in his seat, looking up at the bus roof, thinking before his mouth stretched into a smile.

“What’s your birth year?” Lance asked and Keith almost answered before cutting himself off. “Same year as everyone else.” Keith answered, not looking Lance in the eye. “And that is…?” Lance asked curiously and Keith sighed.


“Why? What did you fail?” Lance asked and Keith looked at him, frowning but not mad “You know, curiosity killed the cat.” Keith said. “And satisfaction brought it back.” Lance retorted, making Keith sigh. “I didn't fail anything.” Keith said, only succeeding in making Lance even more curious.

“I got held back because of ‘disciplinary issues’.” Keith said, using his finger to make air quotes. Lance snorted. “Well, what did you do specifically?” Lance asked. Keith waved his hand, smirking a little. “Oh, you know, set fire to the gymnasium, nothing much.” Keith said, grinning as Lance’s face twisted into horror.


“I’m good, no need to continue explaining now.” Lance said as the bus stopped. Keith laughed as he stood up, grabbing his suitcase. “Yeah, yeah. Your fault you wanted to know.” Keith said to Lance, who slung his duffel bag over his shoulder. “Yeah, yeah, whatever.” Lance aid, mocking Keith’s tone.

Keith laughed as they started walking home. “So, tutor session tomorrow?” Lance said and Keith nodded. “Yeah, and you better make this a good lesson since it’s the last.” Keith said and Lance smirked. “Yeah, yeah, we’re coming to an end of our tutorship.” Lance said and Keith scrunched his nose up.

“That sounds weird.” He stated and Lance laughed. Suddenly his phone vibrated and he stopped walking, taking out his phone. Keith stopped in his tracks and turned as Lance frowned at his phone.

“Hey, you alright?” Keith asked and Lance shook his head, smiling at Keith as he shoved his phone away. “Yeah, it’s nothing.” Lance said and Keith hesitated for a moment before nodding. “Kay.” he said and they continued walking. Once they arrived to Lance’s house, Keith noticed the lack of cars in the driveway, but didn't say anything, waving goodbye to Lance as he continued home.

Keith stared at his feet, lips pursed as he walked. He’s never seen Lance frown before and something about it was really unsettling to him. Without realizing it, he was in front of his house and had almost walked into the door. Keith blinked a few times, opening the door and walking in.

“I’m home!” Keith called out, kicking off his shoes and noticing Matt’s next to Shiro’s. He smiled
to himself as he dropped his suitcase in the corner, walking into the living room. Shiro sat on the couch, arm in a cast and Matt sat next to him, a large bandage across his left cheek.

“What the fuck did you do when I was gone?” Keith asked, taking in the scene. Shiro and Matt turned to face him and Shiro laughed nervously. “I-uh, so, lesson learned. Matt cannot fly, and do not try catching your best friend who’s falling at 30 mph with your bare arms.” Shiro said and Keith almost laughed, remembering Lance’s words.

..Your brother’s an idiot. Matt smiled a bit though, turning to Shiro. “We-well, thanks to you! I’m not hurt at all!!” Matt said and Shiro rolled his eyes, shoulder bumping Matt with his good side. “Yeah, now you just have a cut across your face that’s going to leave a scar.” Shiro commented.

Matt only smiled more, hand reaching up to his cheek. “Now we can be scar bros!” Matt cheered and Shiro laughed. “Yeah,” Shiro said and smiled at Matt. the scene made Keith smile and he scoffed. “What did you guys even do anyway?” Keith asked.

“Matt climbed on top of a Krispy Kreme store and jumped off.” Shiro shouted as Matt tried to cover his mouth. “Shut up!” Matt shrieked, smiling. “You’re the one who dared me too!”

Shiro laughed again, trying to wrestle Matt off of him, despite is broken arm. “Let’s just blame Rosie for taking us to get donuts with her and Romelle.” Shiro said and Matt nodded in agreement. “Yes, let’s.” Keith laughed at them again and walked out, waving to them.

“Well, you two have fun, I’m going to my room to study.” Keith said. He was really just going to surf the internet, but they didn’t need to know that. Matt turned and grinned. “How’s studying with Lance~” Matt asked and wiggled his eyebrows.

Keith narrowed his eyes and looked at Shiro. “Did you tell everyone?” Keith spat out and Shiro shrugged, looking away. “Uh, I said, you might like Lance. You’re not sure yet, and he told Pidge, who told Hunk…..” Shiro trailed off as Keith narrowed his eyes even further.

“Shiro, first, why would you tell anyone, when I said, I might?” Keith asked, not actually all that mad, knowing this would have happened at some point. “I might not even end up actually liking him like that.” Keith said, though he felt he cheeks burning. Matt pursed his lips, side-eyeing Shiro.

“He didn't know, besides, we know better then to actually tell Lance.” Matt defended and Keith
sighed. “Just, don't tell anyone else. It’s already bad Pidge knows.” Keith said, pinching the bridge of his nose. Shiro brightened a little a saluted. “You got it, Keith,” he said and Keith let out a chuckle.

“Whatever, see you later.” Keith said and continued to his room, pulling out his laptop. He signed into Tumblr and scrolled through, commenting, reblogging and talking to a few mutuals he met online.

Soon though, he got very tired of that and leaned back in his chair. His couldn’t draw, he had filled out his sketchbook a while ago. Nothing new was on Tumblr, well, nothing new he cared about. Some anime movie was coming out soon but he could care less about that. He didn't have any animations he wanted to work on either.

After minutes of contemplating what to do, he decided on actually studying. He would need it for his finals, though he mostly understood everything, it never hurt to be extra prepared. He got out his textbooks and notebooks, though his phone went off the moment he even touched his science textbook.

Smiling and grabbing his phone, he flopped onto his bed, opening hsis phone to find a text from Lance, reading ‘Loser’ at the top. Keith had changed his contact name a while ago, though it still made him laugh to read it.

**Loser (12:34):** hey, so Maria and Mario have a game later tomorrow night and they want you to see it. It’s at 7, if you wanna come or smth.

Keith lit up and jumped out his bed and walked out his room to find Matt and Shiro sitting very close to each other, watching some t.v. show.

“Hey Shiro,” Keith said and Shiro looked up, turning down the t.v. “What’s up?” he asked and Keith wanted to face-palm at how dad-like that was. “Are-uhm,” Keith shifted a bit in his spot. “Are we still going for ice cream tomorrow?” Keith asked and Shiro nodded.

“Unless you don't want to?” Shiro asked, raising an eyebrow and Keith waved his hands around. “No! It’s uhm, just,” Keith stumbled to get his words out. “Lance’s siblings are having a soccer game tomorrow and they wanted me to go, it’s at seven, so I wanted to know if we’d still have time to do ice cream.” Keith said, nervously.
Shiro smiled brightly and Matt grinned. “Sure, it’s no problem Keith.” Shiro said and Keith smiled. “Thanks, Shiro.” Keith said and suddenly noticed that Shiro’s arm rested on the couch behind Matt’s head. Keith raised an eyebrow at it and Shiro’s face flushed, Matt’s attention on the t.v.

“Go to your room.” Shiro said and Keith laughed a bit before walking back. He sat on his bed and texted Lance back.

Mullet (12:42): Yeah, I can. But we’re studying tomorrow too? Right?

Loser (12:42): so long as you pay me, yeah XD

Mullet (12:43): i might block you now

Loser: whyyy?!??!

Keith could almost see Lance pouting in his head, but he shook the thought out of his head.

Mullet (12:44): you just ‘XD’ed’ me, what do you expect?!

Loser (12:44): XDXDXDXDXDXDXDXDXDXDXD

Mullet (12:44): STOP IT!

Loser (12:44): Nope XDXD

Mullet (12:45): BLOCKED

Loser (12:45): NO WAIT I’LL BE GOOD I PROMISE!!
Mullet (12:45): fine, you're unblocked only because you're my only source of entertainment rn

Loser (12:46): you should draw something then

Mullet (12:46): can’t ran out of sketchbook pages

Loser (12:48): okay then.

Mullet (12:48): why the hesitation?

Loser (12:49): you seem to forget i have five siblings

Loser (12:49): quick question, what’s my contact name?

Mullet (12:49): Loser

Loser (12:50): what? Change it to Shakira, dude, like, c’mon

Mullet (12:53): okay, fine, what’s mine?

Shakira (12:53): Mullet

Mullet (12:53): and you yell at me, change it to Britney

Shakira (12:56): finished

Britney (12:56): do you know how painful it is to have drawing ideas without anywhere to draw?
Shakira (12:57): no, but just draw on your arms or smth

Shakira (12:58): oh, i have to go, becca’s back

Britney (12:58): back from where?

Keith frowned when Lance didn't respond, sitting up in his bed, he ran a hand through his hair before deciding to take a nap. He really didn't want to study and there was nothing else to do. Setting his phone on his nightstand, he tucked himself under his blankets, despite how warm it was in the room.

He closed his eyes, snuggling into his pillow as he let sleep take him away. He was woken up by knocking on his bedroom door a few hours later, though to Keith it felt like a few minutes.

Keith sat and up opened his door, almost screaming when a blur of human tackled him. “Keith!” Pidge yelled and Keith groaned, trying to push her off of him. She slipped off, rolling onto her back on the floor before standing up.

She adjusted her glasses, short hair wild as she stared up at Keith. “What?” Keith asked, frowning. “I have intel.” she stated and he raised an eyebrow, walking to his bed and sitting down. She sat next to him, pulling her legs up to sit cross legged. “And that intel is?” Keith asked.

“So, Rolo may not exactly be over you yet.” She said and Keith tilted his head in confusion. “What?” he asked and she smiled. “Yes, our blonde football player still has feelings for our raven emo.” She said, holding her hands to her chest.

“Why?” was the next question out of Keith’s mouth before he even realized it. “I mean, why do you know?” he restated and she flopped her hands around in the air for a moment. “Okay, so, I was hanging out with Nyma and Rolo a little while before, cause they wanted to hang out or something. I dunno, Nyma invited me. But we were talking and Nyma asked Rolo if he liked anyone and he got all quiet.”

Pidge inhaled deeply before she continued. “And then we asked who, and he was all like, ‘Oh, he’s one of my exes.’ Which of course made us start thinking like, he’s only dated three guys that we know of, who could it be? But we realize that one, his first boyfriend, Thomas or
something, moved, so it couldn’t be him. The other guy, Jonathan, is a complete jerk to him, so we kinda just ruled him out.”

Pidge paused and took another deep breath, which made Keith grow concern, but the younger girl continued on anyway. “Which leaves you. And when we asked he just played the ‘I’m not saying anything’ card but we started thinking about it. How he comforts you, he let you sleep on him earlier, he’s always making dumb jokes, that you for some reason find funny.

“So it’s most definitely you and Rolo still likes you.” Pidge finished, pushing her glasses up her nose again. Keith thought for a moment, brain trying to understand what she just said. “Wait, what?” he asked and she sighed.

“Rolo, still, likes, you,” she said slowly and she could almost see the gears turning Keith’s head. Immediately, his face flushed and started to stutter. “Wh-what? I mean, he’s-he’s just my friend? Wh-who was my boyfriend, but like, he-he’s my ex now! So, why would he-he like me again?” Keith played with his fingers, tugging a bit at his gloves.

“An-and besides, we like, broke up? He broke up with me, so if he broke up with me why-why would he want to date again?” Keith asked and Pidge shrugged. “I dunno, plus, he should know you’ve already got it bad for Lance, so like, why’s even trying?” Pidge stated and Keith blushed even more.

“I don’t ‘have it bad’ for Lance.” Keith deadpanned, though he stuttered a bit. Pidge grinned. “Who’s the last person you texted?” Pidge asked and Keith grabbed the neck of his shirt, burying his face in it. “That proves nothing.” he said and she cackled.

“Uh-huh,” she teased. “What’s he doing anyway?” she asked and Keith shrugged. “He said his sister Rebecca got back, but he didn’t say from where. She probably was at her friend’s house.” Keith suggested and Pidge nodded. “Probably.”

~

Lance’s eyes widened as he looked at his mother, her dark blue eyes teary. “What?” Lance asked, voice coming out broken as he felt another part of his heart break.

His mother, Amelia, nodded, rubbing at her eyes as she shifted to the couch. “It got worse?” Lance whisper yelled, trying not to let his younger siblings in the kitchen hear. Amelia nodded again,
slow as she sniffed. “That’s what the doctor said. She’s going to try to help us, but she’s doing the best she can, Lance.”

Lance buried his face in his hands, frowning as he held back tears and Rosita rubbed his back soothingly. “How did this happen?” Lance asked, voice muffled by his hands. “She said it was a multitude of things,” It wa Maria who answered this time.

“But she said a main one was the radiation therapy.” Maria continued. Lance threw his hands up. “So stop giving it to her!” he shouted. “It’s not that easy Lance,” Rosita said from above him. “It’s also the only thing working to heal her.”

“Another reason was she’s using too much energy so,” Juan paused, inhaling a little slowly. “She can’t go over to Claire’s anymore.” Lance frowned even more, tears still threatening to fall, but he didn't let them. “That’s gonna break her heart.” Lance said, his own voice soft and broken.

His siblings and parents all shifted awkwardly. “We know,” Amelia said. “But it’s only until she gets better.” Mario rubbed at his eyes, tears falling fast. “If she gets better.” Mario spat out and no one corrected him.

“Is there anything else we can do?” Lance asked. Amelia shook her head. “Besides get her to eat more and use less energy? No.” his mother replied and that was it. That was the dam that was keeping back Lance’s waterworks. But once that broke, Lance started crying, sniffling and hiccuping as sobs tore from his mouth.

“Why does it have to be her?” Lance says through sobs and no one answered him.

Chapter End Notes

SO HOPEFULLY BY NEXT WEEK I WILL HAVE THE REAL CHAPTER SIX UP AND I LIVE THE IDEAS, WE GOT BROGANES BONDING I’M WRITING, WE GOT SOME MCCLAIN BONDING TIME WITH KEITH, WE GOT SOME MCCLAIN PARENT SHIPPERS AND MORE, SO HOPEFULLY I’M DONE BY NEXT WEEK YEET

~L
Dinner At The McClains (GOAAAL)

Chapter Summary

A simple day with ice cream, studying, watching a soccer game and eating. Right?
...
Right?!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Keith was awoken at 5 a.m. when he heard someone coughing harshly in the room next to him—the bathroom. Keith barely even registered the noise before fatigue dragged him into unconsciousness again, darkness filling his vision.

When Keith finally woke up for real this time, it was around 10 a.m. Keith rubbed at his eyes as he stretched his back, inhaling deeply as he did so before throwing his blanket off. He walked to the bathroom to... well, you know.

When Keith finished his “business”, he noticed that in the trash can was a very bloody tissue. And, normally he doesn't question these things, he does have a mom-ish and all, but something in his brain told him this was different, that he should worry.

Still, he dismissed the issue for now, leaving the bathroom as he slugged back to his room to get dressed, trying to wake himself up more. Once he was changed, he walked out of his bedroom, pulling his red beanie over his hair just behind his ears.

Keith took a place at the counter as Shiro turned, plates in his hands full of food. “So! Breakfast then we go out for ice cream?” Shiro asked and Keith grinned. “Breakfast then right to ice cream? Hell yeah!” Keith said as he took a plate from Shiro’s full hands, moving to the dinner table.

Shiro followed, placing two plates for his mom and dad as he sat next to Keith. “Well, I mean, not right after, we can watch a little t.v. or something and then leave.” Shiro said and Keith nodded, already shoveling egg and bread into his mouth.

“Sure,” Keith said, muffled as Ryuzaki walked out, dressed in his work clothes. “Morning, kids.”
he said, taking his seat at the table and looking at his son. “Did you make this?” He asked quizzically and Shiro nodded. “Yeah,” Shiro answered and Ryuzaki raised an eyebrow.

“Where’d you learn to cook?” he asked, scooping up a forkful of food and Shiro laughed a little. “I’m a college student, remember? I’ve learned how to get to my school building that’s twenty minutes away in five minutes on foot.” Shiro answered as Ryuzaki took a bite of the egg.

“Well, it is good.” Ryuzaki commented, looking at Shiro. “I thought for sure though that you’d have to rely on Matt and Allura taking care of you for everything, though.” Ryuzaki said innocently and Shiro almost choked on his food, gulping down his water.

Kotoko walked in and slapped her husband slightly on the back of his head. “Don't tease him,” she said, but she smiled down at Shiro. “You two are going out today, right? Some brother bonding time?” she asked and Shiro nodded as Keith ate silently next to him.

“Yeah!” Shiro said then side-eyed Keith. “I want him to feel more like he’s part of the family!” Shiro added and Keith downcasted his gaze. He knew why they were doing this, he knew it was because of that stupid fight. But, in a way, he guessed it was him being part of the family.

“That’s great you two!” Kotoko said, smiling brightly. “Though, Ryuzaki is going back on a business trip on, when was it dear?” she turned and Ryuzaki looked up at her. “Wednesday,” he answered, eating the rest of his breakfast and standing up.

“Wednesday, so I’d like you both to be home that day.” she said and the two nodded as Ryuzaki retired to his office room. She smiled at Keith and Shiro for a second before grabbing her plate. “Well! I’m off to work! This one family keeps bringing in their daughter,” she said and frowned a little at her food before closing it up. “She’s the one with leukemia I told you guys about,” she said and frowned a little at her food before closing it up. “She’s getting worse and I’m trying to help, I really am,” her voice got heavier and Keith looked at her.

“She’s the one with leukemia I told you guys about,” she said and frowned a little at her food before closing it up. “She’s getting worse and I’m trying to help, I really am,” her voice got heavier and Keith looked at her.

“But I don't know if I can.” Kotoko finished softly. There was a pause before she smiled again, looking up. “But that’s my business, not yours!” she walked around the table, kissing the top of Keith and Shiro’s head. “See you two later!” she sang out before scurrying out the door.

Keith stared at the door for a few moments before turning to Shiro. “Hey, you don't think it’s—"
“Rebecca?” Shiro finished and Keith nodded a little. “Maybe,” Shiro said before standing up with his own empty plate.

“Anyway!” he shouted and Keith jumped, grabbing his own plate and walking into the kitchen. “Today’s gonna be a bonding day!” Shiro said and Keith rolled his eyes as he dumped his scraps into the trash can. “Yeah, whatever.” Keith said, though he smiled a little.

A few minutes later, the two were settled in the living room, t.v. on, as they flipped through Netflix. “What do you want to watch?” Shiro asked, looking at Keith who sat on one end of the couch. Keith shrugged, playing with the ends of his hair a bit.

“I dunno,” Keith mumbled, looking down and Shiro frowned a little. “It’s not-?” Shiro asked and Keith frowned, shaking his head. “Actually, for once, no.” Keith said, voice strange as his eyebrows furrowed together. He shook his head though, looking back at the t.v.

“Could, we,” Keith started slowly, looking at the floor. “watch, Supernatural?” Keith finished, biting his lip and Shiro nodded. “Of course, Keith!” Shiro said, typing it into the search bar.

“I haven’t actually watched any of it yet,” Shiro admitted and Keith gasped loudly. “Jesus Christ, Shiro!” Keith gasped as Shiro clicked on the show. “It’s the most awesome show in the universe! It’s the only thing on Netflix I will ever watch! Understand?” Keith yelled and Shiro laughed, nodding.

“Yeah, yeah, understood.” Shiro said and Keith smiled. “Now click episode one.” he demanded the older boy and Shiro’s eyes widened a bit. “There’s thirteen seasons?” he asked and Keith nodded. “Click episode one.” Keith demanded again and Shiro followed what he was told.

The two watched in comfortable silence, Keith smiling as he mentally quoted what was being said, hoping Shiro would enjoy just as much as he did.

“Ghosts don’t exist.” Shiro said suddenly and Keith let out a weird gasping noise. He turned, offended. “It doesn't matter if ghosts ‘exist’ or not, it’s for the purpose of the show.” Keith pointed out.

Shiro turned to him, pausing the episode. “I’m just saying that they should’ve made it more accurate.” Shiro said and Keith’s eyes widened. “It’s a show about hunting demons and ghosts! There’s nothing ‘realistic’ about it.” Keith pointed out and Shiro shrugged. “Okay, okay, I get it,
but like, I’m just saying.” Shiro claimed and Keith shook his head, resuming the episode.

A few moments later though Shiro paused it himself, turning to Keith. “Okay, but like, if their dad really was missing, why didn’t they just call the cops?” Shiro asked and Keith held back a scream, snatching the remote from Shiro again.

“Must you theorize everything?” Keith asked and Shiro waved his hands around. “I mean, I’m just saying they really should’ve called the cops. There’s no real reason they couldn’t.” Shiro pointed out but Keith ignored him, pressing play and watching the screen.

“And-and why would they kill off the mother in the first episode?” Shiro asked confused. “Like, yeah, sure plot and everything. But really, that seems like a huge jump. And why would he harm the mother? The person didn’t harm the baby?” Shiro babbled on and Keith grabbed one of the couch pillows, hitting Shiro with it.

“Would you just watch the fucking show?” Keith yelled and Shiro laughed as he tried to fend off the younger teen. “It’s not polite to curse!” Shiro shouted out and Keith rolled his eyes, grinning as he smacked Shiro with the pillow.

“It’s not polite to talk the whole way through the show. You missed Jess dying!” Keith shouted and Shiro sat up. “The girlfriend too!? How many people are going to die?” Shiro yelled and Keith laughed.

“Well, apparently there are only, four or five?, episodes without on-screen kills so, there’s a lot of death.” Keith stated and Shiro’s eyes widened. “You watch a very violent show.” Shiro joked and Keith laughed. “Well, a lot of them come back later on, so it cancels out.” Keith decided, putting the pillow back in place on the couch. He turned around to see Shiro with a look of confusion on his face before shaking his head. “Confusion,” Shiro stated and Keith grinned. “But, I guess we should watch the next episode before ice cream?” Shiro said and Keith smiled.

“Hell yeah.” Keith said.

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“Fun fact,” Keit said to Shiro once they finished the second episode. “The brother dies later on anyway.” he said and Shiro grabbed the pillow and hit him with it. “Spoiler warning!” Shiro yelled and Keith laughed.
“Does another Wendy or whatever come and get revenge?” Shiro asked and Keith snorted. “Wendigo, first of all. And you’ll just have to watch and see.” Keith said, grinning and Shiro smiled.

“I will totally watch and find out.” Shiro said and stood up, stretching his arms behind his head. “Okay, so, uh, go make sure you’re ready, I guess, and we’ll go to Weir’s or something.” Shiro said and Keith nodded, standing up. “Just got to brush my hair, then I’ll be back.” Keith said and Shiro nodded.

As Keith entered his emo nightmare of a room, he smiled a little, walking over to his dresser where he had put his plastic hairbrush. He took off his beanie and ran the brush through his hair slowly, letting the bristles work out all the small knots in it.

After a few moments of letting his brush drift through his hair, he set it down, fluffing up his “bangs” a bit before slowly setting his beanie back on in a certain position. He grinned at his reflection in his door sized mirror that took up the whole back side of his door before opening it back up and walking into the hallway.

The moment he did though, he heard a horrid coughing sound, well, hacking was probably more accurate and Keith slowly walked into the kitchen too see Shiro coughing into a napkin. Shiro stopped after a few moments, clearing his throat and throwing out the napkin.

Keith watched curiously as he stepped into the room, eyebrow raised. “You okay?” he asked and Shiro whipped around, smiling. “Yeah, totally. Ready to go?” Shiro asked brightly, though his voice sounded a little hoarse.

Keith frowned a little but nodded. “Yeah, let’s go.” Keith said and the two walked out, slipping their shoes on as they left the house. Weir’s was only around ten or twelve blocks from their house, so they could walk. Besides, it was a very sunny day out and Keith probably needed the Vitamin D.

The beginning of the walk was very quiet at first, neither of the two speaking as the walked past Zethrid’s and Lance’s house. Though the silence was starting to get to Keith, making him a little jumpy so he decided to break it.

“So Pidge blew up our cabins during our camping trip.” Keith said suddenly and Shiro turned to him as he walked. “What?” he asked, concerned, and Keith nodded. “She brought fireworks and
blew up half of our cabins.” Keith restated and Shiro pinched the bridge of his nose.


“You sure? Because you insist on being our chaperone everytime Pidge and I go out of town,” Keith started, listing things off as he touched his fingers. “You always make us go to bed at a certain time during sleep overs, you use dad words like ‘gosh darn it’, you make dad jokes, you’re the oldest out of all of us.”

Shiro scoffed and rolled his eyes. “Hunk says ‘gosh darn it’ too you know.” Shiro pointed out and Keith laughed a little. “That’s because he’s too pure-hearted to say anything else. I’ve heard you when you have road rage.” Keith retorted and Shiro laughed a little.

“Fine, fine.” Shiro said, rising his hand sup in surrender. “You win, I’m a dad.” Keith grinned. “Yeah, Matt’s ‘Daddy’.” Keith said before racing forward at full speed as his blushing not-brother chased after him.

“Why must you say these things?” Shiro yelled as Keith turned the corner. Keith came to a halt as he saw Weir’s a few feet away and took a moment to catch his breath.

Which was a very bad idea since Shiro didn't stop and just tackled him to the concrete. “Shiro!” Keith shouted, trying to push the much older, and much heavier adult off of him.

“Get the fuck off you’re like two hundred pounds!” Keith shouted and Shiro shifted off of him. “That's because I’m all muscle.” Shiro claimed and stood up, brushing off dirt and helping Keith up. “Fuck you,” Keith said, holding his hand up for Shiro to see.

“You tore my gloves.” Keith whined, showing Shiro the scraped back of his left handed glove. Shiro just grinned. “Finally a way to get them off of you! You sleep with those on!” Shiro claimed and the two walked in the direction of Weir’s.

“I do not.” Keith fought and Shiro rolled his eyes. “Yes, you do. I literally have pictures of you and Pidge having sleep overs and you’re wearing them.” Keith pouted a little as he pulled off the torn gloves, shoving them into his pocket as the two walked up to the window of the ice cream shop.
A girl with an overly fake, bright smile grinned at them. She had brown hair that spiked out in certain areas with dark blue streaks.

“Hello and welcome to Weir’s!” she said overly politely, left eye twitching and Keith snorted. “Chocolate waffle cone, small, please.” Keith answered easily and the girl nodded, typing in his order.

“And what would you like, sir?” she asked Shiro and Keith almost laughed at Shiro’s reaction. “Uh, a large rocky road with a chocolate dipped waffle cone with chocolate sprinkles and chocolate dip and oreo crumbles, please.” Shiro answered and the girl’s eyes twitched again at his order as she turned around quickly.

“Coming right up.” she said in a tight voice, turning around quickly to make their orders. Now that she was gone, Keith could see that she was alone and that probably explained her attitude. Also, it was a very hot day out and she looked like she’d been here long.

After a few minutes, she came back carrying two ice creams, handing it to the two before writing up their price. “That’d be $19.38, please.” She said and Shiro nodded, handing her a twenty and walking away before she could give him change.

Keith followed and they sat down at one of the benches, resting back as they ate their ice cream. “Aren’t you lactose intolerant?” Shiro asked, side-eyeing Keith. The emo nodded as he licked at his cone. “That’s why I ordered a small.” Keith answered simply and Shiro just nodded.

Right after though, Shiro started to cough harshly again, leaning into one of the napkins he had grabbed to make sure their ice cream doesn’t drip. After a few minutes of harsh coughing and hacking, and a very concerned looking Keith, Shiro threw out the napkin without looking at it, grinning at Keith before he continued eating his ice cream.

Keith looked at him skeptically as he licked at his own ice cream, biting his lip with concern, but he ignored it. If something was wrong, Shiro would tell him.

“Soooo,” Keith said once he was half-finished. “How’s Matt?” Keith asked in a slightly sing-song-ish voice. Shiro’s face immediately flushed and he turned away. “Why do you always ask about Matt?” he asked quietly.

Keith hummed a little. “I don't know,” Keith admitted. “I guess it’s because, you seem to like him
more.” Keith claimed and Shiro looked at him. “What do you mean?” Shiro asked, looking at him. Keith shrugged. “Whenever I ask you about them,” Keith ate the rest of his cone, turning to look at his not-brother.

“And I ask what you like about them, you can go on and on for hours claiming all the things you love about Matt, from the simplest things like the color of his eyes to obvious things like how amazing he is with computer special effects and everything. But I ask you about Allura, and most of the time your answer is simply ‘She’s pretty’,” Keith stated and leaned back in his seat.

Shiro licked at his ice cream cone, shrugging as he looked out at the road. “There’s…. Other things I like about her.” Shiro mumbled and Keith looked at him, doubtedly. “Okay, but, why’re you so scared of liking Matt? You’ve been with guys before is this…” Keith trailed off as Shiro looked at the ground solemnly and Keith’s expression softened.

“This is about Adam, isn’t it?” Keith asked and Shiro rubbed his arm. “No?” he said quietly and Keith tilted his head as Shiro ate the rest of his own cone. “You’re afraid of being left again, aren’t you?” Keith asked and Shiro sighed.

“Yes, okay? Happy?” Shiro said, looking at the teen. “I just, with Adam, I was happy, I was. But, then we went to different colleges, and he got upset and, everything fell apart. I thought that we were perfect and it was the only time I was ever that serious about being with a guy, and then he just….” Shiro looked at his feet.

“Left.” Shiro finished quietly and Keith nodded. “And, now I feel that same way, but it’s with Matt.” Shiro continued. “And I’m just, I’m really afraid Matt’s going to leave me too at some point. I mean, he’s at T.I.S.C.H. because he wants to work in computer graphics and technology that goes on during movies and shows. I’m there because, well, I want to do graphics makeup. We’re not going to be together forever, we’re going to go our separate ways and,”

“I don’t want to hurt again.” Shiro looked at Keith who was biting his lower lip. “I know, but Shiro, by trying not to get hurt yourself, you’re also hurting both Allura and Matt. But it’s more impacting on Matt,” Keith said and Shiro nodded.

“I know, and I’ll figure it out soon, I promise,” Shiro said then grinned a little. “But for now, how’s Lance?” Shiro asked and Keith’s face turned red as he held his hands up in front of his face. “No, we’re not doing this!” KEith argued and Shiro rolled his eyes.

“C’mon! I just told you about my love life, at least tell me what you feel about Lance. You said before you might like him, has that changed?” Shiro asked softly and Keith sighed, rubbing the
back of his neck nervously.


“I like him. But it’s like, more than like but not quite love exactly yet, if you know what I’m saying?” Keith explained quickly and Shiro grinned, nodding. “Like, he’s nice but weird and his jokes are stupid and his face is stupid and his clothes are stupid. He’s stupid. But I like that, and there’s something really wrong with me because I like everything about him and he’s also really nice to me. He’s kind and he listens and I honestly don't know what this fucking feeling in my chest is anymore.”

Keith finished and took in a huge breath of air as Shiro chuckled at him. “Shut up don't laugh.” Keith frowned, crossing his arms and Shiro smiled.

“It’s just, I haven’t seen you this happy about someone since Rolo.” Shiro said and Keith glared at him. “And you’re opening up more. You’re only friend used to be Pidge and you’d occasionally hang out with Hunk and Lance but you’ve molded into their group now. When you quit Filming classes, I got a little worried. But now you’re open and you have a crush.” Shiro said and Keith frowned more.

“Stop that.” Keith mumbled and Shiro chuckled. “My baby brother’s got a little crush~” Shiro sang and Keith’s face flushed as people walked by, looking at the two weird. “Keith is in love~” Shiro continued, clamping his hands together and fake swooning as he leaned on Keith a little. Keith pouted and tried to push the adult off of him.

“Stop it!” Keith whined and Shiro laughed. “Keith is in love! And he loves someone and he’s finally opening up!” Shiro sang and Keith stood up, walking over to the ice cream stand again. “I’M GETTING MORE ICE CREAM!” Keith shouted and Shiro snorted.

“YOU’RE LACTOSE INTOXICANT!” Shiro yelled back and Keith turned around, walking backwards. “I HOPE IT KILLS ME!” Keith simply replied.

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When the two were finished with their second ice creams and everything, they started to head back
to their house, a comfortable silence passing over them.

Though that was mainly because Keith’s stomach hurt too much and he definitely regretted having that second ice cream.

Shiro laughed at Keith as the younger boy groaned in pain. “Did you learn your lesson?” Shiro asked and Keith flipped him off.

“No,” Keith answered in a pained voice. “I’m gonna do that again tomorrow.” Shiro laughed at the answer and shrugged, opening their door. Shiro looked at his phone then at Keith as the latter collapsed on the couch in pain.

“It’s 1:20, when do you go to study at Lance’s?” Shiro asked, sitting next to Keith. “We agreed on five.” Keith mumbled into the couch and Shiro laughed. “Okay, you should probably take some medicine before then.” Shiro commented and Keith growled at him.

“I fucking hate the universe.” Keith whined and Shiro laughed. “Yeah, yeah, sure you d-” Shiro cut himself off by coughing once again into his elbow and standing up quickly. Keith watched curiously as Shiro ran to the kitchen, grabbing a few napkins and Keith at up.

Shiro pulled his arm away quickly, and Keith saw a few splotches of red where he had been coughing, though he couldn’t tell if he was seeing things or not as Shiro wiped off his sleeve and coughed into the napkins, throwing them out once he finished.

“Shiro, you okay?” Keith asked cautiously, hand resting on his stomach. Shiro just grinned at him and bit his lip. “I’m fine!” Shiro stated, voice hoarse again and Keith narrowed his eyes and Shiro shifted on his foot.

“Really,” Shiro said. “I am! No need to worry!” Keith looked at him, disbelieving, though he stood up and walked to his room. “Fine, but if something’s wrong, you should at least get help,” Keith called out and Shiro nodded.

Keith sat on his bed, flopping backwards just as his phone lit up and started to vibrate. Keith reached over and picked it up, pressing his phone to his ear. “What do you want, Pidge?” Keith groaned out and he heard a crash on the other end.
Keith sat up immediately, eyebrow raised. “What was that?” he asked and he heard shuffling on the other end. “It’s nothing, just hanging with some kids from the film class, you know, the one you quit. Anyway, they’re being dumbasses.” “PIDGE!” “Anyway, I was going to inform you that Aaren said they will give us a ride to the animation contest. Their girlfriend, or whatever, is doing it too.”

There was another crash and Pidge yelled at someone. “Okay cool. What are you guys doing?” Keith asked, concerned and he heard Pidge sigh. “We were supposed to be filming at one of Aaren’s friend’s house, but it turned into a party and Jacob almost broke the camera.” Pidge whined and Keith listened as unfamiliar voices floated in the background.

“I don't think I recognize any of those names, are they new?” Keith asked, mentally going back through his old classmates names in his head.

“Yeah, some of them just joined so I’m supposed to be training them, but they aren’t very obedient.” Pidge complained and Keith laughed. “Sounds like someone I know.” he replied and suddenly there was a loud shriek on the other end.

“Jesus fuck, I got to go before Angela kills someone, talk later.” Pidge said and hung up before Keith could reply. Keith pulled his phone away from his ear and stared at it curiously before tossing it to the side.

“I’m boooored,” he groaned out to his bedroom before laying down. He could take a nap, but he’s pretty sure if he took a four hour nap, it’d mess up his sleep schedule.

He turned to lay on his side as his phone lit up again and he brought his pillow over his face to muffle his groan of complaint. Why were so many people deciding to be his friend today? Why couldn’t they leave him alone?

He grabbed his phone and answered it before the caller hung up. “Hello?” he asked and sat up. “Keef!” a girls voice called out and Keith pulled his phone away from his ear to look at the caller I.D.: Shakira.

He put the phone back to his ear and raised an eyebrow. “Rebecca?” he asked and he heard an excited giggle as said girl moved around. “Yeah! I took Lannie’s phone ‘cause I wanted to talk to ya! Guess what I did today!” Rebecca shouted on the other end and he heard Lance’s voice in the background.
Keith smiled as he flopped back. “What, what did you do today?” he asked the eight year old. “Mama and I went out today and she brought me a beautiful wig, it’s got rainbows!” Rebecca said and this time Keith could hear a very clear “Beckie!” from Lance as she giggled.

“Oh?” Keith said. “Well you’ll have to show me it later.” Rebecca laughed again as there was a lot of movement on the other end. “You’re coming over soon, right? Lannie says he’s tutoring you today and that you’re gonna come to Em and Emmy’s game today?” Rebecca said, though it sounded more as a question.

“Yeah, I’m coming over later.” Keith said and Lance shouted in the background. “Becca! Give me back my phone!” Lance yelled and Rebecca giggled again and there was the sound of a door closing and locking until Lance’s voice was muffled.

“Will you help me braid it later, Keef?” Rebecca asked and Keith laughed a little at the sound of Lance knocking on a door. “Yeah, yeah, I absolutely will. Becca, did you take Lance’s phone without his permission?” he asked and he heard her laugh a bit.

“I definitely did not.” she said in a serious voice, though he could hear the little girl’s smile. “Really? Well, I guess he’s yelling for no reason then, right?” Keith said, teasingly. “What? I can’t hear him yelling? What yelling?” the young girl said on the other end and Keith laughed.

“Rebecca, I think you should give Lance back his phone,” Keith said and Rebecca sighed. “Fiiiine,” she groaned out and the sound of a door unlocking could be heard as the phone was swiped out of her hands.

“Keith! Hey! Sorry about that!” Lance said and there was a whispered conversation on the other end. “No worries, she’s adorable.” Keith said and Lance laughed a little. “Yeah, she is.” Lance said though his voice sounded... mournful?

“What’s wrong?” Keith asked, curiously. “Oh, nothing. Anyway, see you soon, dude.” Lance said and hung up.

Keith frowned a bit, knowing full well that what Lance had said was a lie, but didn’t call back or anything. Keith turned his head to look at his analog clock and almost groaned again as it read 3:34.

He still had nothing to do with his free time and didn’t know how to spend it. Suddenly though, just
as the past though surfaced, a new one appeared and he sat up, walking out of his room. “Shiro?” Keith called out and he heard a distant “here,” from the living room.

He walked in to see Shiro watching the sixth episode of Supernatural and he smiled. “I was about to come in and ask if you wanted to watch it, but you were ahead of me.” Keith said as he placed himself on the floor. Shiro shrugged.

“It’s a good show despite the inaccuracies.” Shiro said and Keith sorted, looking at the screen as “Dean Winchester” murdered a girl as the opening started. “What.” Shiro deadpanned as the episode started and Keith laughed. “It’s not really him, just watch.” Keith explained and the two passed the rest of Keith’s time watching the show.

4:50 came around and Keith stood up, leaving Shiro to continue watching the show. “You should call Matt, he loves this show maybe more than I do.” Keith said as he slipped on his shoes. “Maybe,” Keith heard Shiro mutter and he smiled as he slipped out the door, notebooks, textbooks and pencil in his arms as he walked down the sidewalk to the McClain’s household.

He arrived at the door, raising one hand to knock, though it flew open before his fist landed on the door.

Mario grinned before walking into the house, Keith following him. “¡Lance, tu novio está aquí!” Mario yelled into the house and Lance came running around the corner, face bright red as he turned to his younger brother. “¡Keith no es mi novio!” Lance yelled, flustered, though Keith didn't understand why.

“¿Cómo supiste que era Keith?” Mario asked teasingly and Lance smacked the back of his head slightly before walking into the living room with Keith. “You guys said my name, what were you talking about?” Keith asked, looking at Lance and sitting on the floor with his stuff.

Lance’s face flushed a little more but he waved his hands around. “No, no, it’s nothing he was just announcing you’re here an everything.” Lance said and Keith pursed his lips. “Sure,” he said before pulling out his books and stuff.

“Yeah, it’s fine. Anyway, science!” Lance said, grabbing one of Keith’s textbooks. “I assume you’re a master or whatever at this,” Lance said jokingly and Keith nodded.

“Absolutely, mostly the astronomy stuff though, all that comes really easy to me. The only thing I have trouble on is Anthropology and human physiology.” Keith said and Lance gave him a weird look. “Repeat that first one.” Lance said and Keith snorted.

“Anthropology, the study of human behavior. It’s one of my classes I had to take to get all my high school credits.” Keith explained and Lance nodded. “Okay then.” Lance said, flipping through the textbook.

“Let’s work on physiology first then.” Lance said and soon the two were lost back into their little study world where only annoying terms and them existed.

“I’m tutoring you and I’m getting lost,” Lance admitted after almost an hour and Keith nodded. “Let’s move away from the humans and move onto something else,” Keith said, opening a different notebook as Lance flipped through the textbook again.

“Geology?” Lance asked and Keith shook his head. “I know pretty much every element and mineral and rock in existence, no point in studying that.” Botany?” Lance asked. “Why would I need to know about plants for a senior final?” Keith pointed out and Lance shrugged.

“Zoology?” Lance tried and Keith shook his head. “Again, animals and plants, I don’t really think I’ll need either of those,” Keith said. “What’s the mitochondria?” Lance asked randomly, looking at Keith.

“The powerhouse of the cell,” Keith answered automatically and Lance shrugged. “Proof enough.” Lance decided and discarded the textbook. “I feel like this was kind of pointless, you already know everything else.” Lance said and Keith shrugged. “Well now I know about Physiology and Anthropology more and you get paid twenty bucks. Still a win-win, situation.” Keith said and Lance shrugged as he opened the textbook again.

Name both of Mars’ moons.” Lance said out of random again. “Phobos and Deimos.” Keith responded on instinct again. “Name another dwarf planet besides Pluto.” Lance shot out again.

It’s about time too.” Keith said, grinning.

“Do you believe in aliens?” Lance asked, closing the textbook. Keith nodded. “Obviously. There is no way there’s endless amount of space with nothing else but us living in it, there’s definitely life out there besides us.” Keith stated and Lance grinned.

“Hunk said that if there were aliens, they would have an invaded us by now. But I just told him that either the aliens haven’t found us yet, or our technology is so behind there’s, that it wouldn’t even be worth it. He’s a non-believer.” Lance explained and Keith grinned back at him.

“Moon landing, faked or not?” Keith asked and Lance threw his hands up in the air. “How would you be able to fake a moon-landing?” Lance asked and Keith pulled out his phone, already pulling up a video. He moved next to Lance so that their shoulders were touching and the two of them could both see the phone.

“Okay, watch this part,” Keith said, fast-forwarding a bit and showing it to Lance. “I don't see anything.” Lance stated and Keith rolled his eyes. “Pay attention to the astronaut helmet and tell me what you see in the background.” Keith said and replayed the part.

Lance’s eyebrow shot up once it past the moment and he looked at Keith. “That dude didn't look like he was wearing a space suit.” Lance said and Keith nodded. “Right?!” he shouted and there was a sudden chuckle from the door entrance.

“I thought you two were supposed to be studying, not debunking the moon landing.” Rosita said and Lance rolled his eyes at her, jabbing his thumb at Keith. “Yeah, well this one already knew everything, so what’s there to teach him?” Lace complained and Keith bumped his shoulder in protest.

Rosita smiled warmly at the two before focusing on Lance. “Mom just texted me. She said she’ll be home soon and then we’re all gonna head out to Maria and Mario’s game.” Rosita informed and Lance stood up. “Yeah, yeah, sure.” Lance said then suddenly, his face lit up.

“War paint.” Lance said and Rosita smiled brighter too, practically running up the stairs. “War paint?” Keith asked and Lance grinned. “At all of their games, we wear their team colors to cheer them on, but painted on our faces, in the shape of a lion.” Lance explained and he heard Rosita opening doors upstairs.
Miguel and Rebecca came running downstairs and tackled Keith, shrieking happily as he bent down to them. “Hey guys.” he said and the two laughed as Rosita walked up behind them, holding a few palettes of Halloween makeup.

“Keef! You were supposed to tell me when you got here!” Rebecca shouted and Miguel smiled as Keith ruffled his hair. “Sorry Rebecca, I was studying with Lance.” Keith explained and she pouted. “Fine, but you have to make it up and help my braid my wig for the game!” She claimed, already grabbing his hand.

Keith looked at Lance for help, but the other boy just laughed at his struggle as Rosita started on Miguel’s makeup. Keith sighed, following the smaller girl up the stairs as she led him into her room and to her bed, making him sit.

Across from her bed was Maria, who was laying down and staring at the two strangely as Rebecca sorted through their closet.

Maria dropped the book she had been reading and watched the two curiously as Rebecca brought out a mannequin head with a rainbow colored wig set on top.

Maria’s expression softened as Keith grabbed it and helped the eight year old set it on her head. “I see why Lance likes you,” Maria commented and Keith jumped, not having noticed the teen.

“What?” he asked, ears red and she smirked. “You’re a really good friend you know, and person in general.” Maria said with a smile and Keith smiled back a little. “Thanks,” he muttered as he helped Rebecca try and keep the wig in place before he brushed it.

“Okay, Keef, I need you to braid it into two braids,” Rebecca ordered and Keith let out a soft chuckle. “Okay, french braids or loose braids?” Keith asked and Rebecca’s face brightened. “You know how to french braid?” she asked and he nodded.

The small girl grabbed one of his hands and held it, a determined look in her eyes. “You need to teach me how one day.” She demanded and Keith laughed. “I promise. Now, french or loose?” he asked again and Rebecca turned to the mirror she had set on her kid-vanity.

“Loose, since it’s sports.” She said and Keith laughed again. “You got it, Boss.” he said, dividing her hair into two halves, tying one part to the side as he split one section into three, twisting and turning the pieces loosely.
Maria continued to watch with amusement, looking at the open door of the bedroom occasionally before looking back at them. Keith finished one braid and tied it off with one of the rainbow patterned ribbons Rebecca had handed to him. He finished off the other braid soon after and Rebecca smiled as she turned around, giving him a hug.

“Thanks Keef!” she shouted and there was a snort from the door area Keith turned his head to see lance grinning at the two. “Yeah, good job, Keef.” Lance said, though there was no trace of mockery in his voice. Keith smiled at him before noticing the rainbow lion on his cheek.

“Woah, hey,” Keith said, walking over. “Did your sister do this?” Keith asked, looking at Lance’s cheek. Said adult appeared from behind Lance and smiled as Keith marveled in the art.

“Yes, I made my own stencils a while ago, hand drawn by me, so that these could be easier, but Lance prefers for me to paint them on without it. I mostly use them for the kids anyway.” Rosita claimed and Keith nodded, leaning a little closer to looked at the small lions on both of Lance’s cheeks.

“It’s awesome.” Keith said, pulling away from Lance when he said the other’s red face. Rosita giggled at the two before holding up her makeup palette. “Want me to do yours?” she asked and Keith grinned. “Hell yeah.” he said and he, Rebecca and Rosita all went downstairs, Maria closing her door to change into her soccer uniform and Lance going to his room.

Rebecca sat down in a spinning chair that Rosita had set up, spinning around until her older sister stopped her, pressing a stencil of paper to her face. The young girl laughed as Rosita started to paint on a few colors, blending them into each other. “It tickles.” Rebecca laughed out and Rosita smiled warmly at her.

“That means it’s working.” Rosita answered, dabbing Rebecca’s nose with her brush, let a dusting of red pop on her nose. Rebecca laughed brightly again and Rosita’s smile faltered a little, though the young girl didn't notice.

Keith did.

Keith noticed the way the older girl’s eyes dulled the slightest, noticed the quick drop and pick up of he smile, noticed the aura around her changed. And it confused him.
“All finished, Bex.” Rosita said and Rebecca smiled, smushing her older sister's cheeks and grinning. “It’s ‘Becc’.” Rebecca corrected and Rosita smiled a little as she set the young girl on the floor, peeling off the stencil and turning to Keith.

“All finished, Bex.” Rosita said and Rebecca smiled, smushing her older sister's cheeks and grinning. “It’s ‘Becc’.” Rebecca corrected and Rosita smiled a little as she set the young girl on the floor, peeling off the stencil and turning to Keith.

“Your turn,” she stated and Keith sat in the chair, looking as Rosita grabbed a smaller brush. “What happened?” Keith asked and Rosita turned to him curiously as she grabbed a brush, Lance entering the room. “It’s,” she paused and frowned a bit before dipping her brush into the red. “Nothing.” she said and Keith stared at her blankly as Lance walked over.

“Your turn,” she stated and Keith sat in the chair, looking as Rosita grabbed a smaller brush. “What happened?” Keith asked and Rosita turned to him curiously as she grabbed a brush, Lance entering the room. “It’s,” she paused and frowned a bit before dipping her brush into the red. “Nothing.” she said and Keith stared at her blankly as Lance walked over.

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“What’s nothing?” Lance asked, watching as Rosita grabbed he side of Keith’s face. “He asked what happened. It’s nothing.” she said and Lance just nodded, looking at Keith as the other closed his eyes.

Lance couldn’t see Keith’s face well from where he stood, Rosita’s body almost blocking the whole view, though he stayed leaning on the counter, watching as his sister worked. Maria and Mario came clambering down the stairs in their uniforms, watching their sister also.

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“It’s hard to work with a crowd, you guys,” Rosita said in an annoyed voice and the twins sighed as they went to the living room. “Fiiiiine,” they groaned in unison and Rosita chuckled, moving to Keith’s other cheek, letting Lance see finally.

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Lance looked at Keith’s pale face, eyes closed softly as long lashes almost touched the top of his cheeks, a rainbow lion in the center of his cheek as pieces of his long black hair fell into his face. Lance tore his eyes away, only to find Rosita grinning at him and give him a knowing smile, making the cuban boy blush and turn his head.

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Rosita smiled back at Keith, pulling her paintbrush away. “There, you’re all finished!” Rosita said and Keith opened his eyes slowly and that should not have been as hot as that was, Lance thought as he faced away from the other boy.

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Keith hopped off the chair and grabbed the mirror Rosita held out, smiling wide at the twin rainbow lions on his cheeks. “Now I’m rainbow on the outside,” Keith said and Rosita snorted at that, patting his head.

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The front door opened and Rebecca went running to it, smiling and laughing as Miguel followed behind. “Mama!!!!” Rebecca shouted and Keith leaned to try and see the front door from his spot.
“Keef’s here, you can finally meet him!” Rebecca houted joyously. Miguel nodded, pointing over to where Keith was. “Keith está en la cocina.” Miguel informed and there was a soft laughter.

“Okay, déjame entrar a la casa ustedes dos.” a woman’s voice said and a tall, tan woman walked into the kitchen, grinning when she saw Keith. “Hola Keith. My name is Amelia.” she said, voice shifting from a spanish accent to an american one as she spoke. Keith nodded.

“Nice to meet you.” Keith responded and Amelia smiled. “I like him,” she said, pointing a manicure finger at him and looking at Rosita and Lance. Keith’s face flushed a little as the woman dropped a small pharmacist bag on the counter, clapping her hands together.

“All right!” she yelled in a loud voice, startling Keith as all the other kids froze. “Everyone into the Beast, we’re going to Maria and Mario’s game now! Grab a snack bar so you’re not that hungry!” she ordered and a few of the children nodded as they all slipped on their sneakers of grabbed a snack bar.

Juan, who Keith didn't even know had been there, emerged from a door leading to a room Keith’s never seen, carrying a case of water bottles. “Lance, feed Blue before we leave.” Juan called out and Keith turned to Lance.

“Blue?” he asked and Lance visibly brightened, grabbing Keith’s wrist and pulling him up the stairs.

“I can’t believe I’ve never shown you Blue.” Lance said to himself and Keith chuckled as he was pulled into Lance’s room. “I’ve been in here before but I’ve never-” Keith cut himself off when Lance opened his closet door to reveal a little stand with a cage on it, a light shining into it.

“What the hell.” Keith muttered, walking over as Lance dropped a dead mouse into the cage. Slowly, a black snake poked its head out and slithered over, swallowing the mouse whole as Lance quickly filled its water, closing the top.

“This is Blue.” Lance said and Keith bent down so his face was level with the cage. “Cool,” Keith admitted, watching the snake slither around. “He’s an Eastern Indigo snake.” Lance informed. “I named him Blue, because in certain lighting his skin turns a metallic-looking blue.” Lance continued and slowly opened up the cage, grabbing the snake out and letting it wrap around his arm slowly.
“He’s pretty friendly and chill,” Lance added as the snake slid over his shoulders to his other arm. Keith watched in fascination and admiration as Lance stood still, as if a snake slithering across him was normal.

“How old is he?” Keith asked and Lance grinned. “2 years almost. But guess what the really cool part is?” Lance asked, excited as he walked over to his dresser, Blue still slithering around his arms. Keith followed behind as Lance held out a piece of paper. “You have to have a special permit and everything to have one, and thanks to my mom working with endangered animals, we got to have one!” Lance said.

Keith nodded, impressed when Maria came barging into the room, soccer ball under her arm as she looked at the two. “Put that goddamn snake back in it’s cage and get the fudge downstairs!” She yelled, laughing a bit as the two jumped.

Lance walked over, opening the cage up and setting the snake inside before closing the closet door. Keith and Lance walked out of the room and down the stairs, following everyone to a giant van that was parked in the driveway.

“Lance and Keith get the front backseat!” Amelia shouted out and all the younger kids whined in protest. “What!? Unfair!” Rosita yelled and Amelia gave her a look, making the adult sigh and climb into the back with the younger kids.

Keith sat in one of the carseats, Lance sitting in the next to him as Mario and Maria walked in between them to the middle back and Miguel, Rebecca and Rosita climbed into the back back.

Amelia and Juan sat in the front seats, having closed the side doors first and starting the car after a few tries.

“Everyone went to the bathroom before we left, right?” Juan asked, looking into the rearview mirror to look at the kids. “Uhm….?” Rebecca mumbled and everyone sighed as she unbuckled, running into the house.

Everyone was silent in the car, waiting for the younger girl to return. When she did, Juan took off, driving with a lot more ease than Keith thought, considering the size of the vehicle.

The radio had been turned on, playing some station Keith couldn’t identify, Miguel and Rebecca talking while Rosita tried to calm them down. Mario and Maria went over game tactics behind Keith, while Lance rambled on to him about some random thing.
They arrived to the high school shortly and all climbed out of the van, Maria and Mario running off to meet up with their team.

“Okay, we got our water bottles,” Juan checked, carrying the case as Amelia opened the trunk to the car and Keith watched. “Do we have our cheer poster?” he asked and Rebecca pulled it out of the car with a smile. “Check!” she shouted. “Our handmade megaphones?” Juan continued and Miguel pulled out a megaphone made out of paper, holding it to his mouth.

“Check!” he shouted, voice still thick with a spanish accent. “And pom-poms?” Juan asked and both Rosita and Lance shook their rainbow pompoms. “Check!” the two cheered and Keith snorted as they shut the trunk doors. “We’re all set!” Amelia said and when Lance noticed Keith laughing at him, he shook the pom-poms in his face, grinning.

“You ever been to a game before?” Lance asked as the group started to make their way to the field. Keith shook his head. “Nah, I’m not really into sports or anything like that so I normally don’t go to games.” Keith answered and Lance grinned.

“Well, you’re in for a surprise,” Lance said a little sing-songy. Keith just snorted as the group found seats in the bleachers towards the top, sitting down as they looked out over the field. Many, many other families were there, but Keith was pretty sure the McClains were the biggest family there.

Lance held his pom-poms in his hands, a huge smile across his face as they all chatted quietly to each other before the game begun. Amelia and Juan sat at one end, Rosita talking to them and catching them up on everything that’s happened to her at college. Lance and Keith sat next to them, chatting about literally the most stupidest things Lance could think of. Miguel and Rebecca were talking to each other in rapid spanish, something Keith didn't know but he heard his and Lance’s names mentioned a few times.

Lance was in the middle of saying something, it was something about Pidge’s new creation or whatever, when an announcement shut everyone up.

“Please cheer for Arusian Highschool!” an announcer yelled and everyone’s attention turned to the field as the opposite team’s family members cheered. “Now, please cheer for Voltron High!” and let’s just say, Keith was not prepared for Lance to start shrieking for his siblings, almost scaring Keith to death.
“He gets like this,” Rosita said, leaning over Lance to talk to Keith. “Just wait until the game gets intense,” She joked and Lance grinned at his older sister, turning a bit to Keith. “I like being supportive,” he claimed and Keith just nodded, looking down at the field as he spotted the twins talking to a few of their teammates.

The teams split up into smaller groups and took their positions, Mario going to the other side and standing in the goal, Maria standing almost direct center as she grinned at the other team’s player.

“Oh, God.” Rosita muttered and Keith turned to her, confused as some sort of whistle blew. “Don't do iiiiiii,” Lance mumbled too and Keith turned back, looking down at the field as the game start. Maria immediately took charge of the soccer ball, dribbling it between her feet before she passed it off to another one of her teammates.

“What?” Keith asked and Lance turned to him. “Maria likes to, how do I put this-” “Get violent,” Rosita finished for Lance, who nodded. “Yeah, she almost got kicked off the team for it last year, hopefully she knows how to-” Lance cut himself off and broke into a cheer as his sister managed to kick the soccer ball straight into the goal.

“Hopefully she doesn't kill anyone.” Lance said and Keith laughed a little. “We’ll see.” Keith replied, grinning as he looked to the side at Lance.

Around 20 minutes later, a whistle was blown and the two teams sat down for a break as some cheerleaders Keith could care less about came onto the field.

“Who’s winning?” Keith asked, because honestly, he was lost. Lance turned, grinning and there was a little bit of worry in his eyes. “Maria and Mario’s team is winning right now, but the other team is close behind. They’ve played against Arusian Highschool before, and they normally save the real fighting for the second half of the game.” Lance said.

Keith nodded, trying to understand as Lance shifted a little in his seat. “Also, this is sort of the time when Maria gets more aggressive. Mario’s just the goalie so he only just tries his best to block the other teams scores, but Maria’s the midfielder, so she gets pretty intense when she starts to lose.” Lance explained and Keith nodded.

“So, they're ahead, but the other team is close and now they’re gonna be working harder?” Keith asked and Lance nodded. “So we hope for the best.” Keith said and Lance nodded again when he was suddenly pushed into Keith a bit, their shoulders knocking together with enough force that Keith almost fell off his seat.
Keith froze a bit as Lance had to put his arm on the seat behind Keith to save himself from falling onto the other boy. Lance looked down into Keith’s eyes, their eyes locked on each other for a few moments before the two snapped out of their stupor.

“Rosie!” Lance shouted, fixing his seating position so he wasn’t leaning on Keith anymore, turning to his older sister, who was smirking. “¿Para qué diablos fue eso?” Lance yelled and Rosita smirked at him and put her hands up in surrender.

“It was an accident,” she said, but her smirk didn't help her situation. Keith could feel his face heat up and he pushed Lance away gently, turning his head away to look at the field, completely missing the way Amelia smiled at the two of them as Lance fixed his position awkwardly.

The second half of the game begun and Keith understood what Lance meant when he said that this was when Arusian Highschool got more serious. They were a lot more brutal, more strategic in their movements.

The midfield player for the other team was fast, stealing the soccer ball from Maria as he ran in the other direction, kicking it fast and harshly into the goal. Mario’s eyes widened as he brought his hands up in an attempt to catch it, missing it just barely as it hit the back of the goal.

A few of the other team cheered as they now tied with Voltron High, making Maria frown and Lance stared at her with a worried look as she balled her hand into a fist. “Is she-” “Yeah,” Lance said, and Keith looked at Maria again, noticing the way she set her jaw in anger and her fists were shaking as they blew the whistle.

Maria was fast as lightning, sweeping the ball with her feet just in time before the boy could kick it away from her. She dribbled the ball between her feet as people chased after her, swerving in between other players as she ducked under them, passing the soccer ball to another one of her teammates just as someone was about to kick it out from under her feet.

“She’s good,” Keith commented and Lance bit his bottom lip. “She's getting aggravated.” Lance replied and everyone in the bleachers watched for the next fifteen minutes as the teams went back in forth between being ahead. There were five minutes left before the second half ended, and the two teams were tied again.

The two teams had been fighting with brutal strength, both teams fast, both teams smart. But now, it was all coming down to an end for the final winning point. Maria was tense, Mario was probably
bruised all over from blocking goals with his body, the whole team was sweating and radiating energy as they faced their opponents.

The whistle blew and Maria slammed her body into the other team member, kicking her one leg out as she scooped the soccer ball into her control as the opposing team member’s midfielder fell to the ground, harshly. A whistle was blown and Maria stomped at the ground as she was pulled off to the side.

“What was that?” Keith asked and Lance sighed. “She got a penalty, she should be back on soon, but not in enough time to win the next point. We told her to stop being brutal, but she gets tense. Now they might lose.” Lance explained as the team was switched around, some guy with obnoxiously bright blonde hair taking Maria’s position.

“The other team gets a free kick from where the foul happened.” Lance added as one of the kids besides Keith groaned loudly.

Keith looked down to where Maria sat on the bench, arms crossed as her team coach talked to her. Mario looked at her from his spot by the goal, frown placed on his lip as the whistle blew and the Arusians kicked the ball to their side, hitting the back of the net and now they were one point ahead.

The game started as regular again and the Arusians gained quick control of the soccer ball, racing around the Voltron kids as they tried to score, kicking it to the goal, but Mario kicked it out of the air in time, sending it flying to the other side as his teammates wrestled for control.

Keith started to bounce his knees in anticipation he wasn’t normally one to get worked up over sports, but he had to admit the tension was pretty thick in the air right now, he could almost feel himself suffocating.

At the one minute mark, a whistle blew again as Maria practically raced back into the game as the teammates all moved around once more. The score was back to being tied and whoever earned the next point would win. Keith was vibrating with energy as Rebecca held her motivation poster up, shouting with Miguel for their older siblings to win.

“You got this!” Lance shouted through one of the paper megaphones, waving his pom-pom in the air again and both Maria and Mario smiled at him.
“Win it! Win it!” Rosita cheered with Lance and Keith grinned joining in with the two as the game started again. The midfielder for the other team kicked the ball away from Maria, running towards Mario, though one of the Voltron team members kicked the soccer ball away from him last minute, almost tripping him as Maria kicked it to another teammate, the only other girl on her team as said girl kicked it to the other side, one of their team members gaining control as Maria ran to him.

The boy passed the soccer ball to Maria as the crowd started counting down in anticipation. “Ten! Nine!” the crowd shouted and Maria weaved through the other players, a few of them close behind her as they tried to steal it away. “Eight! Seven! Six! Five!” the crowd continues and Lance and Keith lean forward, awaiting for the final score that decided the winner.

Maria ran as fast as she could, the soccer ball switching from foot to foot as she ran. “Four! Three! Two!” Maria kicked the soccer ball as hard as she could into the goal, stopping in her tracks as the white and black ball flew into the net and her team cheered.

“One!” The crowd cheered, but it was muted as everyone screamed in excitement and Maria threw her hands up, twin braids flailing about as she did so. Rebecca stood on top of her seat with Miguel, screaming in victory as she waved to her sister with a bright smile. Maria waved back and laughed, though it was inaudible from their distance.

Keith cheered with Lance as the team all surrounded Maria, hugging her with happiness as the other team congratulated them.

Once all the chaos of winning was over, the McClains and Keith all climbed down the bleachers, meeting up with the twins, who were bouncing excitedly.

“We won!” Maria cheered, almost jumping Lance as he smiled down at her, ruffling her hair. “Yeah! You guys did!” he cheered and then bent down to look at her. “But you would’ve won a lot sooner if you hadn’t attacked Luke,” he said and she visibly rolled her eyes.

“He had it coming, being all up in my space like that.” Maria said and Mario grinned at her. “I was a immovable wall!” Mario said and Lance laughed at him, ruffling his short brown hair too. “Yeah, but that’s gonna hurt tomorrow.” he said and Mario simply rolled his eyes. “Yeah, yeah, whatever. That’s tomorrow’s problem.” Mario said and the twins turned to Keith, smiling.

“How’d you like the game?” Maria asked, bouncing as the family walked back to the van. “It was… tenseful.” he admitted and Maria smiled brighter as she linked one of her arms with his, Mario doing the same on the other side and Lance snorted at him.
“But did I do good?” she asked and Keith nodded. “I have to agree with Lance though, you would’ve won by more if you hadn’t attacked that guy.” Keith said and Maria sighed. “Of course you’d agree with Lance,” she said and Keith felt his face warm up.

“Was I a good goalie?” Mario asked and Keith turned to him and nodded. “Yeah,
I don't think I could ever be a goalie, I’d see the ball and run away,” Keith said and Mario nodded. “I feel like that sometimes, but I did that once and Maria beat me up,” he said and Maria nodded.

“It was one of the end season games and he lost the whole game because it was going for his face.” she whined and Mario pouted as they let go of Keith at the same time, getting into the van and Lance rolled his eyes as they started fighting.

“Did you have fun?” Lance asked and Keith hummed in response. “It was fun, I’ve never been that worked up over sports before.” Keith said and Lance let out a soft laugh that sent flurries flying through Keith’s stomach. “I guess games do do that to a person, right?” Lance teased and Keith saw Amelia smiling at the two of them out of the corner of his eyes.

“Yeah,” Keith mumbled as the van pulled out of the school parking lot, chatting in the car being picked up, but with more excitement before. Lance looked at Keith, trying to gain to other’s attention. “Hey, Pidge said you make animations?” Lance said and Amelia turned around in her seat and smiled at Keith.

“Is that true?” she asked and Keith nodded. “Yeah, I make a lot of random ones. I’m doing a competition this Saturday in Tennessee that is offering a scholarship for one of the colleges I want to go to.” Keith mumbled and Amelia smiled. “Well that’s a very good and healthy way to let your creative side flourish!” She said and Keith laughed at her formal use of words.

“I guess that’s one way to put it,” Keith said as Juan stopped the car at a stop light.

“Hey, winners!” Juan shouted to Maria and Mario, who stopped mid-argument to look at their father. “What do you want for dinner?” he asked and in unison, the two pumped their fists in the air. “HOMEMADE EMPANADAS!” they shouted together and Juan laughed.

“Fine, fine, I’m pretty sure we have everything at home,” Juan said and Amelia suddenly shouted, making Juan swerve a little to the right before fixing it, making everyone in the car go wide-eyed, some gripping their seats.
“Dear, give us a warning next time,” Juan said slowly, but Amelia ignored him, turning in her seat once again to look at Keith. “Do you want to join us for dinner, Keith?” Amelia asked and Keith shifted in his seat. “Uh, are you sure that’s okay?” Keith asked and Amelia nodded.

“As long as your parents are okay with it, we don’t mind.” Amelia said and Keith nodded, already pulling out his phone to text Shiro. “I’m sure they’ll be fine with it.” Keith said.

Kid “Brother” (7:04): Hey, Shiro, the mcclain’s invited me for dinner, is alright if i stay for a little longer?

Shiro The Teenage Dad (7:04): yeah that’s fine, Matt and I are watching Supernatural like you suggested.

Kid “Brother” (7:05): Matt, huh?

Shiro The Teenage Dad (7:05): ANYWAY HAVE FUN WITH LANCE

Keith smiled and turned off his phone, slipping it back into his pocket. “It’s fine, I can stay,” Keith said and Amelia clapped her hands, smiling. “Yay!” she cheered and Rebecca cheered with her from the back.

Keith leaned over the aisle to talk to Lance, who had been watching him the whole time for some reason. “Shiro’s hanging with Matt, so that works out for him,” Keith said and Lance grinned. “I swear to God, they’re literally so perfect for each other, if Shiro would just pay attention!” Lance said and Keith laughed.

“He’s got, a lot going on,” Keith said, softly. “I understand why it’s taking him a while, and that’s okay.” Keith finished and Lance laughed at that. “You sound like a guidance counselor,” Lance commented and Keith punched his shoulder lightly.

The moment Keith’s fist made contact with Lance’s shoulder, the cuban boy grabbed his hand, eyes wide as he held it. “You’re not wearing your emo gloves,” Lance noted and Keith rolled his eyes, feeling his face heat up at the contact of Lance’s hand.
“Shiro made me trip and got them all scratched up, so I had to take them off,” Keith said, trying to tug his hand away but Lance had it in a death grip. “But, it’s so weird, you’re never not wearing them, I thought you slept in them!” Lance commented and when Keith didn’t answer, Lance let Keith’s hand drop a bit.

“Wait, don’t tell me you slept with them on?” Lance said and Keith’s ears turned red as he looked away. “Omigod, you’re an emo nightmare.” Lance said and Keith punched him again, pulling his hand away fast so Lance couldn’t grab at it again.

“I’m not emo!” Keith argued as they pulled into the McClain’s driveway. “I beg to differ on that,” Rosita said and Maria nodded as she climbed out. “Oh you guys shut up, no one asked for your opinions.” Keith said and the two just laughed as they walked into the house.

Rebecca ran past Keith into the house, Miguel chasing after and Keith and Lance followed after. When they entered, Rebecca was sitting on the ground, hands on her knees as she breathed heavily and Lance ran over, gently pushing his ten year old brother out of the way and Keith stood by, not knowing what to do. The rest of Lance’s family stood around, saddened looks on their faces as they looked at the scene.

“Rebecca, breathe in slowly, out slowly,” Lance said, voice almost broken as he held his younger sister’s back. After a few moments, the small girl’s breathing was back to normal and she grinned at Lance as if nothing had happened. She put her hands on Lance’s cheeks and squished them, shaking his head a little.

“I’m all fine now! Smile!” Rebecca said, using her thumbs to stretch Lance’s mouth into a smile. Lance just nodded as she stood up and she and Miguel went into the living room. Lance stayed at his spot on the floor as Rosita retreated into the kitchen with her father, the twins retreating to their rooms and Amelia going into the living room.

Keith sat down on the floor next to Lance a little awkwardly as the other boy hugged himself. “You okay?” Keith asked, pressing his lips into a thin line. “Yeah, it’s just,” Lance looked at Keith. “She got worse,” Lance whispered and Keith looked at him alarmed.

“It did?” he asked and Lance nodded lowly. “We’ve been trying to get her to stop moving around so much but, she’s young,” Lance said and chuckled a bit. “Oh, God. I sound like my mom.” Keith rested his hand on Lance’s shoulder and looked to the side a bit.

“I think it’s good you care about her so much, she’s lucky to have a brother like you. She’ll get better, she will, because she has you.” Keith said and Lance let out a sound that sounded like a
laugh but not entirely?, and Keith turned to him. Lance smiled at him softly and looked at the had rested on his shoulder.

Almost instinctively, Keith pulled it back and Lance looked in his eyes, purple meeting blue. “You suck at cheering people up,” Lance said and laughed as Keith pouted at him. “I’m joking, I’m joking.” Lance said and stood up with Keith.

“Lance!” Juan called once they were standing. “Come help me with this!” Lance raised an eyebrow at his father, though he walked into the kitchen, Keith following behind. “What? Help you with what?” Lance asked and Juan pointed to his meat mixture.

“I need you to help Rosita fill the shells,” Juan explained and Rosita waved from where she stood, empanada shells set in front of her. “¿Por qué?” Lance whined and Juan rolled his eyes, smirking, at his son. “You do this all the time!” Juan insisted and Lance groaned again as he moved to help his sister. Keith leaned on one of the far counters, a few feet away so he wasn’t in the way.

“You help cook?” Keith asked, curiosity burning in him. Lance nodded. “Like I told you before, all the McClains can cook,” Lance answered, folding one of the empanada shells once it was filled with meat, pressing down on the edges so it would seal as he set it in a basket to be fried.

Rosita did the same as Keith and Lance talked. “Why, do you not cook?” Lance asked and Keith shrugged, watching Lance’s hands as the other worked. “If you count boiling water, cooking.” Keith answered and Rosita raised an eyebrow.

“Did you just-” “Call his mother, ‘mom-ish’? Yeah, he does that.” Lance said and she nodded as she went back to work.

“She’s not really my mom,” Keith answered and Juan grabbed the half-filled basket of raw empanadas and placed another empty basket as he walked over to the deep-fryer.

Rosita nodded, not prying any further as she balled up an empanada shell, making Lance stop her with a shout. “Rosita! ¿Qué tu estas haciendo?” Lance shouted, stopping her from putting the empanada ball into the basket. He unraveled it, fixing the shell a bit before putting it the way it was supposed to be.
“This is boring,” Rosita answered and the deep-fryer sizzled as Juan dropped a few of the raw empanadas in. “You’re 23 and still live at home for free, the least you can do is make your food correctly,” Juan called over his shoulder and Rosita sighed.

“Can’t I just go and take a nap or something? Keith can help!” Rosita whined and Juan sighed. “Fine, go to bed,” Juan said and Rosita muttered a ‘yes,’ as she raced upstairs. “Keith, you don’t mind, right?” Juan asked and Keith shook his head, walking over to the sink to wash his hands quickly.

“No, you guys invited me to stay over for dinner, the least I could do is help make it,” Keith replied and Juan chuckled. “Wish my children were more like you,” Juan answered as he pulled out the finished batch, putting them on a cooling rack before dropping in more.

“Hey!” Lance called to Juan as Keith walked over. “Not you,” Juan said and Lance smiled. “How do you do this?” Keith asked and Lance set an empty shell in front of him. “You take about a spoonful or so of the meat stuff,” Lance said, demonstrating as he put the spoonful in the center of the shell. “Then you just fold it, and press the fork around the edges to seal.”

Keith nodded. “Seems easy enough.” Keith said and grabbed the spoon Lance offered out to him, scooping up some meat before setting it in the center. Keith pulled at the shell to lift it up a little to harshly, causing it to rip a bit and Lance laughed at it.

“You need to be gentle, watch.” Lance said and grabbed Keith’s hands softly, which made Keith’s brain falter and short circuit, though Lance didn't notice as he moved Keith’s hands, “You can’t just tear it or it'll get ruined,” Lance said and Lance made Keith’s hand pick up a new shell and put the meat in. “I can do this on my own,” Keith said and Lance rolled his eyes.

“Obviously not,” Lance argued as he moved Keith’s hands again. “Grab it delicately or you'll tear it,” Lance instructed and Keith rolled his eyes as Lance moved his hands, realizing how light his grip was on the food compared to his seconds before.

“¡DEJA DE SER LINDO USTED DOS!” Maria was suddenly yelling and Lances face turned a bright red as he let go of Keith’s hands, putting a few inches in between them and turning to her. “¡CÁLLETE!” Lance shouted at her and she stuck her tongue out at him, eating an apple that suddenly appeared. Keith didn't understand what was being said and it felt really weird for him to be watching a conversation being exchanged but not understanding the context.

“What did she say?” Keith asked and Lance just waved his hand around. “Nothing.” he replied and Keith just nodded, handling the empanadas carefully.
Once they were both finished, they washed their hands and Juan let them go upstairs to Lance’s room.

The two at on Lance’s floor, silence filing the air as they looked around for something to do. Lance grinned as he looked at Keith than his bedroom t.v. “Do you wanna play Mario Kart?” Lance asked and Keith grinned back at him. “Hell yes,” Keith answered as Lance stood up and grabbed two of the controllers, setting up his Wii and t.v. before sitting back next to Keith.

“Who’s your favorite to play as?” Lance asked and Keith thought for a moment. “Luigi,” Keith answered and Lance laughed. “Seriously?” Lance asked and Keith nodded. “Yes, seriously.” he answered as the screen lit up and they chose their characters, Keith choosing Luigi and Lance choosing Toad.


“Bet you’re just saying that because you suck at it.” Keith teased and Lance pouted a little more. “It’s just a really annoying road.” he said as he clicked on Bowser’s Castle. The round started and Keith and Lance raced ahead the COM players until they were both fighting for first place, racing around the track and getting closer to the end.

“Turtle shell!” Keith shouted as he shot Lance with one, knocking Lance off the map briefly as the little guy brought him back on the map. “Rude!” Lance shouted and Keith laughed at him as he passed the finish line, placing first.

“Suck it, Lance!” Keith yelled as Lance crossed the finish line, placing fourth. “I actually hate you right now,” Lance muttered, giving Keith a death glare as the other just laughed. “Don't be a sore loser, Lance!” Keith teased and Lance grabbed one of his pillows of his bed, shoving it into Keith’s face as he pushed the other to the floor.

“You’re gonna suffocate me!” Keith laughed, voice muffled b the pillow and Lance chuckled, pushing the pillow down a little harder. “Good! Die!” Lance said, smiling as he released his hold of the pillow. Keith sat up, grabbing the pillow and smacking Lance with it, making the other teen laugh as he tried to push Keith away from him.
Keith dropped the pillow once realizing he was never going to hit Lance just as Lance’s bedroom door opened. “Dinner, losers!” Maria shouted and Lance stuck his tongue out as his younger sister, making her respond back with her own tongue as she retreated downstairs.

“You’re about to taste the best empanadas ever!” Lance said and Keith stood up, stretching his arms. “I’m about to taste empanadas for the first time, Lance.” Keith corrected and Lance gasped loudly as they walked out of his room. “You’ve never had the all so mighty empanadas before?” Lance asked and Keith rolled his eyes at him.

“Stop being dramatic.” Keith said and Lance shook his head as they descended down the stairs. “I’m not being ‘dramatic’, Mullet. I just can’t believe you’ve never had empanadas before!” Lance stated and Keith shook his head.

“I’ve had tons of foods you’ve probably never had before, it’s the same both ways.” Keith said and Lance waved his hand in the air. “Whatever,” he said as they entered the dining room. “Keith, you can sit between Mario and Lance,” Amelia called out as she set out plates on the table. Keith nodded as Lance took his seat and Keith sat next to him.

A few plates were set down, along with the baskets that Lance, Keith and Rosita had filled before with uncooked empanadas, but now filled with cooked empanadas. The plates were filled with yellow rice on one, rice and beans on another, and plain rice on the last. Two pitchers of ice tea sat in the center too and Amelia sat down.

“Dig in you guys,” Amelia said and the kids all took turns with the spoons for rice and took turns grabbing their empanadas. Lance grabbed one for Keith, setting it on his plate and Keith thanked him, mostly because Keith knew it would’ve been awkward as hell for him to try and reach into this mess.

Keith managed to scoop some of the plain rice onto his plate. After he had finished putting what he wanted on his plate, he clasped his hands together under the table, muttering quickly the word “いただきます” (Itadakimasu). Lance looked at him curiously, but didn’t comment anything as Keith picked up his empanada.

Keith took a small bite out of it and swallowed. This is really good,” Keith commented and Lance nodded as Juan thanked him. “Everything dad makes is awesome.” Lance said and Mario agreed. “Papa makes really good food all the time,” Mario added as Keith continued to eat. The table went silent for a bit as Amelia and Juan looked at each other from opposite ends of the table.

“So, Lance,” Juan said and Lance looked up at his father. “When were you going to tell us you got
a boyfriend?” His father teased and Keith choked on his bite of food, grabbing his cup of ice tea and chugging it. “He’s not my-” Lance started but Keith interrupted.

“He’s just tutoring my for finals!” Keith said and Lance nodded. “In fact, today was our last study session!” Lance added and Keith nodded, though he couldn't ignore the pang of sadness that hit his heart when Lance had said that.

“You sure?” Amelia asked and Keith felt his face flushing, yet he nodded. “Of course I’m sure,” he mumbled and Amelia stared at him for a few moments before resuming eating. Keith did the same and Lance stared at the raven haired teen for a few moments before taking a sip of his iced tea.

“I’m full!” Rebecca announced, pushing her, still mostly full, plate in front of her and her family’s expressions softened as they looked at her. “Me too!” Miguel said, pushing his completely empty plate forward and Keith raised an eyebrow at that.

The two younger children were excused from the table as the ran into the living room. Slowly, everyone else finished their food and Rosita, Juan and Amelia started to clean up the mess. Keith had offered to help but Amelia had just smiled at him. “You’re our guest Keith,” she had said. “You don't have clean-up duty.”

So now Keith sat on the couch, re-braiding Rebecca’s rainbow wig as the eight year old bounced up and down. “Rebecca! You need to calm down or it's not gonna be neat!” Keith said, laughing as she only bounced more.

Lance watched the two while Miguel tried to braid the other side of Rebecca’s wig, only succeeding in making a knotted mess.

“Oh!” Lance said suddenly, standing up and running up the stairs. Keith watched him out of the corner of his eye, but focused on french braiding. “It’s so cool you know how to french braid, Keef!” Rebecca complimented. “If Lannie ever gets long hair you should braid his hair.” Rebecca claimed and Keith chuckled at that.

“I can’t imagine Lance with long hair.” Keith stated and Rebecca shrugged as he tied off the end. “He’d look really pretty,” she stated and Keith laughed again. “Sure,” he agreed and unknotted Miguel’s side, starting from the top.

Lance returned, hiding something behind his back as he waited for Keith to finish braiding
“So,” Lance said as the younger girl and boy ran off. “Yesterday, you said you ran out of sketchbook pages,” Lance recalled and Keith nodded. “Yeah?” he said and Lance smiled.

“Are you still out of sketchbook pages?” Lance asked and Keith nodded. “Where’s this going? He asked and Lance pulled out a black, hardcover sketchbook.

“I, uh, hope you don’t mind at all?” Lance sad as he handed the book to Keith, who stared at it, confused. “And sorry if it’s like, not the right type, I’m not an artist or anything-” “It’s fine,” Keith said, smiling from his spot on the couch. “It’s good quality. Thank you.” Keith said and Lance smiled.

“No problem, but you got to show me your drawings now,” Lance insisted and Keith rolled his eyes. “Fine, fine,” he agreed and Lance cheered as Keith’s phone rang. Fishing it out of his pocket, he answered, confused as to why Matt was calling him.

“Matt? Why are you-” Keith was interrupted by a loud coughing noise on the other end and panic seized up in Keith’s chest. “Matt, what’s going on?” he asked, worried and Lance sat on the couch next to him, trying to listen in.

“It’s Shiro!” Matt yelled and Keith immediately jumped to his feet. “What’s wrong? What happened?” Keith asked, already slipping his shoes on and Maria watched from where she was still seated in the kitchen.

“We were just watching t.v. and he kept coughing, which, you know, I didn't pay attention to that much but,” Matt inhaled shakily on the other line. “But then he had a cough attack and just started coughing up blood!” Matt yelled, tears very evident in his voice.

Keith frowned and he wanted to slap himself. He should’ve known something was wrong from earlier. “Are you guys still home?” Keith asked, standing in the doorway. “Yeah, yeah, but I called an ambulance and they should be here soon,” Matt said and Keith sighed.

“Okay, I’ll be there soon,” Keith said and ran back into the living room. “Shiro’s coughing up blood,” Keith informed Lance, making the other’s eyes go wide. “I’m going to the hospital, thanks for having me, here's your tutoring money,” Keith held out a twenty, and when Lance didn't take it, he set it on the couch next to him.
“See you at school tomorrow,” Keith called over his shoulder and broke out into a run towards his house. “Don't die,” Keith muttered under his breath as he ran into his house, almost throwing off his shoes as he ran inside. Shiro was on the couch, curled up as he coughed into a small trash can. Matt sat next to him, rubbing his back and he jumped to his feet when Keith entered.

“The ambulance should be here soon,” Matt said and Shiro turned to them. “I told you, I don't need an ambulance,” Shiro said in a raspy voice before coughing again, a few drops of blood coming out of his mouth.

“Shiro, shut the fuck up, you obviously need an ambulance,” Keith stated and Shiro frowned at him as the wails of an ambulance truck was heard outside. “That should be them.” Matt said, wringing his hands together as he shifted from foot to foot.

When Keith and Matt heard the ambulance sirens outside, Matt ran to open the door, explaining the situation to one of the paramedics while another tried to steady Shiro as they carried him, well, “forced” is more accurate, him into the ambulance truck.

“Any of you two family?” the one guy asked and Matt pointed to Keith. “Uh, he is.” Matt said and the guy nodded. “Well, you,” the guy pointed at Keith. “You can come with us, you can follow us behind.” he told Matt.

“Are you sure I can’t go with?” Matt asked and the guy sighed. “Look, only one person can ride in the ambulance and since that guy’s family, it’s better for him to go,” the man argued and Keith walked up to them. “Matt, you can go, I’ll need to stay here anyway to tell Mom-ish what happened.” Keith told him and Matt smiled at him.

“Thanks Keith,” Matt said and followed the guy out to the ambulance truck. Keith closed the door and sat on the couch, looking at the time and sighing when he realized it was only 8:48 and that Kotoko or Ryuzaki wouldn’t be home for another half hour at least.

Keith picked at his jeans, knees bouncing as he waited for one of them to come home so he could explain what was happening. Keith was grateful that Kotoko didn't work at the emergency room near them or she’d have a heart attack when seeing her own son being admitted into one of the rooms.

So all Keith had o do was wait, wait for someone to come home so he could explain all this. Goddammit, he had a final in the morning, he shouldn’t have to deal with this.
At exactly 9:30, Kotoko walked into the house, raising an eyebrow when Keith ran up to her. “Shiro was coughing up blood and he’s in the Altean Hospital.” Keith explained quickly and Kotoko dropped off her work bags before grabbing her car keys and motioning for Keith to follow her.

“You said he was coughing up blood?” she asked and Keith nodded as they got into her minivan. “Yeah, he’s been coughing all day, but I didn't know it was this bad.” Keith said and Kotoko pulled out of their small driveway, driving in the direction of the hospital.

“Did his voice sound strained at all?” she asked and Keith nodded. “Okay, you made the right decision taking him to the hospital,” Kotoko said. “Though it was a bit extreme, since I think I know what this is.” she said and Keith looked at her.

“What is it?” he asked and she shook her head. “I’m not one hundred percent sure yet, so I don’t want to jinx anything.” she claimed and Keith nodded, bouncing in his seat as they got nearer to the hospital.

“It was Matt, by the way, who brought Shiro to the hospital,” Keith said once silence had draped over them and Kotoko smiled. “Oh really?” she asked and Keith nodded. “Nice of him to take care of my son, isn’t it?” she asked and Keith nodded again as they pulled into the hospital parking lot.

The two ran into the building and signed in, asking for Takashi Shirogane’s room as they raced up. Matt was sitting in a chair outside the room and waved them over. “The doctor was waiting for you guys to show up,” Matt said. “But he wouldn’t let me call you guys.”

Kotoko knocked on the room’s door and a doctor opened it, tilting his head at Kotoko, who was still in her nurse’s outfit. “I’m from another hospital,” she said quickly. “What’s wrong with my son?” she asked and the doctor moved out of the way to let the three of them in.

“He simply has bronchitis, nothing too major; it should be gone within two or three weeks,” the doctor explained and Matt and Keith let out a sigh of relief. “I thought so,” Kotoko said. “But I’m glad Matt reacted the way he did, because it could have been something more serious.”

Kotoko turned to Matt and smiled. “So thank you for taking care of my son.” she said and Matt smiled back at her. “No problem ma’am.” Matt said and Shiro coughed from where he was on the hospital bed.
“I told you I was fine.” Shiro said in a raspy voice and Keith walked over, flicking his forehead. “Yeah, but if you were coughing up blood the whole day the least you could do was tell me,” Keith said and Shiro rolled his eyes.

“You guys were just over exaggerating.” Shiro insisted and Keith frowned.

*Yeah, God Keith, no need to over exaggerate.*

*Shit.*

*Thought I was gone, didn't you? I don't leave that easily Keith. Itadakimasu.*

**Why the fuck are you here now?**

*Who knows? I only really pop up when there's some truth to be told behind one's statement.*

“Keith, you alright?” Matt asked, waving his hand in front of Keith’s face, making the other boy blink and snap his head back a little. “What? Oh, yeah, I’m fine,” Keith said.

Matt gave him a strange look, but didn't say anything as the doctor shooed them out of the room. “Now, you three can go home and rest. We’re going to keep Shirogane here so we can run some tests to make sure everything really is okay, and you can get him in the morning.” the doctor said and Keith nodded.

“It’s too late for this crap.” Keith whined and Kotoko smiled at him. “It’s not too late, perhaps if you didn't spend all of your days sleeping, then you wouldn't be so tired.” Kotko teased and Keith rolled his eyes. “I wasn’t sleeping the whole day. I was at Lance’s, his siblings are crazy.” Keith said.

“Lance!” he shouted suddenly, pulling out his phone and Kotoko laughed at him as Keith typed out a quick message to Lance.
Brittany (9:58): shiro’s alive and not dying! He has bronchi-whatever the fuck it’s called. He’s not dying but he’s still a moron.

Shakira (9:59): well that’s good I guess? Also, you left your textbooks and stuff here and the sketchbook I literally just gave you

Brittany (9:59): sorry, I was in a rush, Can you give them to me tomorrow at school?

Shakira (10:00): sure it np. You were in a rush. Ik if it were beckie, i’d be rushing too.

Shakira (10:00): speaking of beckie, she’s upset you just ran out like that. I had to explain what was going on.

Brittany (10:01): sorry again.

Shakira (10:01): like I said, it’s np.

Shakira (10:01): i should go now though, we do have finals tomorrow.

Brittany (10:02): see you

Keith put down his phone as he sat down in the back, Matt taking shotgun and they all buckled up. “Thank you, Matt for calling the ambulance.” Kotoko said and Matt turned to her. “Even if it didn’t end up being a major problem, you still did help, and it could’ve been major. So, thank you.”

Matt smiled at the woman as she pulled out of the hospital’s parking lot. “Your welcome,” he answered and Kotoko drove Matt home, waving goodbye to him as he exited, Pidge practically wrestling him for answers to where he’s been.

“Well, tonight’s been eventful, hasn’t it?” Kotoko asked as Keith moved to the shotgun seat. “The whole day’s been eventful.” Keith said and she laughed as she started driving to their house.
“Well, tell me about it.” she said and Keith smiled. “Well, after Shiro and I went for ice cream, I went to study at Lance’s.”

Chapter End Notes

sorry if this chapter's a little boring or something. I was trying to get this up by today, I haven't even seen the new season yet and I was also writing the last chapter to another one of my stories.

I hope you guys liked it! I know nothing about soccer.... if you couldn't tell.....

Anyway, see you guys soon for the next chapter, and as always, Thank you so much to Aaren, my editor, who was literally editing as I wrote last night XD.

Bye!
~L
The Final Finals Of Highschool (SUCK IT LANCE)

Chapter Summary

The last week of finals and well, a lot happens.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Week 3

Keith groaned as he slowly opened his eyes, light filling the room and he almost growled as he sat up. Keith stood up, almost immediately remembering the events from last night and ran to Shiro's room. Upon opening the door, Keith's eyes landed on a note and an empty room he frowned as he walked over to Shiro's bed and picked up the note.

Hey buddy!

I got out of the hospital but TISCH needed Matt and I to go check something for them for our next movie project. Good luck on your English final today and say hi to Lance for me >_o

~Shirogane

Keith rolled his eyes at his not-brother's note and felt his cheeks flush at the mention of Lance. Oh, and speaking of Lance, he still had Keith's bags.

He's going to forget it.

What?

Your bags, then you're gonna fail the final because you don't have your pens or pencils.

Fuck off.

Keith bit his lip though. What if Lance did forget to bring his bag? What if he failed because he
didn't have a pen? or what if he couldn't write a good essay? Or what if he forgets everything he's ever studied? What if-

Keith's phone went off, bringing him out of his thoughts as he took it out of his pocket, leaving Shiro's gym-like bedroom.

Shakira (6:32): Got your bags, Britney! Don't be late

Keith smiled and walked into his room, pulling out clothes with one hand as he texted Lance slowly with the other.

Britney (6:33): Thanks Shakira. And I'm not going to be late, we still have like, a few minutes

Shakira (6:33): yeah, yeah, whatever. see you soon.

Keith smiled at the message as he turned his phone off, changing into what Shiro calls his "Lazy Outfit," which consists of black sweatpant (even though it was almost summer), an oversized Nirvana t-shirt that Pidge constantly made fun of him for wearing and his black vans. Keith grabbed his phone and walked out the door down to his bus stop, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. Worrying for your older not-brother who was in the hospital is very tiring if you couldn't tell.

When Keith arrived at the bus stop, Lance smiled at him, handing the raven haired teen his bag and the sketchbook Lance had given him the day before. "You look like shit," Lance commented and Keith rolled his eyes. "I know." He answered and Lance grinned a bit before his expression softened. "Hey, how's Shiro? You didn't really tell me what happened after you left." Lance asked and Keith smiled.

"Shiro's fine, he's just a dumbass. He had bronchitis and Matt took him to the hospital. I think he now has the mom-approval stamp though from Kotoko to marry Shiro now though." Keith commented and Lance snorted. "Well, it's good he's not dead or anything. We don't both want to have sick siblings." Lance commented, fake smiling. Keith bit the bottom of his lip and looked at the stop sign that Lance was leaning on. "How's Rebecca?" Keith asked and Lance dropped the fake smile.

"She's getting a little upset. Mama won't let her hang out with anyone or go places anymore and she wants to see her friends and hang out with Claire and everything it's just-I feel really bad. And we're trying to help her. She keeps getting weaker too and she gets less and less hungry everyday. I just-I
want her to get better." Lance said, voice soft and low and Keith nodded. "Hey man," Keith said and rested his hand on Lance's shoulder. "It'll be fine, okay? I, uh, I did some research and most victims of leukemia do have a successful recovery. Lots of them actually. You guys just keep doing what you're doing and be there for her. And why not have her friends come over to your guys house sometimes? That way she still gets to interact, and if she's home you guys can watch her and stuff."

Lance smiled as he looked at Keith's hand then at Keith. "That sounds like a good idea, dude." Lance said and moved forward, wrapping his arms around Keith tightly. "Thanks man!" Lance said and Keith stood frozen in the others embrace.

_Oh dear, the pining is just too unbearable!_

_Shut the fuck up._

"Keith, dude, hug back or this is gonna get really awkward." Lance said and Keith nodded, slowly and softly wrapping his arms around Lance before the cuban boy pulled away. "Thanks!" Lance said and the bus pulled up as the group of them got on. Once Lance and Keith were seated in their normal spot and the bus had taken off, Lance turned to Keith, taking out one of his notebooks. "Pop quiz time!" Lance shouted and Keith groaned.

"Noooo," Keith groaned out, burying his face in his backpack, which was settled on his knees. Lance laughed at the other's reaction. "Yes, dude. It's extra practice right before the test, just to make sure all my wonderful tutoring hasn't gone down the drain." Lance said and Keith groaned again. "Fiieeeennn," he whined out and Lance laughed at his reaction again. "Good! Okay, so, what is the definition of central idea?" Lance asked and Keith frowned as he lifted his head from his bag. "It's the thing," Keith started and Lance held back a smile due to tiredness. "Where like, you say the idea of the passage or article fuck thing and it's like, two or something sentences long. Something like that."

Lance chuckled and nodded. "Okay and next, what is-" "Are you two studying?" Acxa interrupted from the seat behind them. Lance and Keith turned their heads to look at the girl and nodded. "Yep! I'm quizzing this moron so he gets everything correct for the final," Lance said and winked at Acxa. Acxa smiled at Lance softly before turning her attention to Keith, smiling a little wider. "Keith, I heard you were going to an art college?" She asked and Keith smiled at her. "Cool!" Acxa said a little too loudly and covered her mouth in embarrassment as others around her turned to the trio. "Uh, I'm going to one too, but I bet it's not the same college. I'm going to one in California." She stated and Keith smiled at her. "California schools are good, I'm going to one in New York though." Keith said and Acxa nodded smally. "Well, we might run into each other during our debuts, you'll have some competition out there for you, Keith. You better watch out." Acxa teased and Keith grinned.
"You sure? Maybe it'll be you who has to watch out." Keith said back and Lance cleared his throat awkwardly, turning both Acxa's and Keith's attention to him. "I'm going to college to be a doctor," Lance said and Acxa nodded in acknowledgement. "I think that suits you very well, Lance." She stated and Lance smiled, wiggling his eyebrows at her. "Yeah?" he asked and she just laughed a bit before sitting back down in her spot. "I think she likes you, buddy," Lance said, poking Keith's cheek.

Keith rolled his eyes. "She's into girls, Lance." Keith said. "And besides, she's my cousin." Keith added and Lance's ears turned red in embarrassment. "Oh, uh, sorry, then." Lance mumbled and Keith smiled at him, poking his cheek teasingly. "It's okay," Keith said and the bus pulled into the school as everyone stood up. "You ready for Hell?" Lance said loudly and a group of people all groaned "no," in unison. "Fuck, I rule Hell," Keith mumbled and Lance laughed at him as they walked over to Hunk, Rolo and Nyma, who were waiting outside for them.

"'Sup Kogane." Rolo said and Keith grinned a bit. "The falling angels." Keith replied and Rolo chuckled a bit. "They won't let us inside until finals start," Nyma informed and Keith and Lance nodded. "We also have to turn in our phones and everything at the door," Hunk added as he hopped onto one of the school's brick walls.

"It's the morning, I don't wanna have to deal with this shit," Keith groaned as he leaned on the wall next to Rolo. Rolo nodded. "Agreed to that." Rolo stated and Lance almost scowled at him. "Well, if you don't want to take this test, you can just fail," Lance mumbled and sat next to Hunk, who looked at him curiously. "Don't be a dick, Lance." Keith called from his spot and Lance rolled his eyes as Rolo just chuckled at Lance's response, which made the cuban boy frown even more.

"Uh, I'm going to take Mr. Gumpy here on a walk, be right back." Hunk said and grabbed Lance's arm, dragging the other, pouting boy along with him far away from their group of friends. "Dude, what is wrong with you?" Hunk asked and Lance rolled his eyes. "Nothing," he mumbled and Hunk raised an eyebrow.

"Okay, fine. It's just, I really don't like Rolo," Lanc started and Hunk sighed in annoyance. "Like, he's cocky, he's standoffish, he pretends he's like, all knowing. And Keith for some reason thinks he's sooooo great! Like, Keith, c'mon! Just open your eyes! Rolo isn't all that great! Keith should hang out with me, not that blonde, prick head." Lance ranted and Hunk sighed. "Are you jealous?"

"Nooo," Lance mumbled and Hunk smiled. "Why would I be jealous of Rolo?" Lance said and Hunk laughed a bit. "You like Keith," Hunk claimed and Lance's eyes widened a fraction and his cheeks turned flaming red.

"No I don't," Lance claimed and crossed his arms, turning his head away. Hunk smiled and poked his friend's cheek. "Ooh~ Lance has a crush!" Hunk sang and Lance pouted. "You've been spending too much time with Pidge," Lance whined and Hunk grinned. "Hey dude. It's fine. If you actually do have a crush on Keith, you can tell me." Hunk said and Lance nodded. "Whatever." Lance mumbled a bell rang, signalling that finals were beginning. "Time for Hell!" a girl yelled as she ran past Lance.

The way finals were scheduled out for Voltron High was that all seniors (other grades had already taken their tests a few weeks ago) would take a certain final on a certain day. Monday was the English final, Tuesday was the science final, Wednesday as the social studies final, Thursday was mathematics and Friday was all extra curricular things, like music, art, gym and languages.

Depending on what subject it was, they'd have part one of their test in the morning, there'd be an hour lunch break, then they'd take part two and leave school at 2 o'clock. Which meant testing all day long for the students.

Keith sat in his spot in the cafeteria, other desks and students around him already writing. Part one of the English final was to write an essay, but Keith sort of sucked at writing things, or writing anything in general. Keith bit his bottom lip as he grabbed his pencil and read through the passage he was supposed to base his essay off on. Keith frowned as he read through it multiple times before remembering what Lance had told him one time while studying. "If you annotate along the way, then it makes the whole gist easier to find and it's easier to find evidence."

Keith went through his passage, underlining and highlighting sentences and facts that seemed important to him before moving along to the essay part. All he had to do was write about the central idea and theme. Not that hard.

In fact, Keith finished through his entire essay with a half hour to spare. He smiled to himself as he put his papers together, turning it over. He looked around him to see a few others still writing away, though most people were now taking a nap or staring off into space. Keith could see Lance with his head down as he took a nap a few desks away from him and Hunk just played with his pencil. Nyma was currently braiding sections of her hair and Rolo was just resting back in his seat when he caught Keith's eye.

Rolo smiled and waved at Keith, who waved back smally, trying not to catch the attention of any teachers. Rolo pointed at his test and grinned. It was easy, right? Rolo mouthed at Keith who nodded. Totally, he mouthed back, smiling as some of the teachers started to go around and collect
papers.

They let everyone out ten minutes later for their lunch break as they got the next part of the test ready. Keith met up with Rolo, who was waiting by the door and grinned up at him. "It was hard at first, but then it got easier," Keith claimed and Rolo nodded as the two of them started to walk to the outside cafeteria (since the inside one was being used for testing). "I guess so. I just don't like all that annotating crap," Rolo claimed and Keith shrugged. "Eh, it helped me figure out what I was doing." Keith claimed and suddenly Rolo and Keith were being pushed aside from each other by Lance squeezing himself in between them.

"Hey dude," Rolo said and Lance ignored him, slinging his arm around Keith. "Hey man! How was that test? Did my amazing tutor techniques help you any?" Lance asked and put his hand under his chin, grinning at Keith. Keith rolled his eyes and smirked, pushing the other away from him. "Nah, not at all." Keith said jokingly. Lance stuck his tongue out and looked behind him as Hunk and Nyma ran up to them.

"That was easy!" Hunk shouted, smiling and Nyma nodded in agreement, twirling one of the tiny braids she had made between her fingers. "Very," She claimed as the group walked into the cafeteria. "Truth or Dare?" Lance asked as they sat and Keith looked at him as he sat in between Nyma and Rolo. "Like, with our own dares and crap?" Keith asked and Lance rolled his eyes as Hunk sat next to him as Nyma and Rolo pulled out their lunch bags.

"Duh," Lance answered and Nyma shrugged. "Sure, why not?" She asked and took a bite of her sandwich. Rolo and Keith nodded in agreement, twirling one of the tiny braids she had made between her fingers. "Alright! Nyma you ask someone since you were the first to agree!"

Nyma looked up at the sky for a moment and smiled, turning to Hunk. “Hunk! Truth or dare?” she asked and Hunk thought for a moment. “Truth.” He answered.

“Okay, uh,” Nyma paused and then smiled. “If you had to choose between being naked for the rest of your life or having all of your thoughts appear in a bubble above your head, which would you choose?” Hunk raised an eyebrow at the question and shrugged.


“Dare!” Lance answers immediately. Hunk grinned at his friend then looked at Keith before darting his eyes back to Lance. Lance’s eyes widened and Hunk turned to the rest of the table. “I
“Dare you to sit in Keith’s lap until it’s your turn again.” Hunk stated and both Lance and Keith stood up.

“What?!” Lance shouted at the same time Keith shouted “Why me?!” Hunk smiled at his friend. “Why not you?” Hunk asked and Keith’s face flushed as he angrily sat back down.


The two stared at each other for a moment with red faces until Lance inhaled and plopped himself on Keith’s lap. The other let out a strange squeak but turned back to the table to face the others.


“Nah man, a real man chooses truth. Doing a dare doesn’t prove anything, but choosing truth lets others ask anything about you and you have to answer.” Rolo shot back, grinning widely and Keith laughed a bit. “Whatever,” Lance huffed out.

“So, truth,” Lance mumbled, thinking. “What are your feelings for Keith?” Lance asked and Keith’s face flushed. Rolo smiled and looked at Keith, then Lance. “What do you think?” Rolo asked, then winked.


“Don’t let him brainwash you!!!” Lance shouted again and Keith rolled his eyes. “Have you ever heard of this amazing thing called ‘shutting up’?” Keith asked and Lance made a strange offended noise as Nyma and Hunk laughed. “Okay Keith, for your truth,” Rolo started and Lance kept yelling something, but no one really listened to him.

“If me, Nyma, Pidge, Hunk, Shiro and Lance and I were all drowning and you could only save two people, who would you save?” Rolo asked and Keith thought for a moment. “I’d let Lance drown,”
Keith said and Lance gasped dramatically. “I’d leave Pidge because she could probably save herself. I’d save you Rolo because you’re cool and I’d save Shiro because he’s my brother.” Keith answered.

“No offense to you two,” Keith said to Nyma and Hunk, who just shrugged. “It's fine.” they said. “Okay, Hunk, truth or dare?” Keith asked and Lance crossed his arms, subconsciously leaning back into Keith.

Keith put his hands on Lance’s waist absentmindedly as Hunk thought. “Truth,” Hunk answered and Lance grumbled something about them all being lame. “Okay, Hunk, do you sleep with a stuffed animal?” Keith asked, saving his evil truths for people like Lance.

“Yes! I have two of them! I have one named Balmera that’s a blobfish and another named Clip-Clop that’s a hippo. I got the second one when I was like, five.” Hunk said and smiled. “Oh! I love hippopotami!” Keith said and Lance snorted.

“Of course you’re one who would love hippos.” Lance said and Keith punched his side, making Lance squeak out in pain. “You’re on my lap, it just makes it easier to fight you,” Keith commented and grinned. “Keef is harassing me!!” Lance whined and Keith frowned. “Lan is being boring!” Keith retorted and Rolo laughed along with the others.

A school monitor walked over, blowing a whistle, telling them all to go back inside. “Get off of me,” Keith said once Hunk threw out everyone’s lunches. Lance crossed his arms. “Uh, nope!” Lance decided and Keith frowned.

“Get off of me,” Keith repeated, and Lance smiled, leaning back into him again. “Nah, I like it here.” Lance said and Keith could feel his cheeks heating up.

*He’s only trying to annoy you.*

*Remember, he didn't even want to sit on your lap in the first place.*

*Shut. The. Fuck. Up.*

“Lance, so help me, I will throw you off of my lap.” Keith threatened and Lance just laughed. “You probably can’t even lift me!” Lance declared and suddenly the cuban was being lifted up
into the air as Keith stood up, cradling the other in his arms before dropping him onto the concrete.

“Dude, you’re strong,” Rolo commented as Lance let out a pained grunt. Keith just shrugged. “Yeah, whatever.” Keith mumbled, ears red as he turned his head away. And Lance stood up, glaring at Rolo.

“Okay, you know what!?” Lance shouted and grabbed Keith’s arm, dragging him into the school. “So we’re going inside, away from that loser Rolo, and we’re going to take our test.” Lance declared loudly and Keith raised an eyebrow. “What do you have against Rolo? I thought you guys were friends or s’mthin’?” Keith asked and Lance pouted as they walked into the cafeteria.

“I don’t have anything against him, I have no clue what you’re talking about.” Lance claimed and Keith sighed. “You’ve been rude to him lately. And you keep insulting him,” Keith replied as he was dragged to his seat.

“Nope, don’t know what you’re talking about.” Lance debated and let go of Keith as he walked to his own seat. “Whatever, you’re impossible.” Keith claimed, sitting in his seat as he waited for the rest of the students to sit down.

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Needless to say, the second part of the test was much easier, the only thing it was about mostly was english vocabulary words and answering questions about a few short stories. Keith was pretty sure he aced it as he set his pencil down, looking at the clock on the wall and sighing when he noticed there was still another half hour until he could go home.

Sighing, Keith leaned back in his chair, looking around him, realizing most people were still taking the test. Keith frowned and leaned forward, burying his face into his arms, closing his eyes.

So, now that you’ve got free time-

Shut the fuck up.

But I’ve got a list here about how horrible you are and how much you suck! I was going to read it to you!
How about you fuck off and go fuck yourself?

Keith. I’m just stating facts. Like for example, your art SUCKS. Also, Lance’ll never love you. And your friends are faking it. And the Shirogane’s are going to make you move to another foster family. And you’ll be the loser all over again. Also-

GODDAMMIT YOU MOTHER FUCKING-

Keith sighed out loud, this was stupid. He was thinking at a random voice in his head. Maybe he does belong in a psych ward.

Yeah you totally do!

Keith rolled his eyes as he tried to sleep, but the voice wouldn’t shut up.

There’s only a week left you know, until the dance. Lance hasn’t asked you, probably because he doesn’t like you, but you haven’t asked him yet. If you like him so much, why don’t you ask him? Or are you a coward? You’re a coward, that’s it, a useless, pathetic coward.

Keith tried, he always tried, but he reaaaally tried this time, to block out the voice. Because now it was hurting him, making him feel pain that he shouldn’t be feeling since it’s not like he and Lance were dating. Pain he shouldn’t feel because it’s not like Lance rejected him, or broke up with him.

Keith was just someone, of probably a lot more, who had a crush on Lance. There were so many others that probably liked Lance, knew him better than Keith did himself. Who’ve had a crush longer and probably deserve to be with the other more than he did.

Yes, there are so many people out there that are better than you and deserve Lance more than you. You’re just you, dumb, un-talented, you. No one’ll ever like you, Shiro’s probably going to kick you out, you’re going to fail that competition, Pidge will leave you as a friend, Rolo’s totally faking it, Hunk will never talk to you again-

It took the administrators dismissing them for Keith to realize he was even crying. People around
him were getting up and turning in their tests and grabbing their stuff to go home. Keith kept his head down and he knew he was getting looks from kids around him, but he didn't raise his head.

Didn't raise his head as his classmates all left, didn't raise his head as James “accidentally” bumped harshly into his desk, he just didn't raise his head.

Suddenly, there was a hand shaking his shoulder, mumbling his name. Keith barely even comprehended the voice before the other person was taking his test papers and handing them in for him. The person came back and knelt down next to him, shaking his shoulder again.

“Keith?” the person said softly and Keith immediately recognized it as Lance. “I’m fine,” Keith mumbled out, feeling his voice break as he squeezed his eyes shut harder. “Keith, you’re obviously not,” Lance said, voice still soft as he looked at the other.

The room had cleared out, even the teachers in charge had rushed out with the group of kids, leaving Lance and Keith alone. “Keith, nobody’s here, you’re fine.” Lance said as he turned back to Keith.

The raven haired teen kept his head down for a few more moments before lifting it up slowly, hair covering his eyes. Lance’s expression softened a whole ton when he saw the tears dripping off of Keith’s chin.

“Keith,” Lance started but Keith shook his head. “Not right now,” Keith’s voice came out broken and it saddened Lance. “Please.” Keith mumbled and Lance nodded.

“No problem!” he said, trying for a cheery tone. “We should proooobably get out of here though before they lock the place up.” Lance added and Keith nodded smally, grabbing his pencils off his desk and bag from the floor. “Sure,” he mumbled quietly and Lance grinned, though it was forced.

Once they were outside, Lance led Keith to a small area that was excluded from other students as they waited for their bus. “Hey, Keith, you okay?” Lance asked softly, hands on Keith’s shoulder.

Keith slowly looked up at Lance, purple looking into blue, and Lance gasped quietly. Keith’s purple orbs were glossy and puffy, tears streaming down his reddened cheeks and his mouth was twitching slightly. “I’m fine,” Keith mumbled and Lance deadpanned.
“That’s exactly what un-fine people say.” Lance answered and Keith let out a small sob. “It’s fine you-you don’t hafta-you don’t need to worry abou-about me.” Keith said, sniffling as he turned away from Lance.

“Okay, no you shut up sir.” Lance said, taking a step forward and Keith immediately hugged himself tightly, almost cowering away from Lance. “You can trust me, okay?” Lance added softly.

“I can trust you?” Keith mumbled, barely audible and Lance nodded. “It’s the stupid voice.” Keith mumbled and Lance bit his lip. “It’s the stupidest thing and I know I shouldn’t listen but it’s just-It won’t shut up!” Keith complained, stomping his foot like a toddler and covering his ears. “I hate it,” Keith muttered and Lance moved forward, wrapping his arms around his torso.

“Keith,” Lance said soothingly as Keith started to shake in his arms, hands falling to his waist. “It’s alright, okay?” Lance whispered and Keith nodded, hugging the other back and burying his face in Lance’s shoulder.

Lance started to rub small circles into Keith’s back as the other started to calm down a bit, crying softly into Lance’s shoulder as he hugged him tightly. And wow, okay, Keith’s hair smelled really good, and he was, kinda cute like this? All vulnerable and everything? And he can be really nice and he gives really nice hugs.

Stop it Lance, Keith needs reassurance, not some random feelings out of nowhere, comfort the other guy dammit!

After a few minutes of hugging, Keith stopped shaking and pulled back a little, looking at Lance. Lance smiled sheepishly at him and used one of his hands to push Keith’s hair back a little and Keith glanced away, cheeks bright red, though Lance was pretty sure it was from him crying.

“Thanks, or whatever, I guess.” Keith said and pulled fully away from Lance, taking a step back and turning away a little. “No problem dude, you’re my friend!” Lance said, though the word sat with him weirdly.

Keith nodded a bit and rubbed at his eyes, though they had already dried, before walking out of the small area. “The bus is late,” Keith mumbled, looking out at the crowd of kids still laying on the lawn. “Yep,” Lance said a little awkwardly as they walked over to the grass.

“Where’s the others?” Keith asked, voice still soft a quiet and Lance shrugged. “Hunk had a ride
home, I know that. And I think Pidge said something about Nyma having dance classes or something after so she might’ve already left. And I have no clue where Rolo is.” Lance answered and Keith nodded, going through his book bag and pulling out his sketchbook.

“Ooh, whatcha gonna draw?” Lance asked and Keith’s ears turned red. “I-uh, If you don't mind, I was going to draw….. You.” Keith answered, biting his lower lip and looking down a bit. Lance felt his own face flush but he smiled.


“Fine, whatever, just, don’t move.” Keith said and Lance tried to keep in place as Keith started to sketch across his paper. Silence ensued and Keith’s pencil scratched across the paper, sketching out the draft lines for Lance’s face.

The raven haired teen smiled softly as he drew, looking up at Lance occasionally to get the perfect reference.

After around five minutes of Keith sketching, the bus pulled up. Lance got ready to get up but Keith held his shoulder. “No wait, I gotta take a picture for reference.” Keith claimed and pulled out his phone, snapping a few pictures before standing up.

The two got their things and boarded their bus in silence, Keith popping in his earbuds and turning his head away from Lance. Lance sighed out as he watched the other out of the corner of his eyes.

Lance wished he could help Keith, wish he knew what was bothering him so he could help, wish he could help Keith with the….. Voice or whatever he had said. It hurt Lance to see his friend acting like this, but it hurt even more that he didn't know why.

The bus screeched to a stop, pulling Lance out of his thoughts as Keith stood up, Lance following right behind him. After they got off and started walking, Keith took out his earbuds, but remained silent.

The quiet was extremely unnerving to Lance, but he didn't say anything, didn't want to make Keith uncomfortable even though there were thousands of thoughts and questions running through his head at once.
When they got to the McClain’s household, Keith waved goodbye to Lance before continuing down the path home. Lance watched him leave in silence before he walked into his own house.

“Idiot,” Keith mumbled under his breath as he walked home. “You just had to cry, fucking moron.” Keith inhaled shakily as he shoved his earbuds into his pocket, staring at his feet as he walked down the sidewalk to his home.

As he pushed open the doors, he kicked off his shoes, looking up to find the house completely empty.

Keith dragged his body to his bedroom, flopping onto the bed and closing his eyes as he drifted off into slumber.

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“Keith, this is your seventh family you’ve gotten sent back from,” Lauren, his caretaker, stated to Keith, who sat in a chair in her office. “I know,” the teen muttered under his breath. “Do you know why they keep sending you back?” Lauren asked, voice soft.

“Because I’m ‘angsty’, because I’m gay, because I mess everything up,” Keith ranted. Lauren sighed, looking through his paperwork on her desk. “I’m afraid that is why. Keith, I’m worried for you.” Lauren said, softly.

“It’s fine, in two years I’ll graduate highschool and can go to college and no one will need to keep me.” Keith mumbled and Lauren looked at with sympathy. “Keith-” “It’s fine, I’ll just go back to my room.” Keith mumbled, standing up and walking through the orphanage, past the many rooms full of other kids.

Keith flopped onto his own bed, burying his face into his pillow and letting out a small scream. Why didn’t people want him? Why was he so horrible? People never even wanted to adopt him, they just kept him for a bit through the foster program before they grew tired of him and sent him back.

No one wanted him and the only way he was ever going to get out of here was when he became old enough to survive on his own.
“Okay everybody, put on your good outfits, a family is coming today!” Lauren called a week later, waking Keith up from his slumber. She popped into his room, a kind smile on her face. “I know you’re tired of this Keith, but please get ready,” she said softly.

Keith groaned and dragged himself out of his bed as he opened his only suitcase, pulling out his black t-shirt and jeans to get ready.

An hour later and all the kids were gathered in the living room, clean and presentable, fed and washed. Keith looked at some of the other kids and frowned when he realized most of the older kids were all gone.

“Oh! Keef! You’re back!” Sofia said, running over to him. It had been a week since the teen got back, but he hadn’t left his room. Keith nodded sadly at the girl as she grabbed his hand, playing with his fingers.

“Sorry you’re back,” she said sadly and Keith smiled at her. “It’s fine,” he said and before they could continue talking, the doors opened and three people were standing in the room now next to Lauren.

“Everyone, say ‘hello’ to the Shirogane family!” Lauren said and all the kids waved at the family except for Keith, who turned his head away.

“Ohmigod!” Keith shouted as he sat up in his bed, looking around his room. It was darker now, signaling he had been asleep for a while and he could smell food, meaning either Shiro or Kotoko were back, and considering that Shiro couldn’t cook for shit except for breakfast related things, Keith guessed it was Kotoko.

Keith rubbed at his face as he dragged himself out of bed, shaking his head to get rid of the random memories out of his head as he walked down the hall.
“Finally the dead has risen,” Shiro commented when Keith flopped on the couch next to him.
“Shut up,” Keith mumbled, running his fingers through his hair, only for it to get caught on a knot.
“How was testing?” Shiro asked, letting out a short cough, eyes still glued on the T.V. in front of
him that was playing South Park.

“Boring as Hell,” Keith answered. “But easier than last year.” Shiro smirked a little, eyes flicking
to Keith before back to the T.V. “That’s ’cause Lance helped you this year.” Shiro replied and
Keith smacked his leg.

“Shut up,” Keith grumbled. Shiro smiled, coughing again harshly into his elbow, making Keith
jump a little as he looked at his not-brother.

“You okay?” Keith asked and Shiro nodded before the two fell into silence, watching the show
until Kotoko came to get them for dinner.

“Boys, time for dinner,” she said and smiled upon seeing the two watching T.V. They all walked to
the kitchen, Ryuzaki coming back from his home office and sitting down next to them at the table.
Once they had said their thanks and started eating, Kotoko spoke up.

“Remember, Ryuzaki’s going back to, where, dear?” Kotoko asked, turning to her husband. “It’s
Korea this time,” Ryuzaki answered simply and Kotoko nodded. “On Wednesday so we’re going to
have a big dinner before he leaves, so don't forget to be here.”

Keith nodded as he shoveled a forkful of rice into his mouth. “Sure,” he mumbled and Shiro
nodded. “No problem.”

They ate dinner, talking about random things such as Ryuzaki’s work or Kotoko’s patient, or
things like Shiro’s school project or Keith’s competition this weekend. It was a mostly peaceful
and calm dinner, ‘cept for when Shiro was coughing violently into his arm.

They all knew he’d be fine but it was still unnerving to hear such a harsh and ugly sound come
from their family, from anyone. Especially when Shiro was still in the process of coughing up
specks of blood.

Once Keith had finished, he excused himself from the dinner table, falling asleep again once his
head hit his pillow. What was up with him and sleep lately?
Keith crossed his arms and sat in his chair, watching as the family parents talked to all the kids and tweens around the orphanage. They had been told that nothing would be final and that the family was adopting yet, but they were looking for a kid to foster for the time being.

Keith took out his phone and popped in his earbuds, blasting Whitney Houston as loud as he could, tuning out the world.

Someone sat next to him, startling him out of his thoughts and he paused his music, pulling out his earbuds. “Hey,” the family’s son said to him and Keith pressed his lips together, looking to the side before he looked at Keith.

“Hi,” he said awkwardly back and the older man chuckled. “I take it you don’t like people?” The man asked and Keith shrugged, sitting back in his seat a bit. “Not really,” Keith mumbled and the other guy laughed.

“My name’s Takashi Shirogane, but you can call me Shiro.” The man said, sticking out his hand. “Keith Kogane,” Keith replied, looking to the side. “You can call me Keith.” Shiro shook his hand and smiled.


“Korean on my mom’s side and American on my dad’s side,” Keith said, hesitant with the words ‘mom’ and ‘dad’.

“That’s cool, do you speak the language?” Shiro asked and Keith shrugged his shoulders a bit. “aju yaggan, T/N: very little” Keith responded with. Shiro smiled widely. “That’s great, what were you listening to?” Shiro asked, gesturing to Keith’s phone.

Keith felt his ears turn red and bit his lip and Shiro caught on. “It’s okay if you don't want to tell me, I was just curious.” Shiro said and Keith nodded.

Jesus, you can’t even tell a stranger, who isn’t going to want you in his house, what you were listening to? Loser.
“It’s uh, I Wanna Dance With Somebody by Whitney Houston.” Keith answered quietly and looked up when he heard laughter. Shiro noticed him looking and waved his one arm around, covering his mouth to stifle his laughter.

“No, I’m sorry, I’m not laughing at you it’s just-My mom says I have old taste in music, but I can prove to her otherwise if you also listen to it.” Shiro said and grinned. “I love Whitney,” Shiro finished and Keith smiled a bit.

“She’s great.” Keith agreed and the two broke into small talk about bands and 80’s music they liked, coming across the realization they liked a lot of the same music.

Sometime during them talking, the parents of Shiro had come over and Keith had suddenly remembered why Shiro was even there.

They don’t want you, you’re not gonna get picked.

That thought wouldn’t stop him from talking to Shiro though, the guy seemed really cool.

“Hey, Takashi, who’s this?” a small, plump woman asked, looking at Keith with a warm smile. Shiro grinned. “This is Keith. He likes 80’s music too.” Shiro said with a smirk and the woman chuckled a bit before turning back to Keith.

“My name’s Kotoko,” she introduced and Keith nodded. “I’m Ryuzaki,” The man next to her said and Keith nodded again.

“So I see you’ve gotten to know Shiro a bit,” Kotoko commented, sitting next to Keith as all the other kids in the orphanage watched.

“Oh, yeah, he seems cool,” Keith replied lamely.

Wow, such a great conversationalist Keith.

“So his friends say,” Kotoko said and giggled a bit. “I seriously think Matt needs a new friend,” Kotoko said to Shiro who stuck his tongue out at her.
“Matt Holt?” Keith asked without realizing and the three of the Shiroganes turned to him. “Yeah, you know him?” Shiro asked and Keith nodded, curling up a bit from the attention. “Uh, yeah, I’m friend’s with his sister, Pidge.” Keith said, shifting a bit.

“It’s a small world, ain’t it?” Kotoko said with a smile and Ryuzaki nodded. “Shiro here has a crush on Matt,” Kotoko said, nudging her son with a smile and Shiro’s face flushed.

“That’s we just met Keith don’t bombard him with my love life!” Shiro said and it took Keith a few minutes to realize what had just happened. Shiro, a boy, had a crush on Matt, a boy, and Kotoko was alright with it.

She was alright with it.

This woman was suddenly his favorite woman to exist.


The four of them all talked for a bit more, and in that short amount of time, Keith learned a lot about this family, like how Shiro had gotten his scar because he had tried to do a trick on his skateboard but fell, and that Kotoko loved to cook, especially with eggs, and that Ryuzaki had been to so many places in just this one year alone.

But as it neared the afternoon and other kids were already being sent to eat, Keith started to think. Why were they still here? Didn't they have to interview the other kids? Why were they wasting time on him? Was it just a joke?

Soon though, Kotoko had cleared her throat and stood up, smiling at her family. “Well, I think our decision is obvious,” Kotoko said and Shiro nodded while Ryuzaki stood up with a smile.

Decision? What decision? Why were they even still here, what was going on? “Keith,” Shiro said, looking at his parents then at Keith. “Would you like to be part of our family?” Shiro asked and it was like Keith’s entire world froze.

“What?” Keith asked and the three smiled. “Do you wanna come home with us? Of course, it’s just fostering so we don’t know how long it’s gonna be,” Kotoko said with a smile.
There’s still a receipt on you, that’s what she’s reminding you, you know.

Keith inhaled shakily. “Are you guys serious?” he asked softly, looking from each person. “As serious as a science teacher.” Shiro responded and Keith laughed a bit.

“O-ok, I guess? Yeah?” Keith mumbled and Kotoko cheered. “Great, we’ll go get Mrs. Montgomery and we’ll fill out the papers.” Ryuzaki said, leaving to go get the woman.

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When Keith had walked into the house, he hadn’t known what to expect. It was small and homely, but he wouldn’t have asked for any other place better than this.

It’s only temporary

Keith frowned a bit at the thought but went to take a step forward before Shiro grabbed his arm. “Shoes off, it’s a rule.” Shiro said and Keith nodded, kicking off his Vans as he grabbed hold of his suitcase again, dragging it into the house.

“So,” Kotoko said, turning to Keith with a bright smile. “Your room is down the hall, across from Takashi’s and next to mine and Ryuzaki’s!” Keith nodded.

“Thank you,” he mumbled.

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“School time!” Shiro shouted, startling Keith awake, making the raven haired teen fall off the bed. Shiro snorted at him and walked over.

“Test time!” Shiro said loudly again and Keith pulled his shirt over his face.
“Noooooooo,” he whined and Shiro started to tickle him. “Yes, you lazy bum, get up!” Shiro said and Keith wheezed out as he tried to curl away from Shiro, clutching his sides.

“Screw you!” Keith shouted out, kicking Shiro as the other man laughed at Keith. “C’mon, today’s your science final and Pidge threatened to break into the house like eight times.” Shiro said as he stood up, grabbing Keith’s ankle as he started to drag him across the floor.

“I haaaaaat e you,” Keith groaned as he tried to wrestle away from his brother, trying to grab at the floor. “Love you too, bro.” Shiro chuckled, dropping Keith’s leg with a thump before he turned to walk out of the room.

“Pidge’s waiting in the living room, by the way,” Shiro said, coughing as he left the room. Keith glared at his wall and stood up, throwing his blanket onto his bed as he got dresses, questions running through his mind.

Why was he having memories of meeting the Shiroganes? Why were these memories popping up out of nowhere? Why was it all so clear like it had happened yesterday?

*Dreams normally have a bigger meaning behind them.*

Keith frowned. Yeah, dreams did tend to have meanings, but what was the meaning of *this* dream? Why those memories?

Keith tried to shake away the thoughts as he changed into his clothes, barely having time to pull his pants up all the way before Pidge bursted into his room.

“!!” (mos-sseuge mandeulda, T/N: *Fuck!*) Keith shouted, as he turned around to see the teenage girl giggling at him. “I like when you speak Korean.” Pidge stated and Keith rolled his eyes, changing his shirt, not bothered by Pidge watching him.

“I only know a little.” Keith said and Pidge shrugged as he pulled down his shirt. “Well, maybe you should study or something.” Pidge suggested as Keith brushed his hair. “I’m fine with not knowing it.” Keith said and Pidge nodded. “So, are you ready for science today?” Pidge asked, an evil-ish grin plastered on her face.

“I’m mostly ready to get the day over with.” Keith answered and Pidge snorted, pushing up her
“I’m only staying with Shiro today because Ryuzaki and Kotoko are going out for Ryuzaki’s last full day here and Shiro’s still recovering so I gotta make sure he doesn’t die or some shit like that,” Matt claimed and Pidge sighed.

“Whatever.” She whined and sat down at one of the bar stool chairs, grabbing a plate of eggs and bacon. Shiro walked into the room soon after, smiling widely at Keith as he noticed he was up and about.

“He lives!!!!” Shiro said and Keith flipped him off as he sat next to Pidge, shoving food into his mouth. Matt smiled adoringly at Shiro as he passed him a plate of food, sitting across from his sister as Shiro sat next to Matt.

“So, you two ready for science Hell today?” Matt asked and Keith shook his head. “Nope,” he answered as Pidge groaned, slamming her head down onto the table. “I hate being smart.” She whined out and Matt laughed.

“It’s a blessing and a curse,” Matt said in a deep voice as Kotoko cleaned up her cooking mess in the background at them. “Mostly a blessing,” Pidge stated and grinned. “Says you,” Keith mumbled and Pidge only grinned wider.

“So how’s Lance?” Pidge teased and Kotoko whipped around. “Yes, how is he?” she asked, bumbling around now, looking for something to do.

Keith’s face flushed a deep red as everyone turned to him and he shoved a piece of bacon in his mouth. “How about we don’t talk about him and we pretend the Earth doesn’t center around me, please.” Keith mumbled and Pidge frowned.

“But that’s my juicy gossip! I need to fill my gossip quota today!” Pidge whined and Keith flicked her forehead, making her gasp in mock horror and shove a face full of eggs into her mouth. “Rude much,” she mumbled and an alarm went off as Keith stood up.
“Go, go!” Kotoko said, shooing him and Pidge out the door as they grabbed their stuff. “Have fun!” she said and the two groaned in unison.

“You know,” Keith said as he walked to the bus stop. “I am not going to miss walking down this sidewalk everyday.” Pidge grinned and turned around so she was walking backwards. “Oof, mood,” she said, smiling at Keith.

“So, I was thinking, after you totally win the art competition this weekend, we should have a truth or dare party, y’know?” Pidge suggested and Keith bitch-faced her. “I’m not gonna win,” he stated and she rolled her eyes.

“Fine, in the unlikely event you don’t win, it’ll be a cheering up party, yeah?” She asked and Keith sighed heavily. “Fine, sure, whatever, just make sure Shiro knows so he doesn't flip his lid,” Keith informed and Pidge snorted.

“Sure, sure, I’ll tell Space Dad.” Pidge joked and Keith raised an eyebrow. “Why space?” he asked. “Cause he and Matt like to do all those sci-fi movie shit and make those stupid space films with the robot cats,” Pidge said.

“Don't let him hear you say that, he’d be upset.” Keith joked and Pidge snorted. “Yeah, he’d be all, ‘Don't insult Voltron like that!’ He and Matt both treat there fucking short films like a baby.” Pidge declared and Keith nodded. “Amen to that!” He agreed and Lance ran up to them as they got to the bus stop.

“Yo! Keith-Dude!” Lance shouted and Keith smiled at him despite himself. “What’s up?” He asked and Lance looked from Pidge to Keith before Pidge walked over to the stop sign, a few feet away from them.

“You okay and everything?” Lance asked in a quiet voice, placing his hand on Keith’s shoulder and Keith decided he was definitely in love with the cuban boy. Keith smiled softly and looked at Lance with adoration in his eyes.

“I’m fine dude, thanks though for checking in.” Keith said and Lance smiled. “Good! Then do you wanna come over to my house today to play Mario Kart?” Lance asked and Keith snorted as they walked over to Pidge.
“You just want to try and beat me again, don’t you?” Keith asked, grinning at him and Lance held up his hands in surrender. “True. I’ve been practicing against Maria yesterday and I think I’m ready to beat you now!” Lance proclaimed and Keith and Pidge both laughed at him.

“Dork,” Keith said and Lance’s cheeks flushed. “You shut up!” Lance said but he smiled anyway and Keith smiled right back…… Until he saw Pidge giving him a knowing look out of the corner of his eyes and he turned away.

“Bus is here,” he stated dumbly and Pidge almost laughed at him as she bolted to the bus.

~~~

The rest of the day went by faster than Keith would appreciate. Long answer testing in the morning with a few lab tests they had to do for each part, but other than that, Keith thought it was really easy. They had lunch with the normal crew, played truth or dare like normal and nothing exciting happened then except for when Hunk got Shay to join them but that was it.

After lunch was multiple choice questions for testing and that went by a lot faster than before, since it was a lot easier. Most questions were from biology and chemistry, which to Keith had been easy.

Once the day was done, Lance met up with him in the grass and Rolo joined them, everyone else already having a ride home.

“How is our bus always late?” Lance whined and Rolo laughed at him as Keith proceeded to continue his sketch of Lance, looking at the picture he had taken for reference.

“Because it’s rush hour right now and the bus has to come later than it’s usual time,” Rolo answered simply and Lance almost glared at him.

“But all the other buses do get here on time, so there should be no real reason as to why our bus is the only one not here,” Keith added to what Lance had said. Lance pointed at the raven haired boy. “Exactly!” Lance shouted and Rolo ignored him, trying to look over Keith’s shoulder at his drawing but Keith shrunk away from him.

“I don’t like prying eyes.” Keith said, voice a few octaves higher and Rolo settled back into his
spot. “Understood,” he said and took out his phone. Lance had simply watched this exchange, a feeling of jealousy twisting in his guts as Keith’s cheeks turned a flushed red.

“Bus is here,” Lance said, standing up and grabbing Keith’s wrist and dragging him away from the now, very confused blonde. “Dude,” Keith said as he was pulled away. “Dude,” Keith repeated as he was pulled onto the bus. “Lance,” Keith tried but Lance didn't listen, sitting next to him and turning his head in silence.

“Lance, man, are you okay?” Keith asked, shaking his shoulder. “I’m fine,” Lance said and Keith narrowed his eyes a bit. “That's what un-fine people say.” Keith said, repeating the same lines he used on Shiro a while ago, and the same ones Lance had used on him.

“It’s really nothing, it’s stupid,” Lance said and sighed, running his hand through his hair and smiling at Keith. “Just forget it, okay?” he said and Keith stared at him for a moment before nodding. “Sure,” He mumbled and the rest of the bus ride was spent in silence.

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“Mario Kart!!!!” Lance yelled as he opened up the door and Keith followed behind, rolling his eyes. “Aw no fair!” Rebecca yelling as she ran over to them.

“I wanted to play!” She whined and Lance stuck his tongue out at her playfully. “Loser weepers,” he said and picked up the smaller girl, swinging her around in circles while she squealed with happiness. “Give me to Keefy!” She said and Lance swung her over to the raven as she held out her arms.

“Keef!” She screamed and Keith laughed a bit as she clung to him like a koala, almost immediately playing with his hair by fluffing it up. "How have you been?" Keith asked and Rebecca smiled. "I've been good!" She said. "I get dizzy a lots now and I can't hang out with Claire, but I still see her at school and we play board games, except they aren't boring."

Keith frowned a bit at her and looked at Lance, who was now frowning at the ground with his hands in his pockets. "But! Tomorrow, Mama and Papa are gonna take me out for dinner at the buffet for a treat! And it's just me!" She cheered happily and Keith let out a small, fake chuckle. "Oh really?" He asked and she nodded her shining head, which held a bright pink baseball cap on it with a small cat on the front.
"Can you put me down now? I wanna go show Miguel something," Rebecca asked Keith, who obliged as she took off running upstairs. "Is she getting worse?" Keith asked in a low voice and Lance, still looking at the ground, inhaled shakily before looking at Keith.

"Yeah," Lance said, voice broken. "I know."

Silence was exchanged between them before Lance clapped his hands, face breaking out into a wide smile. "So Mario Kart, yeah?" He asked and keith nodded smally, putting his book bag down.

Keith watched Lance walk in silence before he followed, choosing not to ask him anything he didn't want to answer.

“Do you finally wanna try and beat me at Rainbow Road instead of chickening out again?” Keith asked and Lance stuck his tongue out at him. “Hacker,” he claimed, though he still clicked the route as they set up the game.

“So,” Lance said as the game started and Keith went shooting forward, making Lance frown a bit. “There’s a more updated version of Mario Kart, with harder roads and everything,” Lance started and Keith hummed in acknowledgement as he got to Lap 2.

Lance’s own Kart went flying off the screen and he was knocked down to 8th place. “Cool,” Keith said with a grin. “You get that and I can beat you again, but newer.” Keith simply teased and Lance laughed a bit.

“That’s what you think, but I’ll show you,” The Cuban challenged as he went soaring off the map again, finally hitting Lap 3.

Keith scoffed as he set his remote to the side, having finished his own lap, he turned just in time to see Lance drive off the map, again. “Oh yeah, you’ll definitely show me,” Keith said mockingly and Lance frowned as he finally made it across the finish line in 11th place.

“Shut it, Kogane,” Lance said, but he smiled affectionately as he looked at the other. The two held eye contact for a few moments before Keith inhaled sharply and turned his head, looking back at the screen. “How about we do an easier road for you, since you totally suck at this,” Keith declared and Lance pouted again.
“Mooshroom Meadows?” Lance said, but didn't wait for an answer as he clicked on said road. The round started again and Keith’s Kart went flying forward which made Lance frown again. “How do you do that?” Lance squeaked out as his Kart went zig-zagging through other Karts, right behind Keith.

“Secret start-up,” Was the only response Keith gave as their Karts raced each other, battling for first place.

The front door was opened and someone dropped their keys on the table in the main hallway. “¡Estoy aquí!” Rosita called out and Keith briefly looked over Lance’s shoulder to see her bustling about in the front door, kicking off her shoes and hanging up her jacket.

“Buenas tarde, Lance,” Rosita said and she noticed Keith, a grin stretching across her lips as she leaned in the archway leading to the living room. “Hello Keith,” she said, reverting to English.

“¡Sale!” He shouted, red faced and she cackled as she raced up the stairs.

Keith laughed at the exchange between the siblings and Lance shrugged, trying to feign ignorance.

“She’s just being weird,” Lance claimed and picked up his remote again, selecting Bowser’s Castle. “I thought you’ve been practicing,” Keith joked and Lance wrinkled his nose. “I only lose ‘cause of that stupid ‘secret start-up’ you do.” Lance declared and Keith snorted.

“It’s easy though,” Keith was met with silence and he sighed. “During the count-down, after it hits ‘2’, you hit your start button,” Keith informed and Lance looked at him skeptically.
“Sounds fake. Isn’t that how your engine backfires though?” Lance questioned and Keith shrugged, turning to the game. “Choose to believe me or not, it’s your choice,” Keith stated.

*He’s not going to believe you, he doesn't trust you.*

Keith shook his head and focused on the screen.

Lance bit his lip the moment the countdown started and after a split second of debate, he pressed his ‘go’ button, and the moment the countdown ended, his Kart went flying forward and his eyes widened.

“Woah what the fuck?” He exclaimed and Keith laughed at him as they both went racing down the bridge. There was a sharp turn that Keith drifted on and Lance let out a noise of frustration.

“Okay, how the hell do you know all these tricks?” He asked and Keith laughed. “Press ‘1’ to drift, obviously.” Keith answered and they continued racing, Lance winning the round this time.

“Haha! Suck it Keith!” Lance yelled and then covered his mouth, remembering his little siblings were home. “Shit,” he mumbled and Keith laughed at his reaction. “Uh, let’s start another,” Lance said and randomly clicked another road.

Keith grinned and pushed up his jacket sleeves, making Lance look over and his eyes widened as he grabbed Keith’s arm, lifting it up.

“Keith!” Lance shrieked, holding his wrist up for inspection and Keith’s ears flushed. “What?” He asked, though he already knew the oncoming question. “What are these?” Lance said, voice high pitched as he pointed at the white scars along Keith’s arms.

“I-they’re old, you don't need to worry,” Keith promised and while yes, indeed, they were all very old and there were no new ones, it still made Lance concerned to look upon them. “I-I’ve been to some very violent and harsh foster homes,” Keith started, looking to the side as Lance continued looking at his wrist.

“A-and my parents killed themselves because of me. Don't think I wouldn’t just be fine with that.”
Keith paused, refusing to look at Lance as he tried to pull his arm from Lance’s iron grip. “I-I’m still not just, fine with it, I’ve-uh, I’ve gotten over it, I gu-guess.”

*Lies. You’re a liar Keith, you haven’t gotten over it, you just ran out of room.*

Keith took a shaky breath and tried to meet Lance’s eyes, looking up to see pity in the blue eyes he loved so much. God he hated pity. Keith bit his tongue and looked down again. “Look, I don’t want sympathy, I’m fine now, give me back my arm.”

*Liar.*

“You’re my friend you know, I don’t want you just disappearing without me knowing.” Lance said softly and Keith had to remember to breathe, suddenly realizing how close Lance’s face was to his. If he just leaned forward a few inches…

*He doesn’t like you, he just feels sorry.*

Keith turned his head but didn’t move back, simply staring at the screen and he realized that the race had already started, had probably started a while ago seeing as how he was in 12th and Lance was in 11th place.

“You Keith,” Lance said moving forward the slightest and Keith ducked his head a little more, shoulders going up to his ears.

“It’s fine, it’s in the past, Lance.” Keith mumbled, pretty sure his face was burning red at the moment. “You can’t change the past.” Keith was vaguely aware of how hot his cheek felt where Lance’s hand was.

“I-” Lance started but was interrupted. “Ooh!!! What’s happening in here?” Maria whistled and the two teens pulled away from each other, Keith tugging at his beanie and bringing it over his ears.
“It’s not like that!!” Lance shouted at her and she winked, leaning against the door as her eyes trailed down, stopping on Keith’s arm and Lance followed her gaze. “Hey what’s-” “Maria, sale.” Lance commanded, voice tight as he spoke. Maria frowned as she took a step forward. “But I just-” “Vete.” Lance said, voice tight and annoyed but Maria didn't listen. “I’m just trying to-” “¡Váyanse!” Lance shouted and threw a couch pillow at her. She got the hint and ran to the game room, leaving the two in peace.

Lance turned back to Keith with a soft look in his eyes that made Keith’s heart stutter.

_You’re a pathetic mess, he won’t love you._

Keith wiped his eyes, trying to make the tears go away. “Can we-Can we just-” Keith inhaled and turned to the television, grabbing his remote and avoiding looking at Lance. “Can we just finish the fucking game please?”

Lance nodded and grabbed his own remote, turning back to the game and unconsciously leaning his leg against Keith’s so their sides were up against each other. Keith inhaled sharply, though it went unnoticed by Lance as they restarted the match.

An hour or so had passed before Lance tried to break the thickening silence. “So, I still don't have a date to the senior dance,” Lance started and part of him said he should ask Keith. Lance shook that thought away and inhaled. “So I guess both gonna be lonely losers,” Lance joked, laughing slightly and Keith hummed in acknowledgment.

Lance frowned a bit as Keith’s eyes stayed glued to the race and he sighed, turning his remote to avoid hitting another Kart.

“Do you wanna hang out again on Friday?” Lance tried again. “To like, celebrate not having to take finals anymore?” Keith’s hair fell into his eyes as he looked down, twiddlings his thumbs as he set down his remote.

“Yeah, sure,” Keith replied. A beat of silence passed as the race was finished. “Do you wanna do something other than Mario Kart?” Lance asked, trying once more but Keith just breathed in shakily.
You’re dampening his mood Keith.

You’re ruining his fun time.

“I think I—” Keith cut himself off, ears burning red. “I’m going to go home, Lance.” He said apologetically and Lance nodded, frowning. “Uh, y-yeah. See you tomorrow man.” Lance said as Keith grabbed his stuff, not noticing Maria running behind him right to her older brother.

Keith walked out the door, inhaling shakily and willing himself not to cry on the short walk home.

Jesus, can’t even get through one hangout without crying? Pah-the-tic.

Weak.

Keith inhaled deeply once more, pushing back all and any tears he felt as he trudged on home. By the time he was close to his house, he felt mostly in control of his emotions and knew he wasn’t going to cry, until he saw a familiar car in driveway.

Keith’s eyes widened when he read the license plate and then he quickened his pace, opening the door and kicking off his shoes almost instantly, walking into the living room as all conversation stopped and papers were being rustled around.

“What are you doing here?” He asked and she smiled at him, though it was a smile Keith had seen all too often. “I was just sorting out some stuff with the Shirogane family, no biggie!” She said in a chipper voice that would always greet Keith whenever he was sent back to the orphanage.

“Well, I’ll be on my way,” Lauren said as she walked to the doorway. “Thank you for coming Ms. Montgomery!” Kotoko called out and that was when Keith noticed that all three of the Shiroganes were there.
“Hello Keith, how was Lance’s?” Kotoko asked, a smile plastered on her face almost as if it were forced.

*They’re sending you back.*

*They don't want you anymore.*

*You’re too fuck up.*

“Fine,” Keith said, voice an octave higher as he adjusted his book bag strap. “I’m going to go finish up a drawing now.” he said and before anyone answered, Keith walked to his room, plopping on his bed after he locked his door.

Keith buried his face in his hands, shoulders shaking as tears fell, but no sound came out.

*Pathetic.*

*Weak.*

*Useless.*

*Unwanted.*

*Unloved.*

Keith let these thoughts fly around his head until he eventually fell asleep from exhaustion.

~~

When Keith awoke the next morning, his head hurt from crying and he felt dehydrated. He groaned as he pushed himself out of bed, frowning when he saw it was only five in the morning.
Still, he forced himself to get up and to take a shower, mind blank as he moved almost robotically throughout the house, getting changed and then even studying a bit.

Maybe Shiro was right, he should get a therapist, at this point he was barely even functioning correctly, seemingly having more and more breakdowns as he went on. Maybe this would happen until he had more and more breakdowns until one day he finally just…

No, Keith thought, shaking his head. He wasn’t going to think about that. Instead, he pulled out his phone, groaning when he read the time was still only around 5:30 and texted Pidge, knowing the phycotic younger girl was probably still up.

“Keith! My dude! What’s up!” Pidge said, voice full and energetic as there was noise in the background of probably her family dog and her own dog, Green.

“Lance saw my scars yesterday,” Keith said, looking down at his arm. “Is it that big of a deal, you don't exactly hide them? Or is it because he’s Lance and he made a big deal out of it?” Pidge asked, pausing to yell at Bae Bae to sit down.

“The second one,” Keith said and Pidge hummed. “You’re okay though, right? It doesn't matter if it’s Lance, if he made you cry or anything, I will fight him you’re my best friend.” Pidge said and Keith smiled the smallest.

“No, he-he didn’t,” Keith said and there was a beat of silence. “But…. it did?” Pidge asked slowly and Keith hummed. “Yeah, Pidge,” Keith inhaled, knowing he could trust Pidge. “I think it’s getting worse.”

“Well yeah, no shit,” she said, but there was no malice to her words. “Keith, I really think you should see someone about this.” Pidge claimed.

“I know, but I already know what they’re going to say. ‘here take this medicine and this medicine, you’re borderline insane, but take this!’ They can’t just fix this problem Pidge.” Keith explained.

So it’s a problem now???

“A hoe,” Pidge answered immediately and Keith laughed. “Ding ding ding, you are correct!” Keith said with a smile, looking at the Hamilton poster he had on his wall, signed by the cast from the time he and Pidge had gone to see it on Broadway (which had been a very long drive).

“I should probably get ready for work,” Pidge grumbled. Since she only had to come in a few days for her finals, having already done the others last week, she had gotten a job at Lost Levels Game for the summer, taking almost everyday free so she could get money. She also played all the gaming machines one hundred times and had the highest score.

“Yeah, you go do that, I’m going to draw.” Keith said, already taking out his sketchbook and opening to the page with the picture of Lance on it.

“See you dude, and the next time I see you, I’m going to hug attack you,” she said, voice deeper and threatening. “That is the scariest way to be cheered up,” he said but laughed before the two said their goodbyes and hung up.

It was still only around 5:45 when they finished and Keith cursed the Earth for time moving slowly as he opened his gallery, smiling at the pictures of Lance he had taken for reference before picking up a pencil and starting to shade the jawline lightly, starting to add value to the picture instead of just lineart.

Almost the moment he finished shading and highlighting on about half the picture, his alarm for him to leave went off. Keith smiled, thinking about how drawing always made time seem to fly faster as he shoved all his stuff in his bag, walking out of his room and bumping into Kotoko, who quickly reminded him to be home by 3:30 that afternoon before she disappeared again.

Keith walked to the bus stop in a strange mood, feeling content at the same time as he was dreading school, feeling worse about his whole ‘Voice’ situation and talking to Lance, knowing the other would ask about the day before hand.

Keith wasn’t going to lie, yesterday had been a mess. Well, actually, understatement. It had been a trainwreck just because he couldn’t handle memories of the past but when Lance had pointed out his scars…. All he could do was feel the emotions he had had when putting those cuts there, remembered how fucked up his life was and how helpless he was.
Which had sent his emotions spiraling and when he had come home to Lauren, most likely there just because Keith was going back to that dreadful orphanage….

Keith inhaled shakily and froze, realizing he was at his bus stop and he allowed himself to breathe, shifting his extremely light bookbag on his shoulders, which contained his sketchbook, pencils and pens and his phone.

“Keith, my man!” Lance shouted, slinging his arm around Keith’s shoulders from behind him, almost giving Keith heart attack as he let out a quiet yelp. “No beanie today?” Lance asked, looking at Keith’s hair, which was free of it’s normal beanie and tied into a small ponytail at the nape of his neck.

“It’s too hot for that hat anymore,” Keith simply answered, cheeks flushing from Lance’s closeness and Lance stared at the ponytail. “Looks good on you,” Lance stated simply before removing his arm from KEith's neck and throwing his hands up in the air, not noticing Keith’s tomato red face.

“Soo!!! My mom’s taking me and my siblings out to the mall later this afternoon and I’m going to buy the newer Mario Kart so I can prove I’m so much better at the game then you are.” Lance said and grinned. Keith scoffed.

“You keep saying that but you’ve only won 2 out of 38 games.” Keith pointed out and Lance rolled his eyes. “But I’m getting better ,” Lance said and Keith simply just laughed as Zethrid made her way to the stop, sitting in the grass as she texted someone-probably Ezor.

“Do you ever think about how we only have a two weeks left of school? Not even, this is it, our last year of forced school before we’re adults.” Lance said to Keith and Keith bit his lip, looking to the side. “Yeah, can’t wait,” Keith mumbled.

Lance looked at him strangely, eyes shining unusually as if filled with tears before it was gone, and he was smiling brightly. “Alsooooo~” Lance sang out.

“Pidge tells me, that little Mister Talented here is doing an art competition this Saturday!” Lance said and Keith shrugged. “It’s nothing all that major, I’m probably not going to win anyway.” Keith muttered, kicking at the ground a bit.

“Okay, well if you don’t win I’ll gouge out the judge’s eyes because they obviously aren’t using
them if they don't pick you for the winner,” Lance simply stated and Keith chuckled. “You’ve been hanging out with Pidge too much,” Keith said and that was the end of the conversation.

~~~

The rest of the day went by pretty fast for Keith, he took his Document Based Questions part of his final in the morning and then his multiple choice test in the afternoon, then went home. Not once had Lance mentioned the events of yesterday and the only remotely amusing thing that had happened was when Rolo had sat next to Keith and Lance pushed him aside.

Keith still didn't understand that whole situation though, he had thought that Rolo and Lance were friends, he remembers them chatting sometime at the beginning of the month about his whole tutor thing. Why and when had it changed?

Whatever, it wasn’t any of Keith’s business and he wouldn’t, shouldn’t, butt into other people’s drama, he had too much of his own. Speaking of which….

“Keith! Are you all dressed and everything!!” Shiro yelled, straightening his own white button up shirt. Keith rolled his eyes and gestured to his own black polo and jeans. “For the sixth time Shiro, I’ve been ready FOR HALF AN HOUR!” Keith shouted and Shiro ignored him, running into his room to put on his shoes as Keith walked to the living room.

The four of them- Kotoko, Ryuzaki, Shiro and Keith- were all going out to a fancy restaurant as a family before Ryuzaki left to go on his business trip that night. Also, Kotoko said she had a few things she wanted to discuss with them that was important for all of them.

“Are you-” “Yes,” Keith said and Kotoko just smiled at Keith in response, her bright red lips stretching across her features. “Okay, go get into the car, we’ll be leaving soon, once I find my purse that is.” Kotoko mumbled the last part and walked off and Keith nodded, pushing up his sleeves to his elbow and grabbing his phone before walking out to the car with Shiro, the two of them cramming into the backseat.

Keith opened up his phone and flipped through social media apps when suddenly the sound of a camera shutter went off and Keith looked up, eyes wide as Shiro grinned. “Why’d you take a picture of me?” KEith asked as Shiro typed away on his phone.

“Just texting Rosita so she can show this to Lance,” Shiro responded before clicking a final button
“Why do you feel the need to show Lance what I look like?” Keith pouted, crossing his arms as a piece of his hair came loose from his tight ponytail. “I feel like a friggin’ Ken doll.” Keith mumbled and Kotoko and Ryuzaki entered the car.

“Okay kids!!! Dinner time!” Kotoko said as she started the car.

~~~

The dinner was mostly uneventful, except for Keith running into James Griffin from school, Griffin glaring at Keith before walking off with Ryan Kinkade.

At least, the night was uneventful, until Kotoko gathered their attention.

“Attention to all of thee!” She said and smiled, clinking her spoon against her glass quietly. “So, I would like to tell everyone that,” she inhaled and smiled. “I have news.”

Keith leaned forward in anticipation and the other two males did the same. “And the news is very important.” Kotoko said, trying to stretch out the wait.

“But Ryuzaki and Takashi already know what this news is, so it’s more news for Keith.” Kotoko said and Keith pouted a bit. “Can you just tell me what it is?” he asked and she chuckled.

“Oh, okay.” Kotoko clasped her hands together before grinning again. “Because you are such a wonderful kid, we decided to foster another kid, buuuuut, according to Ms. Montgomery, you know her. And was close to her.”

*They’re getting another kid because they don’t like you. And it’s a girl, so they can be a perfect family, because you ruined it you know.*

“Her name’s Sofia?” Kotoko said and Keith’s eyes widened. “Holy shit she’s still there?” Keith asked, voice strange and higher pitched and Kotoko smiled and nodded. “But not for long, because she’s going to be your sister!” Kotoko announced and Keith leaned back to think for a moment.
Sofia, a girl, who’s younger than you, not a complete mess in life, kind sweet, gets along with everyone.

The opposite of you.

“Holy shit she’s gonna be my sister.” Keith said quietly and the three Shiroganes looked at him as he blocked out the Voice in his head, smiling widely and covering his face out of embarrassment.

“The little twerps gonna be my sister,” Keith said, laughing a bit as he looked up.

Sure, Sofia was everything he wasn’t, the Voice made that clear, sure they might like her better, sure she argued with him before, but she had been the only constant in Keith’s life at the orphanage, the only one who’d talk to him, who would be there for him whenever he got sent back. Why no one had adopted her before was the real question.

“Keith?” Shiro asked, the other boy having been silent for a while. “Thank you,” Keith mumbled through his hands and Ryuzaki and Kotoko smiled. “The only thing is you and Shiro are going to have to share a room once she gets here.” Ryuzaki added in and Keith shook his head.

“I don't care, I’m just-happy.” Keith breathed out. It wouldn’t matter about the sharing a room thing anyway, Shiro mostly always slept on the couch, at Matt’s or at his summer job. And the two would be going to college at the end of the summer anyway. Well, Shiro would be going back.

“She’ll be here for your graduation next week.” Ryuzaki added and Keith grinned even wider.

She’s just your replacement.

Yeah, well I don't give two shits about it.

~~~

The next day at school, Keith was beaming, a smile on his face and Pidge had brought it up a few
times during their lunch break.

“Why is math so hard?!” Hunk groaned and Pidge snorted at him. “It’s not all that hard buddy.” She teased as she stole one of his fries. “Easy for you to say, you’re two years advanced.” Hunk retorted and Lance laughed at that, turning to Keith. “By the way, how was your dinner last night?” Lance asked and Pidge’s head turned towards him.

“Oh, yeah, you said you wanted to tell me something?” Pidge asked and Keith nodded, hardly even being able to keep his good news in any longer. “You remember Sofia, right, from the orphanage when you’d come to visit?” Keith asked and Lance and Hunk went silent, watching the two.


“Really?!” She shrieked and Hunk and Lance looked at the two in confusion and Keith turned to them.

“When I was-” Keith bit his lip, talking about the orphanage/foster home was always hard for him to talk about with others besides Pidge and Shiro. “When I was at the-uh, the place, I only had one friend, well, besides Pidge. But, uh, she was this little girl, when I had gotten there, when I was twelve, she had been six, but now she’s twelve. Anyway, we basically grew up together there.”

“I would always, I would-” Keith bit his lip again, trying to push down any anxiety and bad memories that came up when he talked about the orphanage. Especially that one. “When I got taken into foster homes, and they’d send me back, she’d always be there for me. We told each other everything and she always apologized whenever I got back. She’s the sweetest thing ever and now, I get to live with her, officially, like in a family.”

Lance nodded, Hunk’s eyes glazed over at the tearful story and he hugged his friend, making Keith laugh as Lance watched with a sort of somber look. “She should come over and play with Rebecca sometime,” Lance said and Keith nodded, the two staring at each other for a beat too long before Pidge snapped her fingers, bringing the two out of the little space.

“Hey, not to interrupt anything but, here comes Rolo.” Pidge said, almost in a warning tone, though Keith didn’t notice as he turned around, grinning to the blonde that was making his way towards them. Lance crossed his arms though, rolling his eyes.
“He could’ve just continued eating with Nyma and Callum, but noooo, he just had to come over here, didn't he?” Lance said under his breath and Pidge laughed at him.

Keith didn't hear them as Rolo finally met up to him, nodding at him as Keith started to tell him about his good news, Keith wanting everyone to know about his situation, for…… some…. reason.

Rolo smiled at him, eyes shining and he went to ask him something once he had finished telling him everything but was cut off by the bell. Lance, for some reason, was glad for the bell telling them to go back to testing, because for some reason, whatever Rolo wanted to ask, he didn't want to hear Keith’s answer.

Lance walked over to Keith before Rolo could and grinned at him. “Do you wanna hang out at my house tomorrow after school? To celebrate being done with our tests?” Lance asked.

Keith shrugged. “Sure, I guess. But can we not play Mario Kart this time, I wanna do something else.” Lance nodded. “Sure, I haven’t even mastered all the new routes on the new game, we can watch Buzzfeed Unsolved.” Lance said and Keith immediately smiled brightly, despite having to go back to testing.

“Mothman video first and then every other video ever.” Keith said and Lance rolled his eyes playfully. “Of course you’d be one to believe in Mothman.” Lance teased. “He’s out there!” Keith said seriously and Lance laughed and ruffled his hair.

“Sure he is,” Lance said and Keith growled a bit. “He is!”

~~~

“Theory,” Lance said Friday afternoon as they were sitting on Lance’s couch, only a hand away as they watched on Lance’s T.V. They had hooked up Lance’s XBox so they could watch Youtube like it was television.

“Shane’s a demon.” Lance finished and Keith rolled his eyes. “He’s a human being, Lance. This isn’t Supernatural or anything.” Keith complained and Lance turned to him, pausing the video much to Keith’s protest.
“When he and Ryan went to Goatman’s bridge he was completely fine with the idea of a devil goat
due. He even tried to call him out. That is not a normal human thing to do,” Lance started and
Keith smiled.

“Also, when he said ‘hey demons, it’s ya boi,’ what does that mean? Because he can’t just mean it
as like, being a meme or anything. He said it like he knew the demons.” Lance theorized and Keith
laughed lightly at him, eyes soft and adoring as he looked at Lance.

“You’re starting to sound like me when I talk about Mothman or Bigfoot.” Keith said. “Well that’s
because you believe in cryptids.” Lance retorted. “I believe in science, dude.”

“Shane being a demon isn’t science!” Keith shouted. “Says you,” Lance retorted. “I can’t believe
you’re so uncultured, we can’t be friends anymore.”

“Aw, Lance c’mon!” Keith said teasingly, grabbing Lance’s arm. “We had a bonding moment! On
the bus! I cradled you in my arms!” Keith shook the cuban and Lance laughed.

“Nope! Don’t remember it! Didn't happen! I never had a bonding moment with an uncultured swine
who doesn’t believe in demons!” Lance joked.

Suddenly, Maria popped her head into the living room, face covered in dirt. “Is he trying to
convince you Shane’s a demon?” She asked and the two older boys gave her a once over.

Maria’s twin braids were staticky and loose, mud and dirt streak her face and body and her soccer
uniform was torn at the bottom of her shorts. Her nose was bleeding too and there was a small knot
on her forehead.

“Did you get in a fight?” Lance asked and Maria shrugged. “Yeah, I lost.” She said sarcastically.
“Uh, no, not really. At soccer practice, I tripped and Clarisse and Luke tripped over me.” Lance
tsked.

“You gotta be more careful, is Mario still at practice?” Lance asked and Maria nodded. “I got sent
home for ‘reckless behavior’, which is bullshit you know.”

“LANGUAGE!” Rosita’s voice came from the kitchen and Maria jumped. “HOLY SHI-” “DON’T
FINISH THAT!” Rosita yelled again, running into the living room, shirt covered in flour as Miguel
followed her, perfectly clean except for the frosting dot on his nose.

“Becky may not be here but Miguel still is, Missy!” Rosita lectured, pointing a finger at her younger sister. Keith watched the exchange then looked at Lance, as if he was just now realizing the other’s youngest sibling wasn’t here.

“Where is Rebecca?” Keith asked and suddenly Rosita and Maria’s arguing went silent, the room quiet enough you could drop a pin and it would cause an earthquake. “Voy a seguir horneando,” Miguel mumbled and left the room. Maria pointed upstairs and mumbled something about getting cleaned up and Lance said he needed to go check on Blue and he’d be right back.

“Where is Rebecca?” Keith asked again and Rosita sighed, sitting next to him on the couch. “She’s, Becky’s gotten worse.” Rosita said, voice soft and dark and Keith’s eyes widened.

“She’s started having a harder time doing things, she got so weak she couldn’t even open doors, she kept throwing up and had no appetite. She’s been admitted back to the hospital.” Rosita’s voice was shaky, as if she were holding back tears.

“How is Lance dealing with all this?” Keith asked softly. “He seems to care for her a whole lot, I imagine he’d be freaking out a lot more.” Rosita inhaled shakily before locking a him with a smile. “Lance is freaking out, but not as much as he would’ve.” Rosita said and Keith tilted his head in confusion.

“What do you mean?” The raven haired boy asked curiously and Rosita smiled softly, turning more to the younger boy. “He’s not freaking out. If he had lost everything, he would, but he still has one thing,” Rosita said and Keith looked at her. “And what is that?” “You, Lance still has you, Keith.”

“He’s not falling apart because he still has you, and I’m so, so grateful for that, because he is still holding it together. He needs to hold it together for us, and for Rebecca.” Rosita ranted. “What do you mean it’s because he still has me? What does that mean?” Keith asked and Rosita smirked a bit.

“You’ll just have to wait and see, won’t you?” Rosita responded before standing up and walking away from Keith.

Okay, what the fuck?
“I fed Blue!” Lance shouted, running into the room with a smile on his face that startled Keith. “That’s-uh, that’s good.” Lance either didn't notice Keith’s change in mood, or didn't care to comment on it as he hit play on the Buzzfeed Unsolved video and leaned into the couch. “Oh shit, I just remembered they started a new season, Lance said and went off rambling about something or other, but Keith wasn’t paying attention.

What did Rosita mean he still has Keith left???

What the fuck does that mean?!?!

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Okay! So, note to readers!!! Sorry this update took so long!!! My laptop broke a little while ago and I have to use my mother’s laptop to write but she has her own needs for her laptop so I can’t always have access to it. I hope you guys liked this chapter and thank so much for all your support. As always, special thanks to my editor!!! And thanks to my siblings who kept giving me (horrible might I add) ideas for this that make people cry. Also, did you cry?!?! I hope so!!?> God i love being cruel XD. seriously though, I’m going to try and have the next chapter out before next season, but i said that last time and look when I posted, almost two months after (no wait, over two months after).

Please forgive me for slow updates and I’ll see you next chapter (Whenever that is) and goodnight (it is 11 p.m. when I finished this, Satan please help me)
Chapter Summary

Keith and Pidge go to the animation contest. That was supposed to be the only eventful thing. Not panic attacks, someone running out of the house and mixed up dreams.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Keith was sitting on the couch waiting for Pidge’s friends to come pick him up. Apparently, Pidge had some film club friends that were also doing the contest and had a car to give the two of them a ride. “It’s going to be awkward, I don't know them.” Keith claimed and Pidge shrugged as she checked her camera battery for the one hundredth time.

She had been told by their club teacher to take pictures even though her last club meeting was next week, her club advisor wanted to get a head start on next year. “If you had stayed in film club, maybe you would’ve gotten to know them. Besides, L and Aaron are pretty cool. I don't think they’ll judge you too harshly or anything.”

Suddenly a car horn could be heard outside and Pidge hopped to her feet. “That’s them!” She said and Keith grabbed his jacket, phone and sketchbook, walking out nervously.

“Yo! Tiny demon c’mon!!!” A girl with black hair shouted that Keith recognized as the girl with red hair from a while ago that had stopped him on the bus, quoting Hamilton at him.

“Oh hey you’re Aaron Burr, Sir.” the girl said as he approached and he just nodded a bit as he and Pidge got in the back.

Keith buckled up his seat belt, adjusting himself in the backseat. “Are you guys cosplaying?” Keith asked, eyeing the two’s strange clothing. “Yep!” The girl with black hair answered, fluffing her hair up a bit. “By the way, Keith! My name is L. As in the letter. Not E-L-L-E. And no it’s not a Death Note reference.” She said as if she had answered that question many times before and Keith just nodded.

“So, you two match? In your costumes, I mean.” Pidge asked, moving her glasses up her nose.
L turned, smiling as she adjusted her red scarf. “Yep! We’re Callum and Rayla from this super cool show called *The Dragon Prince*.” She informed her. “Callum’s super awesome, he’s my favorite so I dressed up as him. Rayla is Aaren’s fave because Rayla’s a badass.”

Keith nodded as he smiled at the two in front, L now talking to Aaren about some show she had watched, insisting they absolutely had to watch it. Keith could tell that L was energetic by the way she bounced her leg on the floor and her hands made constant motions in the air.

Keith could also tell that L was a very sociable person, considering she easily started talking to him and had smiled wide at him the moment she met him.

*Don't you wish you could be like her?*

~

Something Keith had learned from this so far half hour ride was that L was a superfan of everything. She overanalyzed every detail about the show, trying to guess the next episode. Aaren seemed to just listen and add in input whenever L forgot a word or got something wrong. Though Keith suspected the other was secretly just as big a a fan.

“Have you read the new chapter of Lumine?” Aaren asked L, stopping the fangirl in the middle of her rant.

“Oh shit. I downloaded it but I haven't read it yet. Gimme a sec!” L pulled out her phone and immediately went silent and Keith thanked Aaren for the break of silence. Pidge giggled at the two and turned to Aaren. “So what did L do for her animation?” Pidge asked and Aaren stopped at a stop light. “She did an animation thing for a YouTuber she watches. With the song Pity Party I think.” Pidge nodded. “Keith did the ‘Boys’ animation meme with a character he made up on the spot. It looks awesome.”

Keith and L both turned around, Keith glaring and L pouting. “You guys talk about us like we aren't here.” L said and Pidge laughed. “We’re aware!” she responded and Keith hit her head.

“So what are you two gonna do before the contest?” Keith asked and as he had predicted, L turned, phone forgotten, as she started to talk.
“So one of my favorite artists is doing a panel there so I want to get advice from her. Also some of my favorite actors are doing panels this week but today’s panel is run by Misha and Sebastian.” L explained and Keith sat up straighter as he recognized the names. “Misha and Sebastian as in Castiel and Balthazar?” he asked.

“OMIGOD! You know Hamilton and Supernatural? You’re officially on my ‘Cool Dude List’.” L said and Aaren looked over at her. “Am I on there?” They asked and L nodded. “Duh you’re number one!” She said and Aaren smiled as they parked the car. “We’re here.” they said and L fumbled with her seat belt, trying to undo it quickly.

Once L was unbuckled, she grabbed her own sketchbook, wallet and an empty bag for anything she bought as she ran to the other side of the car, grabbing Aaren’s arm. “Sanders Sides cosplayers!” L said, pointing across the street at two people. L started to run off, dragging Aaren behind her as Aaren waved to Pidge and Keith.

“Well, those two are exciting.” Keith said and Pidge snorted, adjusting her glasses. “You should meet the others.” she commented as the two checked in at the front door, getting their tickets confirmed.

“L seemed to think you’re cool, which is awesome considering she’s not good with people.” Pidge commented, checking her camera battery for the umpteenth time that day.

“ She’s not a people person?” Keith asked incredulously. The girl seemed to be very sociable and very good with people. How could she not be good with people?

“Hey, don't judge a book by it’s cover. L may seem very lively but she’s almost as bad as you. She has really bad anxiety, especially social anxiety, ADHD and other stuff I’m not obligated to share.” Pidge replied and Keith turned, looking to where L and Aaren stood, talking to two cosplayers.

The two people she was talking to were dressed up strangely, one in a prince-like costume, a sword at their side, the other wearing a polo shirt with a tie and piece of paper that said “Yerkes-Dodson Curve.”

Even from here, Keith could see the way L shook as she tightly held Aaren’s hand, how she moved her hands around an unnecessary amount, how he could hear her repeat the same sentence a few times, stuttering too much as she paused, trying to remember words. The other two cosplayers didn't seem to mind, even mentioning how she seemed very “Virgil-esque,” whatever the Hell that meant.
L said something that made the cosplayers laugh and she smiled widely, Keith turning back to Pidge, the smaller girl looking at him. “What?” He asked and she waved her hand around. “It’s nothing, what do you want to do before the contest begins?” she asked.

“Let’s go buy stuff.” Keith answered immediately and Pidge smiled.

~~

Three hours and two armfuls of merch later, Pidge and Keith met up with Aaren and L so they could go to the animation contest. As they sat down, Pidge held open her bag with the Hamilton logo on it. “Put your treasures in here kind sir.” Pidge said and Keith snorted as he dropped his stuff, sitting next to L, Aaren sitting on her other side.

“Did you guys buy anything?” Keith asked and L grinned, holding up a book of poems and a wig, along with a sketchbook that had a drawing print on it. “I got a wig!” She said, as if it was the most amazing thing to exist.

The wig was blonde with blue and pink highlights and Keith looked at it a bit before recognizing it. “Is that the pan pride flag?” He asked and L laughed a bit. “Yep!” she said cheerfully, face lighting up as she remembered something, turning to Aaren to talk about random theories for a fandom she was in, Aaren pointing out some things too until an announcer came onto the stage, silencing everyone.

“Hello everyone and thank you for coming to Goucon 2019!!!! We hope everyone’s been having an amazing morning! Today we will be showing some animations that have been sent in and at the end we will announce the three winners!!! 1st place wins a scholarship to New York Institute Of Visual Arts!!!! 2nd place wins a scholarship to Cal Arts!!! And 3rd place will win an internship with animator Vivziepop!!” The girl shouted into the microphone and everyone cheered.

“Now let’s get started with the animations!!!!”

~~~

An hour of animations had passed and both Keith and L’s have been played, L mumbling about how she didn’t like how it looked on the big screen and how she should’ve added more panels in certain places.
You know, her’s was better than yours.

Keith bit the inside of his cheek, ignoring the voice as Aaren tried to reassure their girlfriend that she had done fine.

You’re gonna lose, and then what will you do? You can’t just ask the Shiroganes for help with money, Shiro’s college is already expensive enough, how’re you going to ask for that much money from them?

“Keith?” L asked, shaking the raven teen a little, fear evident in her eyes, though Keith didn't understand why. Had he been mumbling too? “What?” He mumbled and before she could answer, the announcer was back on stage, three cards in her hand.

“Okay peoples and weebs!” She shouted and someone yelled at her. “We have the three winners here! In my hand! Who will win?!” She pulled out one card, holding it up in the sky before reading it. “In 3rd place, Gabrielle Sanchez with the animation Pity Party!”

L’s eyes widened as Aaren started to shake their girlfriend, L standing up and running over, dragging Aaren behind hem. The two made their way up stage, Aaren standing off to the edge as L accepted their gift certificate along with a packet of information for the assistance animating thing.

“Congratulations!!” The announcers said and L stood off to the side with Aaren, hugging them tightly.

“2nd place, Verona Montoya with her animation Can’t Decide!” A tan girl with blue streaked hair was pushed to her feet by the people around her, them all cheering as she walked up to the stage. The announcer whispered something to the other girl and Verona nodded before standing by L.

“And in first place we have….. Keith Kogane with his animation Boys!” Suddenly time froze and Keith could hardly believe it. He won? How? Why—who thought his animation was good enough that he’d earn a scholarship? Who thought he should win this?

They’re poorly mistaken.
Keith was brought to his feet and walked up the stage, Pidge pushing him the whole way, yet everything seemed to happen in slow motion. He got a scholarship, he wouldn’t need the Shiroganes to pay for him. No matter what happened now, if the family decided they didn't want him, he had a place to be. A place to go. He wasn’t on his own now.

“Here’s your gift certificate!” The announcer said, handing him his own certificate and then whispering something about the college details being discussed over email, but he couldn’t hear, he didn't remember bowing with L and Verona when asked, he didn't remember walking off the stage, he didn't remember Pidge slapping his arm happily as she giggled.

He remembered smiling. He remembered the feeling of joy, how happy he was. Because God was he just sooo happy right now! Nothing could ruin this!!!

They were bribed.

Okay maybe something can ruin this.

They were forced.

Keith tried to stay smiling with Pidge as she bought him ice cream.

The others deserved the scholarship.

He fake laughed with the trio as Pidge made a joke about birds on the run.

They felt pity.

But that doesn't mean it worked.

~~~

Later as they were getting ready to leave, Keith at the point of wanting to cry, Pidge went to search for L and Aaren, who had left to go to an “Elentori Panel”, whoever that was.
The whole day, The Voice wouldn’t shut up about how useless he was, about how it was some mistake, how someone was bribed, how it could’ve been pity. But all thoughts were erased once he saw two figures crouched on the floor by the entrance.

Walking over he could see Aaren’s arm wrapped around a lump of a person, he couldn’t tell who at first since they were wrapped in a blanket that read “Danganronpa,” but as he got closer he could see it was L, who was trembling and sniffling as she leaned into Aaren.

“What-Is she okay?” Keith asked and Aaren shook her head. “Anxiety attack.” they mumbled and Keith sat next to L, all of his own thoughts gone.

“L, I’m going to get you water.” Aaren said and tried to stand up but L let out a soft, broken cry. “Please don’t go.” She mumbled and Aaren immediately sat back down, hugging L more tightly.

Silence enveloped the two as Keith twiddled his thumbs, trying to think of a way to help.

A few more minutes passed by until L raised her head a bit, hair fluffing around her face as she looked at Aaren. “Can-uh, may you get me some water please?” She croaked out and Aaren nodded. “Yep, be right back.” They said softly, standing up and searching for water anywhere.

L covered herself back in her blanket and Keith shifted awkwardly next to her. “Uhm, Wh-what caused it?” Keith asked. Maybe if he knew he could help in a way. L shrugged, looking at him, face tear stained and blotchy.

“Noi-noise, I guess. The crowd, to-too many things at once. It’s just-everything.” L stuttered out, wincing with almost every word and Keith nodded, looking around a bit. “I guess it can be overwhelming.” He answered and she nodded.

A beat of silence passed as L wiped at her face, the movement useless as she still cried. “I’m sorry, I’m probably bugging you, or-embarrassing you.” L apologized and Keith turned.

“You’re not bothering me. It’s fine.” Keith answered and there was that awkward silence again.

“I’m sorry, I really have no excuse to be crying.” L said, shaking as she tried to sit up. “I just-This
Keith frowned a bit as she spoke. Something was really familiar about how she talked, in fact she was talking like--

Me? But to herself, right? Because she’s just as messed up as you. Because someone else needs help that isn’t you Keith, but you don’t know how to help her because you’re just a useless.

Keith shook his head and put his hand gently on L’s shoulder, making the sobbing girl jump and stare at him wide eyed. “Don’t listen to it,” Keith mumbled and L brought her blanket up to her ears. “Wh-uhm, ho-how did you know? Ca-can you-” L suddenly froze, more tears surfacing as her thoughts ran wild, burying her face into her arms.

“I’m sorry,” She mumbled out again but before Keith could say anything, Aaren was back, handing a water bottle to their girlfriend. L took the water bottle graciously and latched onto Aaren, hugging them as she let out a few final tears.

“Thank you,” L mumbled, to who, Keith didn't really know at that moment but L opened the water and drank, sitting up as she wiped away tears.

“Crying is dehydrating,” L said, wrapping her blanket around her tighter as she sat up straighter, leaning into Aaren.

“But crying is good for the mind,” Pidge, who came out of seemingly nowhere, said. “How?” Keith asked and it was L who answered for Pidge, lifting up her water bottle. “Well, when you don’t cry, all your emotions are trapped in a small area, consuming much more emotional space than needed,” She shook her water bottle a little as she wiped at her tears.

“Which causes them to swirl and mix, making up not very happy emotions.” She sniffled a little as she opened her water bottle and downed half of it, closing it back up. “But once you cry, all those yuck-ish emotions aren’t as much, so there’s more room for the nicer emotions,” she shook her water bottle again and smiled as she watched the water swirl around.

“Crying means release of emotions, which is good,” She explained again and Keith nodded a bit as someone passed them, pointing at L and letting out a bark of laughter, L frowned at the person but otherwise didn't react. “Crying is good,” she mumbled and Pidge clapped her hands.
“Who wants to go home? It’s five o’clock but it’s a long drive!” She said and L hopped to her feet, Aaren following up, pushing their sleeves up to their elbows and something caught Keith’s eyes.

On their left, there were several scars along their arm, very obviously self inflicted but from long time ago and Keith rubbed his own scars through his sleeve subconsciously. Keith thought back to how well Aaren had handled their girlfriend’s breakdown, and now looking at their scars, Keith felt strange.

Aaren noticed him staring and looked up at him for a moment, before turning to Pidge. “C’mon, let’s go.” They said and Pidge nodded. Taking off to the exit and running to their car. L giggled a bit, tying her blanket around her shoulders like a cape and taking off after Pidge like she hadn’t just been crying on the floor. Keith raised an eyebrow curiously but speed walked with Aaren to the car.

“Okay, peoples!!!” L shouted, holding up her gift certificate with a smile. “Let’s go to McDonalds!” She said and turned to Aaren. “Can we go to McDonalds?” She asked and Aaren laughed a bit and nodded. “Great because walking around all day is very energy depleting.” L said.

“Facts,” Aaren commented and started the car, driving out of the Goucon parking lot. “Okay, Aaren, if Roman is Thomas’ creativity, but to create something, you need creativity, then how did Roman get created? Omigod, Roman’s a cryptid.” L rambled on again.

Keith watched L as she talked about paradoxes and t.v. shows, she smiled as she talked, laughing too. She had just been crying, so what’s with the random mood change?

“Crying means release of emotions.” Keith thought back to their conversation. Maybe crying really was a good thing, for her, at least. Keith doesn't know how well he would be able to just cry, to cry without anyone trying to comfort him. He’d rather wear his mask of emotions.

“I’m gonna turn on the music,” L said randomly and started to flip through radio channels until she found one with a song she liked, grinning as she started to belt out the lyrics. “The songs on the radio are okay,”

Keith smiled and joined in just as loud. “But my taste in music is your face!” Pidge let out a high-pitched squealing noise as she put her hands over he ears. “AH! Jesus you two are emo nightmares!” She yelled and Aaren joined in just to spite Pidge.
“I’m in a car full of emos someone help me!” Pidge started to yell, the other three singing louder to the song.

“I’m going to kill you all!” Pidge shrieked and L started to laugh. “If Pidge kills me, can you blame it on Jake?” L asked Aaren who looked in her direction. “What? No, you’re not allowed to die!” They said and L laughed, jumping back into the lyrics as Pidge continued to screech.

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Keith and Pidge were dropped off at Keith’s bus stop, the two walking to the Shirogane’s house as they talked.

“Well, today was eventful.” Pidge commented and Keith laughed. “Eventful may be an understatement.” He said and Pidge rolled her eyes as she took out her phone, checking the time as they walked. “It’s only seven, wanna do something when we get to the house?” She asked and Keith shrugged. “Aren’t you and Matt sleeping over?” He asked and she nodded.

“Yeah, but I mean, like, something other than that.” Pidge suddenly clapped her hands, pointing at Keith. “Let’s call Hunk and Lance over and we can play truth or dare!” She said and Keith frowned.

“That sounds like the worst idea you’ve ever had.” Keith commented but Pidge ignored him as she pulled out her phone, texting the other two and turning off her phone.

“Too late it’s been done.” She said and Keith rolled his eyes as they walked into the house. “Fine, then I’m inviting Rolo and Nyma.” he retorted and she frowned a bit before running to Keith’s room.

“What’s she doing?” Matt asked, who was sitting on the couch, Shiro next to him as they scrolled through Instagram. Allura and another girl Keith has never seen before were on the floor, watching South Park on the t.v.

“I never know, who’s that?” Keith asked, nodding towards the blonde girl.

“I’m Romelle! I go to TISCH with them guys and I’m visiting my grandparents this weekend so ‘Lura’s letting me stay with her. But I live in New York.” The blonde introduced and Allura
nodded.

Keith was about to say something until Pidge came running into the room, carrying the box she made to hold all of her Truth Or Dare game pieces. “Lance and Hunk are on their way here!” She shouted and dropped the box in the middle of the floor, causing all the college kids to jump in surprise.

“Ooh! What’s that?” Romelle asked, poking the box. “It’s a game I made! It’s truth or dare but with truths and dares I got from the internet. And you can lose. And win, and the winner is whoever has the most game pieces in the end of the game.”

Romelle smiled and opened the box, looking at the cards.

“Where did you get all the truth and dares from?” She asked. Pidge shrugged. “Some are from websites, some are ones I made up, others are from Tumblr.” She responded. “How bad are the dares?” Romelle asked and Allura, Matt and Shiro all sighed in unison as the blonde continued to launch questions at Pidge, the younger girl answering them all immediately.

The doorbell rang and Keith walked over, answering the door as Rolo and Nyma stood there awkwardly. “Waddup?” Rolo said upon seeing Keith and the two walked in after Keith let them in.

Soon after Hunk and Lance arrived, Lance immediately complaining about Rolo being there but shutting up as Pidge made everyone sit in a circle around the game.

“Okay, so, we have to do all dares and we have to answer all truths, got it?” Pidge said and everyone mumbled an agreement of some sort.

Pidge grabbed the first card and read it aloud. “‘Truth: what is the worst thing you’ve ever done?’ Easy, I’ve taken blood samples of Lance and Hunk whilst they were sleeping.” She answered.

“Pidge what the Hell?!?” Lance and Hunk shouted and she giggled as she grabbed a red game piece.

“Okay, Lance, truth or dare?” She asked. “Truth,” Lance answered as he reached forward and grabbed a card, grinning as he read it. “‘Who would be the worst person to date (in the room)’ Keith, obviously, duh.” Lance answered and Keith gave him a look at the other grabbed a red game
“Can we put on some music? It’s awkward as Hell.” Matt asked and Lance took out his phone, ignoring Pidge’s shouts at him for “No Shakira!” as he played Bailando.

“Not this again.” Keith groaned out as Lance started to sing. The cuban boy ignored him as he belted out the lyrics with a shit-eating grin on his face. “Yo te miro y se me corta la respiración. Cuando tu me miras, se me sube el corazón.” Lance sung, leaning in towards Keith as the rest of the group laughed at him.

Keith covered his ears as he tried to push Lance away, despite his heart practically pounding in his chest.

“Make it stop!” Keith shouted out jokingly as Lance sung. “..La noche en la que te suplico que no salga el sol,” Lance inhaled deeply as Keith shouted again. “God help!”

“Bailando! Bailando! Bailando! Tu cuerpa y el mio llenando el vacío-” Keith slammed his hand over Lance’s mouth to shut the other up, glaring at him as he did so.

“Stop or kill me.” Keith growled and Lance put his hands up in surrender and the rest of the group laughed as Lance scooted away.

“Keith, truth or dare?” Lance asked. Keith didn't answer as he grabbed a dare card and read it.

“‘Dare: Sit in the person’s lap to your right.’ Wait, didn’t I already get this?” Keith asked and Pidge turned, eyebrow raised. “What? When?” She asked and Keith flushed, remembering that game hadn’t been with the cards.

“Never mind,” Keith said and turned to his left, face flushing darker when he realized it was Rolo, but stood up anyway and plopped himself in Rolo’s lap, the other smiling as Lance glared at him.

“Uh, Nyma, truth or dare?” Keith asked.

The game droned on boringly at first, the only exciting things happening were Matt sticking ice
down his pants and Pidge having to do a handstand for two minutes straight.

Until…..

“Allura, truth or dare?” Matt asked, a neutral expression on his face as Allura reached forward, grabbing a truth card.

“‘What’s a secret you’ve been keeping?’” Allura bit her lip for a moment and then inhaled, looking at Shiro.

“I’m dating Lotor.” She stated and Keith frowned at her. “What?” He asked as his not-brother went silent. Allura turned to Keith. “I have been for around a week now.” She said and before she could finish explaining, Keith stood up, mad for his brother as he stormed out.

Keith sat on the steps of the front porch, the door slamming shut behind him as the others erupted into shouts and yelling. So Allura, one of the people Shiro was head over heels for because she was “honest,” had been lying to him the whole time and might've not actually ever been interested in him.

“That’s so unfair!” Keith thought. Shiro genuinely, for some reason, thought Allura was cool and nice and pretty or some shit, but he gets paid back by her revealing she’s been dating someone else! Keith knew he shouldn’t have liked her.

The front door opened behind him and someone sat next to him on the steps, their foot tapping on the stone stairs.

“Allura, what do you want?” Keith asked, glaring at the older girl who tucked a piece of her air behind her slightly pointed ear.

“To talk to you.” She mumbled and Keith turned fully now, eye narrowed to slits. “Talk about what?! You know how Shiro feels! Why would you do this to him!?” Keith screamed and the older girl was unfathed by the outburst.

“I genuinely like Lotor, he’s kind. To me anyways. And he makes me happy. I know how your brother feels about me and I was planning on informing him about this soon, but I never had a chance to until now.” Allura explained and Keith rolled his eyes.
“Yeah, because you care about Shiro, right?” Keith mocked and Allura nodded. “I do which is why I’m going to try and help him realize his feelings for Matt.” Allura stated and Keith turned again. “Wait, what?” He sputtered and she smiled at the slightly younger boy.

“Shiro is in love with Matt, it’s plain to see, no? Anyway, Shiro himself doesn’t want to admit that for some reason, so I’m going to help. Try to at least.” Allura claimed and Keith stared at her for a few moments.

She was serious, she was going to help get Shiro and Matt together. For real!?

“Thank God because it’s time they got together.” Keith agreed and the front door was being opened again as Matt went running out, face covered as he ran down the street, obviously distressed. Pidge soon followed, shouting for her brother and Keith stood up, running inside.

“Wha the fuck just happened?” Keith shouted and Shiro ducked his head down.

[fifteen minutes earlier]

Lance watched as Allura followed Keith outside and turned back to the group, grinning. “Ok gang! Let’s continue! Pidgeon I believe you’re next!” Lance said, voice light and happy as he tried to lift the mood, Shiro frowning a little as he seemed lost in thoughts.

“Big bro, truth or dare?” Pidge asked and Matt immediately reached for a Truth card, face paling as he turned it around for the others to read. “W-who’s your crush?” Matt read and Shiro looked up immediately, already knowing what was coming as Matt turned to him.

“Matt you don’t have to-” Matt waved his hand as his sister tried to stop him, her arguments falling on deaf ears. “Shiro. I like Shiro. Though like is an understatement. The only reason I hadn’t told him before was because I’m not worth his feelings. He deserves someone better and I’m not better.”

Shiro moved forward to-what, Lance couldn’t tell, eyes still moving to Keith’s empty spot as Rolo took out his phone, typing away random shit on it.
Matt was suddenly standing, pushing Shiro away as he ran out of the house, covering his face as tears surfaced. Pidge got up, following after him. “Matt!” She yelled as she shoved her shoes on. Moments later Keith opened the door, eyebrows pitched as he shouted.

“What the fuck just happened?” he shouted as Allura followed in after him, concern written on her face. “Ma-Matt confessed.” Shiro mumbled and Keith moved forward.

“And?” Keith asked, tone very annoyed. Shiro looked at him and Keith was taken aback when he saw the older man was holding back tears.

“He doesn't think he deserves me.” Shiro mumbled and Keith frowned. “And you didn't say anything to him?” Keith asked.

*Stop yelling you’re making him feel worse you fucking dumbass.*

Keith flinched subconsciously and Shiro noticed. “Is it-” “No, shut up.” Keith dismissed and Shiro frowned. “Go after him and find him. Don't let him leave until he knows your true feelings and feels like he *does* deserve you, okay?” Before Shiro could say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, Keith was pushing him out of the house.

“Get your fucking crush and explain to him how awesome he is or you’re not allowed back in,” Keith said and closed the door, turning around to see several shocked faces looking up at him. “What?” Keith asked, shifting in his spot a little and Lance shook his head. “That was a bit cruel?” Lance said, questioningly.

Keith frowned as he sat back at his spot. “Whatever, it needed to happen, can we just go back to playing the stupid game now?” Romelle was the first to agree and reached forward, grabbing a dare card.

“‘Dare: eat a spoonful of mustard.’ Gross but okay.” Romelle said and just like that, the game continued on, but everyone was really uneasy.

The questions and dares got more serious, people having to confess to many things, or doing stupid things like getting into an argument with a wall, or stopping a car in the street to inform them that their wheels were turning.
Soon though, conversations turned sour, Lance got into a fight with Rolo over seemingly nothing, Pidge came back inside and sat angrily on the floor. When Pidge had come inside, Allura had asked her how it went, only receiving a grumble in response as the small girl grabbed a truth card.

Around 9 o’clock, Hunk had to go home, leaving Lance, Pidge, Rolo, Nyma, Keith, Allura and Romelle to continue playing the game.

Romelle reached forward and grabbed another card, her being the only one who was still really even into playing the game.

“‘Dare: Call a random number and flirt with who picks up.’” Romelle dialed a random number, trying to break through the awkwardness that had settled but Keith really felt as if they should stop playing or this would go too far.

Rolo grabbed a dare card once Romelle had finished flirting with the other person on the phone, the stranger hanging up after around 3 seconds of her even opening her mouth. Lance had laughed at her then, making the blonde and the Cuban get into an argument over who was a better flirt until Rolo waved his dare card in the air, gathering their attention.

Lance looked at the blonde male, glad that Keith had gotten off his lap a long time ago.

“‘Dare: Ask out your crush’,” Rolo read and Lance felt as if the world had stopped spinning. He knew who his crush was, it was really fucking obvious at this point. He wouldn’t really do it, would he? And would Keith say yes? He was pretty sure Keith’s standards were higher than that.

Thankfully for Lance, Shiro and Matt came in at that exact moment, happy smiles on their face as they walked to Shiro’s room. “I don't want any nephews or nieces yet, Matt!” Pidge called after them and Matt immediately turned red and became a sputtering mess of words until Shiro pushed him into his room.

“Looks like that worked out,” Keith said, completely oblivious to the tension between Lance and Rolo. “Rolo, what’s your dare again?

Rolo reread the card aloud, Pidge frowning as she looked between Lance and Keith, then back at Rolo. “Maybe we can skip this one?” She suggested and Rolo shrugged. “Why, I don't mind.” He said and before anyone else could protest, he turned to Keith, who’s face flushed a light pink as Rolo smiled at him.
“Keith, would you care to go out with me again? Please? I was such a complete dumbass for breaking up with you the first time. I was under a lot of stress at the time, and I now see how wonderful you are and always have been. So please? Go out with me Keith?” Rolo asked and Keith turned cherry red as he picked at the carpet.

“I-uh, well-I just-” “Of course he won’t go out with you! You broke up with him a while ago!!! Why do you like him again now!” Lance shouted and Keith and Rolo turned to him.

“Because back then I was dealing with a lot. But now that I’m not I see how wonderful Keith truly is. How determined, how artistic, how kind he is.” Rolo said and turned back to Keith, ignoring Lance who was still trying to argue with him.

Keith just stared at Rolo, the other boy in front of him, the one who had broken up with him forever ago because he didn't “communicate enough”, because he “didn't share his emotions.” Why was he saying all these nice things about him now? Especially since when they had broken up it ended with them getting into a huge fight.

The only reason the two were still friends now was because of Nyma, who had been both of their friend since the start of highschool.

If Rolo had said all those bad things about him then, why was he saying these nice things now?

Because he’s lying. He’s just using you to make himself feel better. He’s guilty, he feels like he hurt your stupid “feelings” and now he’s trying to make him feel better about himself. Because he can see how helpless you are, pining over Lance that he just wants it to STOP.

Keith swallowed air and looked at Pidge, who was looking as if she were about to strangle someone, whether it be him or Rolo, he couldn't really tell. Then he thought of Lance.

Lance was, well, Lance was amazing. He was a great older brother and younger brother to his siblings, he was a great friend, he was kind and sweet. He had helped Keith when the Voice had consumed his thoughts, he had felt comfortable enough with Lance to share what had happened to his family, every time he was around the other, his body got this happy warmth that spread throughout his body.

Lance was just- Wonderful. And yet-
“Yes,” Keith muttered and the room went silent, Romelle stopped blabbering on about random things, Lance’s protests died in his throat, Nyma’s and Pidge’s conversation stopped and Rolo smiled. “Wait what!?” Lance shrieked and Keith winced a bit.

“I said yes, as in yes, Rolo. I’ll go out with you.” Keith said, calmly and Rolo smiled brightly, grabbing Keith’s hand within his and Keith noticed how cold they were in comparison to Lance’s.

“Really?” Rolo asked and Keith nodded a bit after hesitation. Rolo wrapped the much smaller teen into a hug and Keith tried to relax but—it was just really uncomfortable. Suddenly, Rolo’s phone went off and he let Keith go, answering it and talking to someone on the other side.

“Keith what the Hell,” Pidge whispered to him and Keith turned confused, about to question what she meant but Rolo was hugging him again before standing up. “I gotta go, Nyma’s mom wants us back to go help make cookies or something.” Rolo said and Nyma waved goodbye to Pidge before following Rolo out the door.

“Why would you say yes to him!?” Lance shrieked, and Keith turned to him. Blue, confused eyes locked onto purple ones as the two locked gazes.

Lance really didn't understand, he had thought-no, he realized that had been stupid of him, to assume Keith’s feelings. Maybe he had just imagined them that way because he had wanted things to go his way. But it doesn't matter, it shouldn’t matter.

It shouldn’t matter know because Keith had chosen Rolo. Strangely. And Lance hurt.

And hurt was maybe a huge understatement because it seriously felt like he was going to die, the pain in his chest was blossoming, growing with every second as he tried to hold back tears. Keith had never liked him, he had been imagining Keith’s flushing faces, or maybe Keith just got flustered easily.

Keith didn't like Lance. Keith liked Rolo. “I-because he’s nice to me!” Keith answered, though his voice sounded unsure as he answered and Pidge glared at him, Allura also staring at him incredulously.

“Keith, wehn Rolo broke up with you, you literally came crying to me about how worthless you were. You shouldn’t be in a relationship like that ever again, Keith.” Pidge said and Keith looked
at the floor. “He’s changed.” Keith mumbled. “You’re just setting yourself up to get knocked down again.” Pidge said and Keith shrugged, reaching forward and grabbing a game card, ignoring Pidge and Lance’s protests.

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Once they had finished the game, Allura, Romelle, Nyma and Rolo had all gone home, Rolo feeling the ‘completely necessary’ need to kiss Keith on the cheek before he left, making Lance turn red with anger and jealousy. The cuban had then stormed out after, saying something about how Miguel wanted his help making some kind of cake.

Pidge followed Keith to his room, her sleeping bag already set up on the floor and she went to the bathroom to change into her pyjamas while Keith changed into his in his room. Once she came back, she sported a frown, one aimed at Keith.

“What?” He asked innocently, though he knew exactly what as she crossed her arms. “What’s your fucking deal, Keith?” She asked and Keith shrugged, sitting on his bed. “What about Lance?!” She shrieked and Keith frowned, looking at his feet. “I-I don’t know,” Keith mumbled, voice coming out broken and Pidge immediately lost her glare, eyes softening as she walked over to her best friend.

“It’s just-Like, Lance obviously doesn't have any interest in me-” “False, but continue,” Pidge interrupted and Keith looked up at her. “What?” He asked and she tilted her head. “Lance does like you, why else would he get mad over Rolo dating you?” Pidge asked.

Because he wants you to be alone and in misery.

He doesn't want you to have happiness.

You don't deserve it.

“I-” “Nevermind, dumb question,” Pidge interrupted once more. “You do deserve Lance you know, and he does like you.” Pidge stated. “But why would you date Rolo again, especially after all the
tears, especially now with the whole Lance thing?” She asked and Keith shrugged.

“To make myself feel better, I guess.” Keith murmured. “What?” Pidge asked, confusion written across her face. “Because Lance doesn't like me, or at least haven't shown it, and Rolo has, he has obvious interest in me, so why not?” Keith replied.


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An hour or so later, the two were going to bed after watching random conspiracy videos Pidge had found.

Pidge now laid in her sleeping bag on the floor, snoring lightly as she slept, Keith tucked up in his blankets on his bed, curled up as he too, slept.

Though his mind was fully awake with memories.

“Oh God, Beth! The brat's home!” Keith's foster father yelled. Keith, aged 14 years old, rubbed at his bruised cheek, glaring at the man. “What? Already? But, Jack, it's only noon!” A woman shouted from somewhere in the house.

Jack turned to Keith with a glare, standing up above the young teen. “Yeah, why are you home so early?” Jack asked and Keith looked down, debating between answering back. “You answer when spoken to, boy,” Jack growled out and Keith flinched, looking up at him. “I-I got in a fight,” Keith whimpered out.

“Did you lose?” Jack asked and Keith looked up at him and nodded smally. “Ye-yeah.” Keith said and suddenly he was met with the bottom of Jack's boot. “Man up for once in your goddamn life, why don'tcha?” Jack's voice boomed.

“Hon, please stop, we have a dinner later, we don't want any new bruises on him,” Beth was saying as she walked into the room, putting her hair up. Jack turned and sighed. “Fine, but after, he's getting what he deserves.” Jack threatened and Keith only stared back emptily at him.
“Now go to your room and get out of my sight, I don’t want to see you anymore than I have to.” Jack hissed and Keith was running up to his room, or well, the attic, carrying his book bag in one hand as he held his cheek with the other.

Keith didn’t understand it, why would these two even want to be foster parents if they couldn't; didn’t want to, take care of children in the first place. Or at least, it seemed like they didn’t want children, seeing how they treated Keith when he did absolutely nothing wrong.

You deserve it, you know.

Keith looked at his legs as he sat on the bare, dusty floor. The Voice was still new to him, despite having been there in the back of his head for the past few years. It just hardly ever spoke until recently.

“I know,” Keith mumbled, pulling out his homework.

You should run away.

They wouldn’t care.

Keith looked up at the wall curiously. “Should I? What if they got mad?” Keith asked aloud.

Keith, grow up.

They wouldn’t care.

Keith looked around the empty attic at the few things he did have, which were a few clothes, a blanket and a stuffed hippo he’s had from childhood. Keith got up, shoving them all into his book bag and running to the side of the room, looking out the window. There was a small roof outside that he often used to escape outside for a while; now he’d just being using it to escape, hopefully forever.
Keith pushed the window open slightly and put his book bag out the window onto the roof, climbing out after it and shutting the window softly. He distantly heard his “father” yelling at him inside for something, but he ignored it, walking to the side where a tree branch had grown out over towards the roof only two feet away.

Keith tossed his bag over, crossing his fingers for it to not fall down and sighing in relief as it landed softly. The next part was going to be tricky. Keith sat at the edge of the roof, sticking his foot out as far as it could go until it hit the tree branch.

Keith shifted his weight towards the tree, wobbling a bit as he stood slowly. Keith glanced down for a moment, looking back up as he realized how high up he was and shifted his other leg onto the branch, grabbing onto it for safety the moment his other foot left the roof.

Keith sighed out in relief once more as he sat perched upon the branch, grabbing his bag and climbing down the tree, over the fence dividing the neighbors and his house. Once he was down, he took off to the only place he knew was safe.

After fifteen minutes of running, Keith slowed down, ensuring he was far away enough that he could rest easy.

So, where to next? No one wants you.

“Mm, I have a friend. I think she’s a friend. She’s cool.” Keith said, passing a lady who was walking her dog, turning to look at him strangely.

You sure she’ll be fine with you?

“Maybe not, but it’s all I have for now.” Keith mumbled to himself, not being able to wipe the small smile off his face.

Lauren will find you again, you’ll end up back at the same place you were before.

“Hey, man, this was your idea,” Keith replied and shrugged his shoulders to himself, walking up the driveway to an old brick house, breathing in slowly as he raised his fist to knock on the door.
The door opened almost immediately, a 20 year old man opening the door up in surprise. “Keith, what the Hell are you doing here?” Matt asked, looking down at the raven haired teen.

“I ran away,” Keith informed. Matt only nodded, moving aside so Keith could walk into the house. “KATIE, YOU’RE FRIEND IS HERE!” Matt shouted, making Keith flinch a bit at the loud noise.

An eleven year old girl came running around the corner, hair poking out in different directions. “Keith! What are you doing here?” She asked, running over to him and grinning devilishly. “I ran away.” Keith informed again and Katie giggled. “Good job!” She shouted and grabbed his hand, pulling him to her room. “While you’re running away, we can do experiments.” Katie claimed simply and Keith set his book bag down.

“What’s your experiment?” He asked and Matt watched them as he called Colleen. “Mom, he ran away. You know what they were doing to him. I’m just glad he was able to get away. No, I don’t think they know he’s here. Yes, I’ll call Ms. Montgomery. He’s hanging out with Katie right now. Yeah, I’ll watch them.” Matt hung up and Keith looked up at him expectantly.

“Are you going to send me back there?” Keith asked, eyes wide. “To the Dolos’? No, you aren’t going back, I’m going to call Ms. Montgomery though.” Matt informed him and Keith seemed to have an internal debate with himself.

“It says that’s fine,” Keith told Matt, and Matt quirked an eyebrow, leaning down to look at the younger boy. “It?” Matt asked and Keith nodded, going silent as he tilted his head to the side.

“Why can’t I tell Matt?” Keith mumbled, pausing for a moment and sighed. “It’s my imaginary friend, uh, Carl.” Keith lied and Matt sighed, deciding it was a problem for another time, grabbing his phone and calling Lauren as he went to the living room.

“You can tell me, Keith,” Katie said and walked over to her best friend. “I’ll tell you a secret if you tell me yours!” She said, jumping up and down.

Don’t tell her, she’ll think you’re insane.

“Will you think I’m insane if I tell you a really weird secret?” Keith asked and Katie shook her head. “Okay, I’ll tell you, but you need to tell me your secret first.” Keith said and the eleven year old nodded, standing up.
“MAtt-io’s got a crush on a boy!” Pidge announced and Keith stood up too. “What’s his name?”
Keith asked, suddenly curious. It was okay to have a crush on a boy? Really? Even after his
parents-

“I think it’s something like, uh, Shera, or uh, Shilo, something like that. He’s got funny hair, it
sticks out in the front, and it’s white!” Katie said and giggled. “He’s funny too! And he speaks
funny.”

Katie looked at Keith now, waiting for his ‘secret’. “I’m not going to tell you, I said your secret,
not Matt’s.” Keith responded, crossing his arms. Katie sighed. “Fiiiiine,” She looked around her
room a bit before leaning in to whisper in Keith’s ear. “I wanna be called Pidge.” She mumbled
and Keith looked at her.

“Pidge?” Keith asked and the girl nodded. “Any specific reason why?” He asked and Pidge
pitched voice.

“Now yours!” Pidge said and Keith nodded. “I have a Voice.” Keith whispered and Pidge tilted
her head, confused. “It tells me bad things,” Keith mumbled. “And it’s mean. It’s in my head.”

You idiot, she’s eleven, she won’t understand it.

“Does it tell you to kill yourself?” Pidge asked in a small voice and Keith nodded a little and she
reached forward, hugging the other. “Keith! I’m sorry! Is there anyway I can make it go away?”
She cried and Keith hugged her back tightly.

You can’t get rid of me, I’m inside you.

“You can’t, but you being my friend makes me happy.” Keith said and Pidge nodded, squeezing
him tightly before letting go.

The younger girl looked as if she were going to say something, but suddenly there was a loud crash
and a yelp from the living room. Keith and Pidge immediately ran out, Keith ducking behind the
living room sofa once he saw what had happened, Pidge racing towards her brother.

“You absolute bitch!” Jack shouted, standing over Matt, who now sat on the floor, clutching his
“I know that vile child is here and you have no authority to keep him here, I’ll call the cops if Keith is not returned this instant!” Jack hollered and Matt stood up as Pidge ran to her older brother’s side, holding onto his legs. “Keith is safe anywhere that isn’t with you.” Matt retorted and went to close the door, but Jack kept it opened.

“You give me back my son, or else.” Jack said, voice booming throughout the house and Keith was tempted to get out of his hiding space just to help Matt.

**He doesn’t want you, he wishes you were dead.**

“So, don’t move?” Keith mumbled.

**If you don’t, Matt is only going to get even more hurt.**

“So, do move?” Keith mumbled questioningly.

“He is not your son.” Matt said at the front door and slammed it shut on Jack’s hand, ignoring the shout on the other end.

“Matt?” Pidge asked uncertainly as Keith got up from his hiding space. Matt ignored her as he stormed over to the house phone, dialing someone.

“Hello, police? Yes, there is a man outside of my house who has been threatening me, may you please escort him away from my house, thank you.” Matt then hung up and looked down, only to be met with two confused faces.

“Everything’s going to be taken care of you two, don’t worry.” Matt said, but Keith only frowned in response. “It’ll be okay, I promise!” Matt repeated and that was the end of the conversation.
Keith was awoken at some time around noon the next day, but he felt strange. There was something about his dream that made him uneasy, but he couldn’t even remember what the dream had been about, just that it had been bad.

Keith pulled himself out of bed and walked into the kitchen, smiling immediately at the sight.

“So, you two worked things out I’m guessing?” Keith asked upon seeing Matt sitting on Shiro’s lap. Matt immediately turned red but nodded. “Yeah,” He responded softly. “We did.” Shiro smiled back and hugged Matt from behind.

“That’s good, I’m glad Shiro finally after two years of having this crush, got it all figured out.” Keith teased and Shiro only flipped him off. “Screw-” Shiro stopped himself with a hoarse cough into his elbow, startling Matt and Keith.

Once Shiro stopped, he looked up to see two concerned faces staring at him. “You guys, chill, I’m fine.” He said and they slowly looked away, Matt lacing his fingers in between Shiro’s. “I know it’s just,” Matt inhaled and smiled at Shiro.

“I still worry for you.” Matt said softly and Shiro looked at his face for a moment before hugging him tightly. “That’s adorable.” Shiro mumbled. Matt only flushed darker as he sank into the hug and Keith smiled at them as he grabbed something to eat.

“You guys are disgusting,” He commented, though the smile stayed on his lips.

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“You’re….wonderful, Keith.” Lance said, looking into Keith’s eyes. Keith’s eyes widened a fraction as he looked back. “You’re-Lance, stop joking,” Keith mumbled, looking away, though Lance didn’t miss the tips of Keith’s ears turning red.

“You are though!” Lance said and shuffled forward on the couch, grabbing Keith’s hand, the raven turning around. Keith’s eyes looked at their conjoined hands before looking back up at Lance.

“You’re lying. There’s nothing wonderful about me. I don't even see why Rolo wanted to get back together.” Keith said under his breath and Lance put his other hand on Keith’s cheek. “Hey now,
you’re kind, funny, talented, sweet, amazing and beautiful.” Lance said softly and Keith looked into his eyes again.

“Beautiful?” Keith asked, moving forward the slightest. Lance nodded, inhaling Keith’s warm fragrance. “Yes, your eyes, your skin, your hair, everything about you is beautiful, especially your smile.” Lance whispered, also moving forward.

“Really?” Keith asked softly. “Mm-hm,” Lance hummed, not able to answer verbally because now his lips were on Keith’s, the raven haired teen wrapping his arms around Lance’s neck.

Lance smiled into the kiss and tiled his head, hands settling themselves on Keith’s waist as he deepened the kiss.

Lance ran his hands through Keith’s hair, the soft, black locks of hair running over his fingers as the two kissed. Keith made a small humming sound in the back of his throat as he pressed closer to Lance and-

“Fuck!” Lance shouted, sitting up in his bed and running his hand through his hair, hand clutching his shirt fabric. This wasn’t a normal dream, this wasn’t a dream he was supposed to be having! Keith was with Rolo now! He couldn’t-Keith wouldn’t ever-

“Hola, hermano. Hora de desp-” Maria’s sentence died in her throat as she ran over to Lance, wrapping her arms around her older brother upon seeing his tears, those of which Lance hadn’t even known had formed.

(T: Hello, Brother, Time to wa-)

“¿Lance, que sucedió?” Maria asked, trying to wipe away her brothers tears. Lance tried to speak, but no intelligible words came out. “T-tuve un su-sueño, y-y Ke-Keith y yo…..” Lance inhaled before continuing. “Nos besabamos.”

(T: Lance, what happened? I-I had a dre-dream an-and Ke-Keith and I….. We kissed.)

“Ay Dios mio.” Maria mumbled before hugging her brother tightly, letting him cry into her shoulder. Maria rubbed circles into Lance’s back to calm him down while mumbling random calming things to him.
After a few minutes, Lance finally calmed down, pulling away from his sister and rubbing at his tear stained face. “Lo siento…” Lance murmured and Maria tsk’ed at him.

“Lance,” Maria pulled away from her brother, sitting next to him on his bed. “No tienes nada que ser lo siento por.” Maria whispered softly, looking at her older brother. Lance sniffled a bit and nodded.

“Gracias.” Lance said softly and Maria smiled, standing up. “De nada,” she replied and stretched her arms over her head. “Ahora, vístete y baja los escaleras. Mamá hizo panqueques.” She said before leaving his room.

Lance smiled as he watched his sister leave the room before looking down at his knees sadly.

He thought he had just been getting a crush on Keith. Thought he could just wil it away after some time like he did everytime.

But this was a lot bigger than a simple crush, it seemed.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! I don't normally put translations in stories because it takes away from it, but that whole conversation was in spanish and would not have been all that easy to understand had I not put it there.

Finally! I've been waiting to write this chapter since I started the story!!! Just a
warning though to those triggered easily, things will now from this point on only be getting angstier and a lot more trigger warnings will be put in the tags. But for now, those are the tags. Hope you enjoyed this chapter my lovelies!!!

Also, yes, I self-inserted me and my editor in this story, shut up I'm the author I get to do what I want.

Come scream at me: Tumblr: @L-The-Art-Nerd Instagram: L_The_Art_Nerd Editor: Tumblr, Instagram and Twitter: @beyondtheinevitable.

See you next chapter my lovlies!!
~L
Something New (That Lasted Almost 72 Hours)

Chapter Summary

Keith is starting to get worse and everything only gets even more horrible once Rolo says something the Voice predicted.

Chapter Notes

WOW LOOK AT ME GO! ACTUALY UPDATING SOMETHING FOR A FANDOM I'M NOT IN ANYMORE!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Keith stood at the bus stop on Monday morning. Ever since he and Rolo got back together, Pidge’s done nothing but yell at Keith for poor decision making, Lance has bombarded him with memes all up until Sunday morning, Matt and Shiro have been disgustingly adorable and Rolo’s been texting him asking to hang out and stuff, though that last one Keith ignored.

After a few minutes of waiting at the bus stop, Lance came running up to him, practically beaming. “Becca's home!!!” Lance shouted, smiling. “She went to the hospital before, I didn't tell you because I didn't want you to worry but she got worse but now she's getting better! The cancer cells or something starts clearing up and they say within 1-2 months she'll be back to normal!!!” Lance shouted.

“That’s amazing, Lance!” Keith shouted, taking a step towards Lance. Lance involuntarily took a step back and hated himself when he saw Keith’s face fall the slightest.

The raven stared at Lance, confused at his actions and Lance turned away. “Ye-yeah, it is.” Lance mumbled and Keith tilted his head to look at Lance. “You okay, dude?” Keith asked, voice laced with concern at the cuban’s strange actions, or maybe it was insecurity.

“Ye-yes, I fine. The-the uh, bus is here.” Lance mumbled and Keith looked up, sighing a bit as he watched the bus come into view. As it parked, Keith started up the steps, sitting in his normal seat and waiting for Lance to sit next to him, though the cuban walked right on by and sat in the very back.

Keith felt his heart shatter and he wanted to sob, but he simply turned around, staring at his hands.
as the bus started to chug down the road.

*He hates you.*

**No he doesn't.**

*Why else is he ignoring you then?*

Keith frowned even more and pulled out his phone, finally reading the eighty messages Rolo had left him and replying to them as the bus brought them to school.

~~~

Keith walked into his gym class that morning. Everyone had their bags and stuff considering they were only really there for graduation practice, which Keith really didn't want to go through, but it was mandatory.

Pidge skipped over to him, she, like all the other sophomores and juniors, would play the parents and family for their rehearsal. The small girl looked up at him, adjusting her glasses and he tried to fake a smile.

“What’s wrong?” She asked and Keith shrugged. “Nothing really, just, anxious y'know, over graduation. It’s on Thursday, and that’s really close, especially with the dance on Saturday. Plus Sofia’s gonna be living with us then. I-wow, okay, I just made myself more anxious.” Keith stopped in his ranting and Pidge giggled a bit.

*You're life is shit right now isn't it?*

*Lance hates you,*

*You're going to leave Texas,*

*That's a good thing, no one wants you here anyway,*
And you’re getting replaced soon.

Absolute shit.

It just sucks more that Lance doesn't, and never will, like you back.

He obviously doesn't feel the same way if he’s been ignoring you.

Rolo hates you, he’s just using you. Shiro’ll love Sofia more than you.

You should just go kil-

“Do you need to sit down?” Pidge asked, smiling, though her expression turned serious when Keith started to breathe heavily.

The small girl looked around the room before grabbing Keith’s arm and dragging him out of the gym and down the hall. By then, Keith was shaking and panting, hugging himself with his one arm as Pidge opened up the janitor’s room, locking it from the inside as she set Keith down.

“Keith, breathe.” Pidge muttered, though Keith only heard muffled voices, shutting his eyes as his feelings consumed him. “Shit,” Pidge muttered and looked around the room before looking back at Keith. She grabbed the janitor spray bottle that was always full of soapy water and spritzed his face.

Keith gasped at the sudden wetness and looked around the room, eyes dilating slightly as he came back to Earth. “Keith, what caused this, and don’t give me ‘nothing’ or the excuse you gave back there because that was something else.” Pidge commanded and Keith wiped away the sweat that had formed on his forehead.

He was always tired after attacks, always felt like he had just run eight miles.

“It’s a secret,” Keith mumbled, bringing his knees up to his chest and resting his head on them.
Pidge grinned at Keith. “If I tell you my secret, will you tell me yours?” She asked and Keith lifted his head slightly as the girl moved to sit next to him, resting her head on his shoulder.

“What’s your secret?” Keith asked and Pidge hummed. “You’re my best friend, so I trust you, okay? So, don't tell anyone until I’m ready. You have to best friend swear on it.” Keith squinted his eyes a bit but rested his head on top of hers.


“I’m non-binary,” Pidge informed and Keith tilted his head to look at her a bit. “It means I’m not female, nor male, Keith.” She told him. “I-I thought I was like, genderfluid maybe? Even thought I was a guy for a bit bu-but I was talking to L and Aaren and few of their friends and they helped me figure it out. So-so, they/them pronouns please?”

Keith smiled and wrapped his arms around the other in a hug, which Pidge returned immediately. “You’re still only into girls though, right?” He asked and Pidge nodded. “Oh fuck yeah, boys are gross!” They said and Keith sorted. “I beg to differ.” He said.

Pidge giggled at that and puffed their short hair up a bit. “So, what does that mean for your sexual orientation?” Keith asked and Pidge froze, their eyebrows knitting together in confusion. “I’m a nonbinary lesbian?” They said confused and shook their head. “I’m female-sexual.”

Keith laughed at that and Pidge joined in. “Okay, now you have to tell me what your secret is, that’s how this works.” Pidge said and Keith sighed.

“Lance is ignoring me. I don't know why, but he is. An-and like, all this other stuff is happening and The Voice said.” “Screw the Voice.” Pidge interrupted and Keith blinked. “If Lance is ignoring you, I’m sure there’s a reason, that isn’t because of you. Okay? Lance has a hard enough time in his own life and he’s probably just as worried about graduation as you are.” Pidge stated.

“I’ll talk to him at lunch and try to see what’s up, okay?” They offered and Keith nodded. “Okay, but, I’m gonna go back to sitting with Nyma and Rolo again like I was before. Just cause-yo-you know.” Keith mumbled and Pidge nodded, running their fingers through Keith’s hair.
“I understand Keith.” Pidge mumbled and the two sat there for the rest of their gym period.

~~~

When Pidge got to lunch a few periods later, they frowned at the sight of their lunch table. One, Lance was halfway across the table, head down as he flopped his arms across it, two, Hunk was toying with something that looked verrrrrry familiar.

“BITCH!” Pidge yelled, running over and snatching their translator decoder out of Hunk’s hands. “I TOLD YOU TO QUIT TOUCHING MY STUFF!” They yelled and Hunk laughed nervously. “I wanted to see what it would do, but the translations are all funky.” He said and Pidge plopped down next to Lance, pushing his arms to the side a bit out of their way.

“That’s because it’s for geniuses only. Matt, dad and I made up a different code also, you translate this translation into that code and it makes up the full message. The code though is only available if your last name is Holt.” Pidge stated.

“Marry me then?” Hunk asked and Pidge scoffed. “Shay would be very disappointed in you, Hunk, also, neither of us would be Holts.” Pidge laughed and pocketed their translator.

“You nerds! Can’t you see I’m moping!?” Lance’s muffled cry came out and Pidge turned to look at him. “Yes, we clearly see that. Question is, why?” Pidge asked and Lance turned his head to look at them. “I had a dream yesterday night.” Lance mumbled.

Pidge and Hunk stared at him for a moment. “I think he wants us to ask what it was about?” Pidge whispered loudly to Hunk. “Oh! What was it about?” Hunk asked and Lance slightly glared at him, ears turning red before he buried his face into his arms.

“I quist queef.” Lance mumbled and Pidge put their hand to their ear. “What’s that?” They asked and Lance lifted his head up. “In the dream….. Keith and I…. kind of kissed.” Lance muttered, looking to the side and Pidge stood up fast, knocking the table a bit as they did so.

“YOU FUCKING WHAT?!” They yelled and the whole cafeteria turned, even Keith who was sitting across the room with Rolo, Nyma and some girl that went by the name N-7, and Lance blushed at the attention.
“Pidge, shut the fuck up.” He whipped and Pidge slammed their hand on the table, causing all viewers to jump. “BUT THAT’S MY BEST FRIEND YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT!” They shouted and Lance could see Keith now shifting uneasily out of the corner of his eye.

“Pidge, seriously, sit down.” Lace said and Pidge rolled their eyes, crossing their arms and sitting down. “You had a dream about you and Keith kissing,” Pidge whispered, aware of unwanted watchers. “Like just a peck kiss, full on making out or like, even more?” Lance’s face flush and he pulled his shirt over his mouth.


“What?” Lance asked. “The dream, the kiss? Did you like it?” Pidge asked and Lance blushed even more, looking down at his hands. “Ye-yeah. I did and-I just, it felt, natural? Like, I dunno, we were meant to be? It’s just, I-I,” Lance sighed, covering his face with his hands.

“I don’t know. Okay? I like him, I know that, but I think I might more than him like but he and Rolo together are all and Keith wasn’t like me into? But he-” “Lance use proper sentences you’re not making any sense.” Pidge deadpanned and Lance blushed more.

“I like Keith,... but he’s with Rolo.” Lance sighed out and Pidge opened their mouth before closing it, resting their hand on their chin before looking over at their best friend. All they wanted to do was yell at Lance that he was being an idiot because Keith liked him back to, he was just confused. But, Pidge decided that unless really needed, they wouldn’t intervene. This was Lance and Keith’s battle, nothing would change if Pidge just told them both everything.

“Keith has a lot going on right now, okay? I don't even really think-I don't know, okay? If you like Keith, that’s-it’s not to be ashamed of, at all. But Keith has a lot of inner turmoil that even after 6 years of knowing him, I still haven’t heard all of it. Keith will figure out his problems, and who knows? Maybe he and Rolo will break up? We don't know, that’s for Fate to decide. You, on the other hand, can do whatever you need to do to show Keith you care, whether it be romantically or platonically, let him know you’re there for him.”

Pidge finished their monologue and Lance nodded simply. The two stared at each other for a few awkward moments before Lance smiled. “Thanks Pidgeon. You’re a girl who knows how to help.” Lance said and Pidge ignored the small urge to scream at the use of ‘girl’. Yes, they knew Lance didn't know, but it still hurt.
“What’s that supposed to mean?” Pidge said instead, lifting an eyebrow and Lance shrugged. “I-I don't even know. I don't think that came out right.” Lance admitted and chuckled. Hunk tapped his shoulder.

“Leave her alone.” Hunk said and Pidge bit their lip to resist screaming and simply nodded. “Thank you Hunk, my favorite hero!” Pidge said through gritted teeth and Hunk smiled back.

“I’ll,” Lance inhaled. “I’ll let Keith be, I won’t push anything but I’ll try to be there for him no matter what.” Pidge smiled and patted Lance’s arm from across the table. “Good boy,” They said and suddenly they perked up. “Have you guys started practicing the graduation song?” They asked and Hunk and Lance groaned in unison.

“Yes,” They both answered and Pidge giggled. “What song are they making the seniors sing this year?” Pidge asked.

Every year at the senior’s graduation, the school made them all sing a goodbye song together. This year the song was “See You Again,” and Lance remembers how a ton of girls in his class had screamed about it..., something about a movie or some shit?

“See You Again by some dude and Charlie Puth.” Lance said and Pidge nodded. “Who are the soloists?” they asked and Lance groaned agained. “Me, Ezor and that N-7 girl.” Pidge laughed and grinned. “Well that’ll be fun to see!” Pidge said and Lance groaned while Pidge and Hunk laughed.

The noise coming from their table attracted a lot of attention, especially from a certain raven haired teen. Keith stared at the trio from afar as he shifted towards Rolo a bit more, who had his arm wrapped around Keith’s shoulders.

Keith turned away and focused on what Nyma was saying, something about a robot pet she and Rolo had made named Beezer. Keith couldn’t figure out why but he felt very….. Awkward, to say at the least. Like, before he even ever actually spoke to Lance and Hunk that day Pidge had dragged him over, he had always felt comfortable at the table.

He, Nyma, Rolo and recently N-7 had always eaten lunch together despite Pidge being Keith's best friend. Even after Keith and Rolo had broken up, the tension had been awkward for a bit but it had gone back to being the same joking, lively table they had been.

But now…… Everything felt…… off?
You don't belong.

Keith ignored the Voice as he watched Nyma smile, talking as she moved her hands around excitedly. N-7 watched with mild amusement, building a small tower out of her utensils.

You don't belong anywhere.

You can't ignore me forever.

Keith’s ears started to make a buzzing sound as he focused on ignoring the voice, though it gave him a slight headache and he started to tremble, leaning into Rolo who looked down at him concerned.

“Keith?” Rolo asked quietly but Keith ignored him, focusing on what Nyma was still rambling on about.

“Ugh, but then like, he snuck up on the girl and of course I went full girls protect fellow girls mode and grabbed her hand, asking what store she wanted to go to. Anyway, after that the guy left her alone and I got her number so now we’re friends!” Nyma said and giggled cutely at the end.

N-7 turned to look at Nyma, her short pixie fluffed around her ears as she tilted her head, looking at the blonde next to her. “You're literally the poster child for good behavior Ny.” N-7 said and Nyma grinned. “Thanks!” She said and giggled again.

You're not like them.

You’ll never be.

You don't help others.

You only look out for yourself.
You can’t even approach someone without breaking down.

You can’t even tell your friends what’s wrong.

Keith.

You should just d-

Keith stood up, pushing himself away from Rolo as he ran out of the cafeteria, the noise causing a few tables to turn their heads and Keith never noticed the two familiar figures standing up and chasing after him as he ran down the hall.

Running away again Keith?

You can’t run away from me.

I’ll always be here.

Keith found an empty classroom-after a few minutes of searching-and sat in the corner, curling in on himself and shaking as he held back tears.

Almost the moment he sat down though, another person sat next to him, hand on his back to try and stabilize him as the person stopped him from shaking. "Keith, it’s okay to cry,” A female voice said and Keith lifted his head up quickly to see the same dark brown wild hair that L owned. Aaren stood by the door as per request by their girlfriend, apparently.

“Don’t bottle it up.” L said, her eyes searching his face quickly, either scanning to see if he had been crying or moving because she couldn’t look him in the eye.

“Keith,” L said and Keith bit his lip, allowing tears to fall slowly down his face and L moved back a bit, hands shaking nervously as she sat next to him, letting the raven haired teen cry next to her as she played with the edge of her already fraying sleeves.
“You-uh, you don’t have to be embarrassed or whatever. It-it’s okay, y’know to cry.” L stammered out, hands fidgeting as Keith buried his face into his arms. L sat patiently waiting for Keith to finish crying, or maybe to tell her why he had been crying, when Lance came running into the room.

“You-uh, you don’t have to be embarrassed or whatever. It-it’s okay, y’know to cry.” L stammered out, hands fidgeting as Keith buried his face into his arms. L sat patiently waiting for Keith to finish crying, or maybe to tell her why he had been crying, when Lance came running into the room.

“Keith are you-” Lance stopped mid-sentence upon seeing L, who looked at Keith, then at Lance. “Uh, so-I’m just, I’m gonna go, if-if that’s okay with you Keith?” L turned to said raven, who weakly shrugged his shoulders. L nodded and stood up, fidgeting with her hands as she walked out of the room, looking over her shoulder a few times at Keith before she grabbed Aaren’s hand and shakily walked away.

Lance looked over his shoulder before looking back at Keith, moving to sit next to him. “Who was that?” Lance asked, sitting next to Keith who had finished crying. “That’s uh, new friend. I think?” Keith mumbled. “You think?” Lance asked and Keith shrugged.

“Yeah, uh, her name’s L.” Keith muttered. “Like, just the letter. And she said it’s not ‘cause of Death Note or something.” Lance nodded and scooted slightly closer to Keith.

“So, uh, besides that, what happened?” Lance asked, referring to Keith’s tears. “I just, it’s, Him.” Keith said, voice soft and broken as he spoke. “Him? As in, uh,” Lance tapped the side of his head for an example and Keith nodded.

“I-He’s just getting worse and worse and He hurts me emotionally and I can’t process things correctly whenever He starts speaking and it’s like no matter what I do, He’s always there.” Keith sobbed out, a few more tears sliding down his face.

You can’t get rid of me.

Ever.

“I think you should see someone.” Lance spoke out and Keith shook his head violently. “They’ll just put me in a mental institution! Or say I’m insane or-or” Keith stopped talking as he choked on his tears and Lance instinctively put his arm around Keith, bringing him closer. “Okay, nevermind, you don’t need to tell someone, yet.” Lance said, though he didn't believe his own words.
Lance cleared his throat, changing the subject.

“Hey, uh, sorry for kind of ignoring you this morning. I don't really know what overcame me.” Lance said as Keith cried into his shoulder.

“Do you wanna come over today so I can make it up? Miguel made some mean cookies that I’m sure he’d love if you had a taste. And I bet Becca would want to see you!” Lance tried and Keith smiled a bit despite his tears. “Yeah, that’d, that’d be cool.” Keith mumbled and pulled away from Lance once he realized how close they were.


Lance lifted an eyebrow, shifting uneasily as his face began to flush. “What?” he asked and Keith shook his head. “Nothing ‘s just, L said that too.” Keith mumbled and Lance smiled. “Sounds like she knows what she’s talking about then.” Lance said and Keith scoffed a bit.

Comfortable silence was exchanged between them as Keith wiped at his face. The only sound filling the room was their soft breathing, Keith’s slightly uneven from crying. Their backs pressed against the wall as they sat and it was actually rather peaceful.

But of course Lance had to ruin it.

“Why didn't Rolo come after you?” Lance asked and Keith looked at him before looking at his hands.

Because he doesn’t care.

No one really does.

L only followed because she’s as broken as you.
Or maybe, you're more broken.

“I don't-” Keith stopped and shrugged, looking away from Lance. “I don't know.” Lance made hummed a soft hum of disapproval as he looked at Keith. “Well, just know I’m here for you Keith, no matter what.” Lance said, feeling his cheeks heat up a bit as he spoke.

Keith nodded, smiling a bit as he turned back to face him. “Thank you Lance.” Keith said, voice soft.

The two looked at each other for a moment and then the bell rang, signaling them to go to their next class and Keith jumped a bit, standing up immediately. “I have to go get my bags from the cafeteria.” Keith spoke quickly, running out of the room before Lance could say anything else.

Keith wove himself through the crowd to the cafeteria as he grabbed his bag from his now empty table, his smile dropping as he realized the whole table was empty already.

He turned around and almost ran into L. Said girl let out a shriek and clutched her bag strap. “S-sorry!” She squeaked and Keith exhaled out as Aaren grabbed L’s hand and the trio started walking. “Are you okay now?” She asked and Keith nodded. “Yeah, actually, I feel a lot a better-” “After crying, right? It’s a good way to heal, believe it or not. No one should be afraid to cry!” L interrupted and her ears turned pink.

“Sorry I interrupted.” She said and Keith waved it off as they exited the cafeteria. “It’s fine, but thank you for helping me.” Keith said with gratitude.

“Uh, sorry for following you though.” L mumbled and Aaren looked at her. “Stop apologizing, he thanked you for it.” Aaren stated, elbowing her playfully and L nodded. “Sor-uh,” L coughed a bit and smiled at Keith before adjusting her book bag strap.

“Well, I’m glad you’re better Keith, and I hope you remember that crying is okay. See you in art!” She called out and Keith blinked for a moment before she and Aaren walked off, Aaren saying something about how they had found a theory of Catra, whoever that was, also being a princess.

As Keith walked to his advanced science class he mentally ran through the class roster for all his classes, raising an eyebrow to himself as he realized L was in three of them. Three. How the Hell did he miss that? Maybe she just blended in with the others?
No, he’s sure he would've recognized someone like her, she has a very….. Vibrant personality.

Keith shook his head as he walked into his classroom, walking to his seat as Haggar ran the usual “It’s the last week of school but we’re not done learning,” schtick.

~~~

The rest of Keith’s day went by surprisingly fast, well duh, there were only two classes left, but it went by faster than usual. L had talked to him during art, saying she had seen his picture hung up and how cool that had been before they both parted ways and Keith got onto the bus.

As the raven watched Lance board, he suddenly got nervous.

He was lying to you.

He isn’t sorry.

He’s going to sit with someone else again.

He won’t-

“Hey man!” Lance said as he plopped next to Keith. “How’s your day been?” Lance said and Keith gaped slightly at him before losing it, shrugging as he looked out the window. “It’s-uh, been, okay, honestly it’s been a bad day..” Keith mumbled and Lance stared at him for a little too long, making him shift in his seat uncomfortably.

Lance sighed a bit and shifted closer to Keith, making the raven blush. “I'm sorry dude that you had a bad day and I’m even more sorry I can’t do anything to fix it.” Lance sighed out and Keith glanced at him quickly. “It’s fine, it’s just, life is shit.” Keith muttered. “But I have friends who help me through it.”

Lance nodded and looked at his hands. “I’m also, uh, sorry for being weird this morning it’s just-” Lance cut himself off and tried to think of a way to explain his reactions without revealing too much, or making Keith feel like shit. “Some stuff happened and I was just feeling off today.” “It’s fine Lance,” Keith mumbled. “We all have off days.”
Lance hummed in agreement and nodded, the two going silent for a beat.

“So, what’s the story with L?” Lance asked, looking away from Keith and said raven haired teen looked at him. “What do you mean?” Keith asked and Lance shrugged. “I mean like how did you meet her and stuff? Is she cool? Do you think she’d wanna go to the dance with me?” Lance asked and Keith scoffed.

“Okay, one, she’s dating someone already, has been for a long while now. And two, I just met her recently, she was my ride to the animation contest.” Keith explained and Lance’s face fell a little.

“Oh, well she seems like a nice person and you two seem to have a lot in common.” Lance commented and Keith shrugged. “Not really, I don't think?” Keith mumbled and Lance shrugged before they both went quiet, awkward tension filling the air as both teens tried to think of something to speak about.

“So, uh, one of the moms of a student in Becca’s class bought her Dance Dance Revolution to try and make sure her muscles work and to help her stay moving, wanna try it?” Lance asked and Keith smirked, raising an eyebrow. “Why the heck not?” he answered after a moment of thinking as the bus pulled up to his stop.

“Well, then prepare to have your ass kicked and handed to you, because I can dance, really well.” Lance bragged and Keith laughed once they got off the bus and started heading to the McClain’s.

“Lance, if anything Maria told me is true, you dance like a 35 year old dad at a middle school dance.” Keith joked and Lance put a hand on his chest, gasping in fake hurt. “Keith! How dare you try and roast the Roast King?” Lance said and jokingly shoved Keith with his own shoulder.

“‘Sides, that’s when I freestyle, when I’m given choreography,” Lance grinned wickedly. “Just you wait.”

~~~

“No, you still can’t dance.” Keith commented after their third round of DDR. Lance stuck his tongue out as he sat on the floor. “Well you aren't much better, you’re just barely winning you know.” Keith rolled his eyes.
“Sounds like loser talk to me.” was all he responded with as the front door came flying open. “I. Hate. Marcus!” Maria shouted as she came stomping into the house and Keith and Lance turned to her as she flopped onto the couch, arms crossed.

“You can’t go to one date because you have to go to soccer practice, something that you have a passion for, and suddenly you get dumped! Boys.” Maria growled out tugging her hair ties out, letting her braids come undone. Maria then looked up, noticing Keith and she grinned.

“Hi Keith!” She said brightly and waved, looking at Lance with a proud smile. Mario came running through the door at that moment, hair sticking to his forehead as he shut and locked the door, breathing heavily.

“Why were you late? And what happened?” Maria asked, looking at her twin, who was also covered in dirt.

“Oh, I beat up your boyfriend, no biggie. Do we have a stronger lock or-?” Mario was cut off by a loud banging on the door and he screamed, running up the staircase, leaving the other three in frightened silence.

“Okay, your house is by far more entertaining than mine.” Keith commented as Lance stood up, running to the door. Keith followed quickly behind and froze when he looked through the glass upon seeing who it was.

“Wai-he,” Keith tried to find his words as Lance stood against the door, holding it shut. “That-You meant M-Marcus Mouwn?” Keith asked, turning to Maria, who stood in front of the door, arms crossed. “Yeah? You know him?” She asked, eyebrow lifted at Keith’s pale face.

“Ye-I-unfo-unfortunately.” Keith stammered out and the lock on the door broke by some amazing force, the door swinging open and Lance falling on the ground.

Marcus glared at the three in front of him before he finally actually looked at Keith.

“Oh, if it isn’t Snitch-Face. What the fuck are you doing here?” Marcus asked, taking a step into the household and Keith took a quick few steps backwards. “I-they’re m-my friends. I wa-was hanging out with them.” Keith stuttered out and Lance got to his feet, trying to push Marcus out.
Marcus pushed the smaller teen out of his way and Maria snuck away into the kitchen, grabbing the house phone.

“As if you have friends. They probably just want to humiliate you, just wait. No one likes you Bitch-Boy.” Marcus continued spitting out insults, lifting his hand up to hit Keith but the other took a step back, tripping on his feet and falling backwards.

“Fucking pathetic.” Marcus commented, looking down at Keith and Lance once again stood up. Keith curled himself into a small ball as the cuban boy wedged himself in between Keith and Marcus.

“What do you have against Keith?” Lance asked and Marcus rolled his eyes. “He’s fucking gay you know, nothing but a loser.” Marcus insulted.

“Hey!” Maria shouted from the kitchen and Marcus looked at her. “I’m bisexual you know!” She shouted and Marcus sighed. “Uh, yeah, why do you think I broke up with you?” Marcus commented and Lance punched him.

Hard.

Marcus crumpled to the floor as Lance landed the blow, Marcus immediately holding his cheek as Maria and Keith looked at him with surprise.

“Holy fu-fuck.” Keith mumbled out and Lance felt a sense of pride at Keith’s words.

Stop that. He’s with Rolo. Lance reminded himself.

Marcus jumped to his feet, fist raised high in the air, but before Marcus could even think about moving, the cops came in, grabbing his arms and tucking them behind his back.

“Yo what the Hell???” Marcus shout out and one of the cops faced him as the other cuffed him.
“You are being arrested for disturbance of peace and breaking and entering a civilian’s home.” The cop informed him, writing something down on a notepad. “Bu-but Mrs. Balmera! You know me, I would neve-” Marcus was cut off by a taser to his side, sent to him by he other cop.

“Thank you, Sven.” Mrs. Balmera thanked and she turned to Keith, holding her hand out for him. Keith shakingly took it and was pulled into a standing position. “Hello again, Keith.” She said and Keith only nodded, looking down at his feet. “I really am sorry we only seem to meet in bad situations.” She apologized and Keith waved his hand a bit.

“It’s fine, not your fault people are assholes.” Keith mumbled and Mrs. Balmera smiled a him, turning to her partner. “Let’s go, don't want to waste anymore time now.” She said and Sven carried Marcus’s twitching body out the door. “I hope I see you again Keith, under good circumstances.” Mrs. Balmera said, then exited the house.

There was about five beats of silence until Lance turned to Keith. “Okay, what the fuck was all that? How do you know Mrs. Ball-whatever and Marcus? And what did she mean bad situations???” Lance asked and Maria snuck upstairs to tell her twin everything that had happened, leaving the two alone.

Keith looked at his shoes and simply walked over to the couch, sitting down and grabbing the remote controller, shutting DDR off and staring at his knees.

“Marcus was one of the sons of one of my foster parents.” Keith started and Lance sat next to him slowly, a little closer than Keith would have liked right now, but he didn't comment, only continuing on with his story. “And Marcus was a very bad person as a whole, he would steal from his parents, would hide their stuff, would break plates and dishes on purpose, would just be a menace. He never got in trouble for it because he blamed it on the dog. But one day I caught him stealing money from his mother’s purse.

“And so I told his mother what I had seen and Marcus got in trouble. But then Marcus started hitting me, fighting me, kicking me any time I told his parents something. And even after I stopped telling on him, whenever he did something bad, he’d just hit me before I could even think of telling on him. His family was very actually accepting of the LGBT community. They didn't understand it, like how your sex is different then your gender or why people felt attraction to the same gender, but they accepted it.

“Except for Marcus, he thought it was horrible and gross. And when I had told my foster parents that, he started to abuse me even more. And at some point the parents noticed and asked who I had been getting bullied by and when I told them Marcus-
“They didn’t believe me. They thought I was lying, trying to get him into more trouble. And so they sent me back.” Keith finished his monologue by wrapping his arms around his legs. Lance thought he was done until Keith inhaled and started again.

“And Mrs. Balmera, well, it seems I’ve only ever gotten sent to abusive families. Either emotionally abusive or physically and one foster parent would constantly call the cops on me because I wouldn’t listen or other really dumb stuff. Most of the other cops would just interrogate me then let me go but one day Mrs. Balmera answered the call.

“And she took pity upon me. She thought it was unfair that I had to live with this. So she spoke to my caretaker, the one who schedules my foster homes and has all my paperwork and she tried to give me a new, proper family, someone who worked with her in the department. And I was happy there, everything was fine, they treated me like a person, not a troubled teenager. They let me do whatever. But-

“They worked as cops, and on-one day on the job they-they got hurt, like, really badly and-” Keith couldn’t finish, bursting into tears as he unraveled himself. “I’m sorry, I’m pathetic.” Keith said, repeating Marcus’s words from before and Lance grabbed his shoulders.

“Hey, no you’re not. You’re a wonderful person who has just had a really horrible past. And I’m proud of you for pushing through, you still fought for your life at the times it mattered.” Lance slowly put his arm on Keiths shoulder and let the raven haired cry on him.

*God, look at how pathetic you are. You can’t even talk to someone about your past without crying.*

*Hasn't this already happened before?*

*Doesn’t this need to stop?*

*Keith, you need to stop.*

*Stop forever.*

*You should-*
“You’re strong Keith.” Lance said quietly as Keith’s sobs got louder and Keith tried to shut himself up but it wasn’t working. “You’re so very strong and I admire you for that.”

I love you for that. Lance said in the back of his mind.

Keith allowed himself to smile through his tears and their small bubble was broken the moment Keith’s phone rang.

“I-” Keith grabbed his phone, cutting himself off as he unlocked it. “It’s Rolo.” Keith said. He unspoken, ‘My boyfriend’ permeated the air as Keith read his text. “He wants to talk to me about something.” Keith mumbled and Lance looked over his shoulder, arm still around his shoulder.

Keith ignored the warmth emanating from Lance’s body as the questions of what flew around his head.

He’s gonna break up with you.

He doesn’t like you.

He’s gonna break up with you.

He was just using you to feel better about himself.

He’s gonna break up with you.

Keith ignored those thoughts and looked at his phone, totally not intentionally leaning into Lance a bit, totally not.

Babe <3: Can we talk tomorrow? I’m at Lance’s right now

Rolo The Brolo: sure that’s fine. We’ll meet up at the school library before classes
Keith stared at his phone for a moment before he typed back ‘k’. Keith turned to look at Lance and immediately pulled away from the other when their noses touched. “Ah-uh, sor-sorry.” Keith mumbled, scooching away as Lance held the top of his nose with one hand.

“It’s-uh,” Lance cleared his throat. “It’s fine, let’s just continue with DDR.” Keith nodded at that, grabbing his remote as Lance started the game up.

~~~~~

Keith stood by the doors of the library as he waited for Rolo to arrive.

*He’s not gonna show*

*He was just messing with you*

*Maybe you’re late*

*Maybe you should go and k-*

“Hey! Sorry I’m late.” Rolo said, holding his hat over his blonde hair as he ran up to greet Keith, side hugging him before looking around.

“So uh, Keith, I really wanted to talk to you about this and I know that this’ll seem really, uh, douchey? I guess. Especially since we’ve already done this before and I just asked you out but—” Rolo stopped himself from rambling as Keith looked up at him, slight fear in his eyes.

*He’s gonna break up with you.*

*He pities you.*

*He’s gonna break up with you.*
He hates you.

He’s gonna bre-

“I’m breaking up with you.” Rolo rushed out and Keith felt tears come to his eyes, but not because of the breakup.

Because He was right.

“An-and it’s not because I hate you or anything, in fact the opposite.” Rolo inhaled, moving closer to Keith and wrapping his arm around him, sitting him down slowly upon noticing his tears.

“I’m doing this because I love you and want you to be happy but,” Rolo looked to the side, away from Keith. “I see the way you look at Lance.” Rolo started and Keith felt his entire world shatter.

Was he really that obvious? Did everyone else just think he was a lovesick helpless teen? What did Lance think? Why did this have to happen to him? How could this happen to him? He thought he was keeping it down and hidden but no, he was just dumb.

“And I’m only breaking up with you because I’ve seen the way he looks at you. I wouldn’t break up with you if I didn’t think you had a shot, believe me, I wouldn’t. But you definitely have a shot with Lance, and I think you guys could make each other really happy. And I hope he does make you happy, happier than I could’ve.” Rolo smiled sadly, now looking at Keith as the raven simply stared at him with a dumbfounded look.

“Yo-you really think I have a shot with him?” Keith asked and Rolo nodded, his sad smile getting even sadder as he looked at his shoes.

“Yeah, I do.”

He just wants to get rid of you.

Keith didn't normally believe the voice in his head.
He pities how obvious you are.

But now,

He hates you so much he came up with lie.

Keith believes him.

He’s a good actor.

Why?

You’re worthless.

Because He had been right.

~~~

Keith had walked around school all day, softly swaying as the school bustled about him.

It was only the seniors that had been going to school this week unless someone had sports, because it was graduation week.

In fact, graduation was fricking tomorrow and no one would stop talking about it. Excitement filled the halls, but so did sadness.

A lot of people said goodbye to their favorite teachers while other kids bid farewell to their best friends that would go to different colleges. A lot of teens were going to community college or a college in New York, because, well, it’s the Big Apple!
A lot of people weren’t planning on going to college and instead picking up a few jobs.

Keith though felt like an outsider to all of them, the Voice practically shouting at him that he was gonna be alone, he was leaving his family, he was leaving his friends, he’d be alone.

A small part of his brain mentioned how Lance’s dream college was only a 23 minute drive a way, but the Voice shouted how Lance probably didn’t want to go now since Keith would be so close.

Sofia comes tomorrow that small part of his brain supplied. She’s going to be the Shirogane's favorite. She’s not gonna remember you. She’s gonna hate you now.

The small part quietly added that Keith would be leaving Texas soon, away from his bad past. But Keith would also be leaving his comfort and everything would change, he’d be going somewhere no one knew him and no one’s gonna like him.

Keith was wrapped up in these thoughts the whole day, the rest of his last day passed in what felt like a matter of minutes.

He doesn't remember informing Pidge of the breakup, doesn't remember them hugging and comforting him. Doesn't remember Lance trying to cheer him up or Hunk baking him cookies. But he does remember every. Single. Thought that went on in his head. He remembers. Every. Single insult the Voice said back to him. He remembers the. Exact. Moment the smaller voice stopped responding.

And when that smaller voice stopped pointing out the good, he felt himself drowning, falling, suffocating in his thoughts. No one seemed to notice his lack of response to anything. Did he even respond to anyone? He couldn’t remember. It was like he had been possessed, another spirit taking over his body and controlling him while he was stuck listening to his thoughts.

And when he finally gained control of his own attention, he was in the middle of graduation. Did Keith ever go to sleep? How did he get here? When did he change? He couldn’t remember, but the suddenness of location change made him jump in his seat and Lance, who sat in the row behind him, put a reassuring hand on his shoulder, making Keith visibly relax back as he watched the rest of his ceremony go by.

Towards the end when they were all called up for their diplomas and handshake with Principal Zarkon, he froze. He stood up in his seat and froze, feeling fear fill up inside him.
Keith jolted at the harshness of the Voice and took a step forward, walking up to the platform as they called his name. He grabbed the diploma with shaking hands from Zarkon and shook the older man’s hand, turning to face his family, and crowd, with a smile.

Keith felt safer seeing them, Kotoka with her camera out, capturing the moment, Shiro holding up an iPad so Ryuzaki could watch from work and Pidge sat next to Shiro, tears running down both their faces as they waved at him excitedly. Keith let out a soft chuckle and started walking off stage as they called the next person and on his way down the stairs he froze, watching as a young, familiar girl walked into a seat next to Kotoka, hugging her and turning around, dark hair fluttering in the wind.

Keith waved a small wave at her and her face lit up, standing in her spot and waving crazily at Keith and he let a smile rest on his face before he sat back in his seat.

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“You ASSHLOES!” Pidge cried at their celebratory dinner that night. Kotoka had driven their whole friend group-Keith, Lance, Pidge, Hunk, Rolo, Shay, Nyma and then her other kids, Sofia and Shiro out to a local restaurant and ‘let them go wild.’ Matt was going to join them soon, but he had gone to New York to drop something off a TISCH earlier that day so he’d be late.

“You’RE LEAVING ME ALL ALONE, A HELPLESS JUNIOR NEXT YEAR WITHOUT ANY FRIENDS!!!” Pidge cried out into their hamburger. Lance laughed at that and ruffled their hair, making them glare at him. “You’ll make new friends,” Lance encouraged and Keith nodded, finally smiling after his long 24 dark hours. “You’re friends with L and Aaren and stuff right? Doesn’t L have a younger brother and sister, you could hang with them.” Keith helped.

Pide pouted. “But Christian’s annoying and Ani doesn't like me. ‘Sides, I’m friends with Aaren and L, not their siblings or something. For example, I don't like Shiro-” “HEY!” “-But I’m friends with you.” Pidge responded, ignoring Shiro’s complaint as Shay giggled behind her hands.

Sofia kicked her legs back and forth watching the older kids interact as she held onto her older foster-brother’s hand. Keith smiled down at her and she smiled back.
“I’m glad you’re here,” She said and the table slowly got quiet as she talked to him. “I’m glad you finally found people who can appreciate you for what your worth and aren’t just in it for the money.” Sofia added.

“Hun, I’ll be honest when I started taking care of Keith, I didn’t even know this was a thing you got paid for,” Kotoka said from the table next to them and Keith tilted in his chair to look at her, listening intently.

“All I knew was I wanted someone to help complete the family and when I saw Keith and Shiro interacting, I knew he’d fit in.” Keith smiled at Kotoka and she smiled back before Nyma stood up.

“As a newly graduated senior, I would like to officially do something as an adult that I’ve wanted to do for a while.” She said, looking at the table as they all turned their attention back to her.

“Pidge,” She started and Keith knew what was happening right away, fanboying a little for his friend. “Will you go to the senior prom with me?” Nyma asked and the smaller teen shot out of their chair, hugging Nyma right away and screaming “Yes!”

Keith laughed along with the others as they all ate, everyone getting to know Sofia and Sofia and Keith catching up finally.

At some point, Sofia tugged on Keith’s hand and Keith excused himself from the table, following Sofia outside.

“What is it?” He asked the younger child and she twisted a piece of her hair. “Do, do you like Lance? Like love-like Lance?” She asked and Kei felt his face flush, bending down to look at her. “Maybe I do, why?” He asked and Sofia’s face also flushed.

“How-how did you know you liked Lanc?” she asked slowly and Keith smiled. “Aw, does someone have a crush?” Keith asked and she hid he face in her hair. “No!” she mumbled out and Kith poked her stomach, making her screech with laughter. “Ooh, Sof’s got a crush! Sof’s got a crush!” Sofia smiled a the old nickname and grabbed his finger.

“As you would like to know, I do have a crush. A very serious one. But, I don't really know if it’s just a crush, be-because like, this person makes me super happy and lots of feelings, how did you feel when you first started liking Lanc?” Sofia asked and Keith chuckled a bit, sitting on the sidewalk and Sofia sat next to him, crossing her legs since she was wearing a pink sundress.
“Well, the first thing I thought was definitely ‘Oh shit’.” He joked and they both chuckled as he thought about it, ignoring the voice as Sofia told him to stop, that no one cares.

“But, well, it was kinda sudden, me realizing that is. He made me laugh, and feel special. He understood me and always tried to make me happy. And I guess as time went on, as he started finding more about me and helping me with all these other things, I just fell more in love. It is hard sometimes, because I have moments were I feel like it’s too good to be true, but, sometimes, I ignore that thought, because just hanging with him makes everything worth it.

“I’ve told him about a few of my old foster homes and he’s told me that anything they’ve ever done was wrong, that I deserve everything in the world. He means a lot to me and I don't know what I’d do without him.” Keith finished and Sofia smiled.

“Yeah, uhm, may I tell you who I have a crush on?” Keith nodded with a smile. “Okay, it’s this guy in my english class, he always writes the nicest notes to everyone and he is amazing at writing. I finally worked up the courage to talk to him and now we’re friends. But I think I might like-love him.” Sofia said and Keith smiled again.

“Well, you are too young for dating but, if you really love him and you want to date him at some point, stay friends with him for now, because may one day, he’ll realize how much he loves you too and you guys’ll be happy together.” Keith said and Sofia laughed.

“Thanks Keithy.” She said and stood up. “And by the way, Lance likes you too, I think he’s just waiting for the right moment.” Sofia said and she skipped back into the restaurant right after.

Keith chuckled to himself as he followed her, realizing he just had this conversation with 10 year old.

~

“Who wants to party?!” Pidge shouted as they walked out of the restaurant. Keith rolled his eyes. “Pidgeon, It’s late.” Keith replied and Lance whined out, slinging his arm around Keith’s shoulders. “Aw, but Keeeeef! We just graduated! We’re all adults it’ll be fine!” Lance said and smiled as he tried to hug Keith.
Keith pretended to be disgusted and pushed Lance away. “Ugh, fine whatever I guess.” Keith said and Sofia cheered but Kotoka picked her up. “Nuh-uh, bedtime for you missy, you still have one more day of school tomorrow.” She said.

“Awww.” Sofia whined but didn't argue as she yawned, waving smally at Keith as Kotoka carried the smaller girl away to her car, everyone else piling into Matt’s car and Shiro’s.

Pidge pumped their fist in the air. “Let’s play truth or dare!” they shouted and everyone groaned. “Can we play something different for once?” Lance asked and Keith nodded.

---

No one wants you there Keith

You should just go home instead

Be alone, where no one has to deal with you.

“Guys I think I should go-” Keith stopped talking when he realized no one was listening to him, all of them debating over which game to play while Pidge texted Nyma to inform Matt, Shay and Rolo of all decisions being made.

Lance turned when he saw Keith shrink back into his chair a bit and paused the conversation. “Keith, you okay?” Lance asked.

No

You will never be okay

You don’t deserve happiness

You only deserve to suffer

You won’t ever be happy
“I’m fine,” Keith said and tried for a smile, hoping the other teen would take it and leave him alone but Lance stared at him for a moment. Once the car stopped at a stoplight, Lance climbed over the seat to drop in between Pidge and Keith in the back.

“Dude what the fu-” Keith started but Lance interrupted him. “You don’t have to tell me what’s bothering you, but please be honest with me.” Lance said and Pidge looked at Keith before they scrambled into the middle seat with Hunk, ignoring Shiro shouting at them for moving around.

“Are you okay?” Lance asked and Keith hugged himself, looking out the window.

_If you tell him how broken you are, why don't you just go ahead and confess while you're at it?_

_Why not tell him you still harm yourself just not through cutting?_

_Why not tell him how much you wish you could just disappear off the face of the planet?_

_Why not tell him how you completely spaced yesterday?_

_Why not tell him how much you want to di-

“Really, Lance.” Keith started but said nothing more as he leaned into Lance, closing his eyes. Lance looked down at Keith and wrapped one arm around him, bringing the raven haired boy closer to him for comfort, leaning back as Keith rested his eyes.

Lance looked up to find Pidge staring at him. “What?” Lance mouthed and Pidge said nothing as they sat back down in their seat.

Everything in the car was quiet, Pidge and Hunk’s whispered conversation, Lance’s breathing, Shiro’s dad music playing at the front, everything.

Except for Keith’s thoughts.
As much as he wish his thoughts would stop for just a few seconds, et him breathe and be peaceful for once, The Voice didn't allow that, making Keith feel shitty about everything.

They were having such fun before.

You could hear them, laughing, talking, singing along to songs

You ruined their fun Keith

Fun ruiner

Even Sofia wanted to get away from you

You remember how she would never go to sleep early?

She used to give Lauren a fight all the time at the foster house

Never has she ever gone to bed early

She was just sick of you and hearing you pathetic love life

Love life?

I wouldn’t even call it that

Keith your time is up

Go kill yourse-
“We’re home!!!” Shiro called out and Pidge was out of their seat in a flash, running into the Shirogane’s house, practically flying. Hun k laughed at them and followed as Lance unbuckled Keith, who was in a half-sleeping state.

Wake up Keith or they'll leave you in the car

Wake up or they’ll abandoned you

Get off of Lance or he can’t get out

Get u-

Keith could barely register being lifted from his seat in his sleep-like state and felt himself being carried out of the car by…. Someone? He thought it was Shiro at first but he could hear Shiro a few feet away flirting with Matt, euch.

Pidge wasn’t strong enough, Hunk was already in the house, Shay, Rolo and Nyma didn't even know he had fallen asleep so-

The moment Keith realized it was Lance was when he finally woke up, blinking his eyes open to stare up at Lance.

“Oh good, the emo’s awake.” Lance commented and chuckled, in Keith’s opinion, adorably. “The emo can hear you.” Keith retorted and Lance chuckled again, making Keith’s ears turn red as Lance put him on the couch.

“How the fuck could you even carry me?” Keith asked and Lance lifted an eyebrow. “Dude you weigh like nothing.” Lance responded and Keith shrugged, looking at the door as others entered.

Pidge winked at him as everyone sat down, making Keith stick his tongue out at them.

“So we decided on Never Have I Ever!” Pidge said and the group cheered as Matt and Shiro went into Shiro and Keith’s bedroom, leaving the newly grads to themselves.
“Aaaand!” Pidge added, pointing at Rolo. “Blondie boy brought some alcohol!” Pidge sang and Keith narrowed his eyes. “Pidge last time you got drunk you ended up releasing all the hamsters that person had owned.” Keith said and Pidge rolled their eyes.

“That was a while ago.” “Three and a half weeks.” “Whatever,” Pidge grabbed the bottle from Rolo, grabbing cups and pouring one for everyone. “So, same rules except that instead of taking a grape, you take a sip of your alcohol and whoever has the most in the end wins!” everyone nodded except for Keith, who looked down at his cup, he tended to lose games and he couldn’t hold his alcohol well.

“Keith?” Pidge asked and Keith nodded, grabbing his cup from them and Pidge grinned.

“Who wants to start?” Pidge asked and Lance’s hand shot up. “Everyone be completely honest! Never Have I Ever had less than five siblings!” Lance called out and Pidge, Hunk, Nyma and Rolo all drank from their cups.

Lance looked at Shay. “How many siblings do you have?” He asked and Shay grinned. “Five brothers and two sisters! I’m the youngest, then Rax is older than me but everyone is else is in college or has a job so you don't see them often.” Shay said and Lance turned to Keith now for an explanation.

“I’m a foster kid, remember? We all count each other as siblings.” Keith said and Lance nodded.

“Me next!” Nyma called and thought for a second. “Never Have I Ever littered!” Nyma said smiling while everyone took a sip from their cup. “That’s not fair Ms. Perfect.” Rolo huffed under his breath and Nyma laughed.

Pidge went next without asking, grinning at Keith. “Never Have I Ever had a crush on Keith within the past year, honesty people!” Pidge said before leaning back a bit. Rolo picked up his cup simply, taking yet another sip from the cup and Lance stared at his for a moment before picking his up too and taking a sip, which made questions fly around Keith’s head until he remembered Lance has admitted to having a crush on him in the past.

“I’ve gotten grounded, just not by my parents.” Keith added and Pidge put their head in their hands. “Not the orphan jokes again.” They mumbled. “No, my parents just killed themselves instead of grounding me,” Keith finished and the room went dead silent.

“Never Have I Ever made a bad joke.” Shay squeaked out and Lance, Keith and Pidge all took a sip, Keith only after Pidge yelled at him to.

The game continued on with stupid shit, Rolo getting out after a few more rounds, Lance right after and then Pidge, Shay and Hunk all got out at once after Never Have I Ever broken into the science lab (Shay kept her plants in there and she had needed to water them).

Keith and Nyma now sat across from each other, both a little tipsy, and both with two sips left.

“Never Have I Ever worn fingerless gloves.” Nyma said and grinned as Keith, who was currently wearing his gloves, took a sip. “Never Have I Ever been pansexual.”

“Never Have I Ever been to a fair.” Nyma said and Keith blinked at her. “Why not?” He asked and she shrugged. “Too crowded, too noisy.” she said and Keith didn't grab his cup. Everyone stared at him in confusion. “None of the foster parents liked me enough.” he responded a little slurred.

“Never Have I Ever had a sweet sixteen.” Keith said and Nyma downed the rest of her drink and everyone was now quiet. “Wow, you’re foster parents suck.” Rolo commented, his honesty coming through due to his level of intoxication. Keith just laughed it off as he backed away to his original seat. “Life sucks when you’re a foster kid.” Keith commented and played with his jeans, which he had changed into right after the ceremony.

“Changing this depressing moment, Rolo, would you kindly explain why you broke up with Keith?” Pidge said, turning sharply to said blonde, who backed up a bit under their glare. “Uh, well. I like Keith, I really do, trust me, but I noticed something that could make Keith happier but he wouldn’t be able to get this thing if I hadn’t broken up with him. But now that I have, I hope he gets it soon, so he can be happier.” Rolo said and Shay and Nyma cooed at him.

Pidge grinned and leaned back in their spot. “Okay, good to know I don't have to fight you.” Pidge said and poured more drinks. “Now, let’s play a little game I called “Never Have I Ever Told Anyone This”. You essentially just drink a lot then reveal a secret of yours.” Pidge said and Keith slowly took a cup offered to him.
“That sounds really dumb.” Keith commented. “And stupid, and risky. Should I go stop Matt from making out with Shiro to stop you?” Keith asked and Pidge made a face. “Neve mention what mine and your brother do, please.” they begged and Keith snorted as he took a sip of his drink.

“I’m in! It’s like a bonding moment!” Lance said and Keith rolled his eyes. “Yet another bonding moment.” Keith added. “Don’t remember! Didn't happen!” Lance shouted as Pidge passed out the cups, giving them both a strange look.

“I’ll go first then!” Pidge said and dunk back their cup, drinking it at once before inhaling deeply. “I’m nonbinary.” They said quickly and the whole group stared at them for a few seconds. “Omigod Pidge I’m so sorry me calling you a pretty girl this morning must’ve been so rude!” Shay apologized and Pidge waved it off. “It’s fine, you didn't know.” Pidge commented and Nyma hugged Pidge.

“Aw, why didn't you tell me! I wouldn’t have changed my view on you!” Nyma cried out and Pidge grinned, tapping her arm. “I was just scared you guys wouldn’t know how to react.” Pidge responded. “I don't understand it,” Rolo said slowly. “But I accept you.” Rolo said and Lance nodded. “Me too!” “Me three!” Hunk pitched in and they all turned to Keith, except for Pidge.

“I already knew, I don't have to say it.” Keith said and the others all turned back. “So uh, thanks all for accepting me, who wants to go next?” Pidge asked, their own words slurring a bit due to their drunkeness.

“Me!” Shay called and thought for a moment as she drank her alcohol. “I once sold someone the wrong flowers at the flower shop and I blamed it on my co-worker.” Shay said and Hunk fake gasped. “And I trusted you!” He shouted and spiraled into an uncontrollable fit of giggles.

Nyma lifted her cup to her mouth to go next but Pidge’s phone rang.

Pidge grinned at the caller I.D. and put it on speaker phone.

“Waddup Aaren??” Pidge called out. “You’re on speaker phone.” Pidge added after a second. “Hi people of Pidge’s phone!” A voice that was not Aaren called out. “Hi L!” Keith said, smiling uncontrollably because of how much he’d drinken.

“Why’re you calling?” Pidge asked and Aaren’s voice rang through. “L wanted to know what
college Keith was going to, she’s nervous that she won’t know anyone at college and it’s kind of freaking her out.” “Kind of???” L asked in a panicked voice as music in the background started playing.

Pidge went to answer but someone on the other end screamed, interrupting them.

“PUT CAM DOWN, WHAT THE FUCK!” “SAMUEL, SHUT UP WE’RE ON THE PHONE!” L screamed back at the other person. Pidge giggled at the shenanigans of the others as Keith grabbed the phone from them. “I’m going to S.V.A.” Keith answered and L cheered. Something in the background crashed and L shrieked into the phone, making Keith’s group of friends jump in response.

“OMIGOD JACOB WHAT THE FUCK?!!??” L shouted, her voice getting quieter as she moved away. “LUNA I TOLD YOU NOT TO INVITE HIM!” Aaren said something to her before hanging up the phone and Pidge burst into giggles again, falling on their back.

“Who even were those people?” Nyma asked, handing Pidge the phone after she grabbed it from Keith. “Friend’s from clubs, but omigod, I have got to ask them what was happening there later.” Keith nodded and giggled a bit too before everyone got settled back into playing the game.

Everything went smoothly, people revealing stuff about stuff they’ve broken or lies they told, Keith even got to mention the one time he hid his foster brother’s stuffed animal under the floorboards, but as the night got late, and Hunk, Nyma, Rolo and Shay all left, the game got more serious.

Matt and Shiro came out of the room, scolding them for drinking, but joined in too.

And hoo boy were secrets revealed.

Matt revealed there had been a time where he and N-7 had dated, Shiro told the others about Adam, Pidge talked about how they used to get into fights in elementary school, Lance revealed how much he had been hurting when Rebecca was going through treatment and Keith-

“Keith.” Pidge nudged him with their shoulder. “Dude, it’s your turn.” Pidge said, but bit their lip, not wanting Keith to reveal his secrets.
“I’ve been to very abusive foster homes.” Keith mumbled. “An-and you all already know that, someone of you have helped protect me from those people,” Matt and Pidge smiled softly. “Or have given me empathy about it,” Shiro looked at his hands. “Or have comforted me because of it.” Lance looked up at the ceiling sadly.

“But, uh, because of those families, I have the ever famous Voice.” the other four nodded and Pidge put their hand on Keith’s arm. “You don’t have to tell us you know.” Pidge said softly and Keith looked down.

“But I should.” Keith mumbled and Shiro nodded at that. “You should, but if you don’t feel comfortable enough, you don't have to.”

_How weak_

_Can’t even tell the people you love most what’s bothering you_

_These are the people who pity you most_

_They fought because they were afraid of getting hurt themselves_

_They empathized with you but really they just pity you_

_They comforted you to lift the guilt off their shoulders_

_Don't tell them_

_Don't tell them you so fucking weak you don't even have the strength to kil-

“Can I go to bed?” Keith asked suddenly and the others looked at him sadly.

“You can go to bed.” Shiro responded and Matt nodded. Keith slowly stood up, Pidge’s hand falling off of his arm. Keith got up in silence and walked out of the room, rubbing at his eyes to try and stop the tears from flowing out when a soft voice made him pause.
“We care about you, Keith.” Lance mumbled. “We really do.” Keith just nodded and trudged back to bed, slipping under the covers, not bothering to change out of his clothes.

How pathetic

Making their graduation day about you?

It wasn’t just your graduation you know

Lance did too

Katie was already upset because you’re leaving her

You rubbed it in her face

Shiro and Matt were finally happy, they just got together

You made them pity you

Lance was happy, his sister’s getting better, he just graduated himself

Now he feels bad for you

Way to go Keith

You’re so selfish

Maybe next time just shut up
Maybe next time I will

See?

You should listen to me

No one knows Keith fell asleep crying that night, wishing he could drown himself in his tears.

Chapter End Notes

I'M NOT IN THE VOLTRON FANDOM ANYMORE (honestly who is) BUT I'M STILL GOING TO FINISH THIS!!!! ALSO SORRY FOR THE DROUGHT I HAVEN'T HAD ANYWHERE TO WRITE THIS BECAUSE MY LAPTOP BROKE SO I HAVE BEEN USING THE ONES AT MY SCHOOL WHEN I CAN!!! ALSO EVERYONE GOT OUT OF CHARACTER SUDDENLY BUUT THAT'LL BE FIXED NEXT CHAPTER. YOU GUYS HAVE NO IDEA HOW LONG I'VE BEEN WAITING TO WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER BECAUSE SOME KLANCE STUFF FINALLY HAPPNES!!!!!!! WHOOO. SEE YOU NEXT UPDATE.
One Dance (Dance, Dance, We're Falling Apart)

Chapter Summary

The dance is finally here and everyone has a date, well, except for Keith and Lance..... How convenient.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Keith felt like absolute crap the next day, but he hid it behind his smiles and laughs as Sofia dragged him around her new room, showing him all her dolls and posters. Kotoka was planning on painting it smaragdine next week but for now it stayed the ever dark purple Keith had had it before.

Keith forced a smile as the younger girl went on about her ‘crush’, talking about how nice he is, and how even though he’s a year younger she still thinks he’s cool.

And then she said he baked, and something clicked in Keith’s mind. “Is this boy, perhaps, a one Miguel McClain?” Keith asked and Sofia squealed, hiding her face in her pigtails, which Kotoka had put up with bows.

“How’d you know?” She asked and Keith forced out a fake laugh to try and keep her happy. “I’m magic.” he claimed and Sofia, giggling, pushed his shoulder playfully. “No you’re not!” She squealed and Keith laughed.

“Ohay then, well, I happen to know the guy, and I must say, you have some good taste in men.” Keith said jokingly, the Voice telling him he should leave Sofia alone. “That’s weird!!” She laughed and Keith grinned, standing up and stretching. “Well, little munchkin, I’m going to get lunch, you can play with your dolls for a bit and I’ll make you some lunch too.” Keith said and Sofia nodded, smiling wider as she grabbed a Cabbage Patch doll from a box she had.

Good job listening Keith

See how she got happier when you left?
You’re finally making the right choices.

Keith sighed and stared at the ground as he walked to the kitchen, passing his and Shiro’s room quietly, trying to not disturb the adult in the room.

If you listen to me, Keith, everyone will be happier.

Except for you that is.

But don’t be selfish,

Let the others be happy.

Keith was stealthily silent as he toasted four slices of bread, getting the bologna and cheese out and sliding them in between two pieces of bread, heating it up again to melt the cheese before he took the two sandwiches out and set them on a plate.

Go slower, let Sofia enjoy her time alone.

She’s finally getting a break from you, don’t ruin it.

Keith sighed out and cut the sandwiches into four pieces very slowly, almost barely moving before he picked up the two plates and walked to Sofia’s room slowly, entering again and she paused mid-doll monologue and turned, grinning up at him.

“You came just in time for the doll wedding! Your can be the person that says ‘you may now kiss the groom’.” Sofia said and Keith half-heartedly laughed as he placed the plates on her dresser, taking the offered doll and sitting next to her.

Keith looked at Sofia’s display. There were two cabbage patch dolls sitting in the back, 3 identical Barbie dolls laying sideways and a guy doll, not Ken, sitting sideways across from them. Sofia held up a really tan Ken doll and a black haired Ken doll up. Keith noticed they were both wearing suits of some type, Keith looked at the doll he was holding and smiled when he realized it was the American Girl doll of her Keith had bought the one time he had an allowance.
“Okay, uh, ceremony speech. Blah blah blah.” Keith said as he bounced the doll up and down, making Sofia giggle. “Blah blah blah. Sir I need your name.” Keith made his doll turn to the tan Ken. “Ah! Well my name is Lance!” Sofia said and Keith felt his face flushed. “Okay, other sir, I need your name.” Keith made his doll turn the other way.

“Oh well I’m the super awesome Keith!” Sofia said, voice deepened and stuck her tongue out to the side, making Keith smile a bit, his whole face red now. “Sofia, you’re very unique.” Keith said jokingly and Sofia giggled.

“I’m just preparing for the future!” She said and Keith scoffed. “Okay little rascal.” Keith teased.

*How obvious must you be to have an 11 year old know you want to marry him?*

*How foolish do you have to be for her to do this?*

*For her to entertain herself?*

*Finish the game and leave her alone.*

*She pities you.*

Keith inhaled shakily, though Sofia didn't notice. “Okay, Sir Lance, Sir Keith, you may now kiss the gro-” “What are you doing?” A voice said from the door and Keith shrieked, dropping the doll and standing, turning to the speaker.

“Uh, Pidge, hey. How ya doing?” Keith asked nervously and Sofia ignored them, making her two dolls kiss. “Yay! They’re married now!” She cheered and Keith’s face flushed more as Pidge looked at him judgingly.

“She uh, wanted me to help her.” Keith said. “Stop looking at me like that.” Keith accused, gesturing at Pidge’s crossed arms. “Okay, well, whatever you say.” Pidge crossed the room and sat next to Sofia, grinning.
“Do they have a cat as a pet or a dog?” Pidge asked and Sofia grinned. “They get a dog and a cat. The dog’s name is Kosmo and the cat’s name is Red!” Keith turned around quickly, face still flaming as he pointed at his best friend. “Okay, first of all, stop giving her ideas Pidge! Second of all, what are you doing here?” Keith asked and Pidge stood, smiling evilly at him.

“Well~” they said, tip toeing over to him. “Rolo said to tell you he’s got a new ‘fake’ date for the dance and that he’ll drive us all there for free!” Pidge sang.


No one wants you there.

You’ll just be an annoyance.

Let them have fun without you being a bitch for once.

Everything they go to you ruin.

Let them have fun.

“KEEEEEEEIIIITH!” Pidge whined, grabbing Keith’s arm and tugging on it. “KEEEEEEEETH!” Sofia joined in, grabbing onto Pidge’s arm and jumping up and down.

“I-” Keith rubbed at the back of his neck, torn between listening to the Voice or his best friend and sister. “Ugh, fine, I’ll go, but if I ruin your fun don't blame me.” Keith said and Pidge crossed their arms.

Sir Keith,” Pidge started and Keith involuntarily groaned. “You could never ruin my fun because Hunk does that already.” Pidge said jokingly and grinned, pulling him out of Sofia’s room into his and Shiro’s, tossing him onto his bed as they rummaged through his closet.
“Okay, so since it’s a like, we have to wear formal clothes thing, I’m going to help you dress, I brought a bag of my shit so I’ll change later but for now,” Pidge pulled out a white tuxedo jacket from Keith and Shiro’s closet.

Pidge looked at it for a moment then at Keith who was patiently sitting on his bed watching them. Pidge tossed it onto a chair in the corner. “No,” they said and Keith raised an eyebrow. “Why not?” He asked and they turned, sighing.

“That one would look like you’re going to a wedding, not a senior dance.” Pidge stated and turned back to the closet, shifting through the clothes once more. “Are you planning on wearing those atrocities?” Pidge asked gesturing at his lap where his hands were folded and Keith blinked.

“Atroc-Do you mean my gloves?” He asked and Pidge nodded, not turning around and Keith looked at his gloved hands. “ kinda?” He said quietly and Pidge nodded, tossing another jacket on the chair.

Finally they pulled out a button up black shirt with red buttons and grinned, “Achievement unlocked: Shirt found!” They stated and tossed it next to Keith. “You’re a nerd,” Keith teased and Pidge just winked before they bent down to the closet drawer. Pidge rummaged through it for a few seconds and pulled out a pair of black slacks, tossing them over their shoulder onto the bed and stood up, walking to Keith’s nightstand.

Pidge pulled out a red bow tie from Keith’s nightstand drawer and walked up to him. “There, finished.” Pidge said and grinned. Keith looked down at the outfit and nodded in appreciation. “How do you know my room better than me?” Keith asked and picked up the red bow tie.

“I didn't even know I owned this and I just packed all my stuff up to move in here.” Keith commented and Pidge giggled.

“I know every inch of your house and everything you own.” They commented and wiggled their fingers, making Keith shift away from them a bit. “That’s not creepy.” Keith said sarcastically and Pidge smiled.

“Thank you!” They said dramatically and bowed. “Now c’mon! Get dressed! The dance starts at 7 and it’s 3 now!” Pidge stated and Keith tilted his head. “Why are we getting ready so early?” He asked and Pidge sat next to him.
“Multiple reasons!” Pidge said and started ticking off on their fingers. “One, I brought my body paint kit ‘cause I wanted to do something, two, time for costume error, three, food and four, I wanna tell you all about who Rolo’s date is!” Pidge said and before Keith could add anything, they skipped out of his room, closing the door.

Don't disappoint her.

Do what your told and maybe you won’t ruin this for once.

Maybe the others will have so much fun they’ll forget you.

Don’t.

Ruin.

Their.

Night.

Keith stared at his hands as his thoughts ran wild.

Was it really better for him to not go?

No.

Why not?

Because they want you to go, for once. But they don't want you to ruin their fun.

So what should I do?
Not talk, only listen. Never interrupt, don't get all emotional, close that off, stand in the corner while they dance, smile when they tell jokes. But never.

Never,

Never, make it about you.

Keith numbly put the outfit Pudge had put together on and fumbled with the bowtie for a few moments before Pidge walked in. Pidge snorted at Keith fumbling and grabbed the tie, tying it for him in seconds before backing away and admiring him.

“I did good with that outfit.” They commented and Keith laughed, playing with the collar of his shirt as he looked down at his best friend and smiled. Pidge was wearing a light green button down shirt with a darker green vest over it and black jeans.

“You look great, Pidgeon.” Keith said and Pidge grinned, pushing up their glasses. “Thanks! And I haven't even done my hair yet!” Pidge grabbed Keith’s gloved hands and dragged him to the living room, where Sofia sat kicking her legs back and forth.

“Keithy!” She shouted and hopped to her feet, her pink tutu fluffing about as she ran. “You look like a prince!” She complimented and grabbed at the edge of Keith’s long sleeve. Keith had to admit one of his favorite things about this shirt was that it went slightly past his hands, covering up his wrist and bottom of his palm.

“I don't know about prince, but thank you Munchkin.” Keith said and Sofia grinned, twirling around in a circle. “She said I get to help with your makeup and hair!” Sofia said and pointed at Pidge. Keith smiled at her and sat down. “Pidge isn’t a girl or a boy,” Keith said and Sofia raised an eyebrow. “What do I call Pidge then?” Sofia asked, playing with her bottom lip with her finger.

“You can call Pidge ‘they’ or ‘them’.” Keith responded and Sofia grinned. “Okay!” Sofia shouted and grabbed Pidge’s hand. “Then they will help me with your hair and makeup!” Sofia said and Pidge smiled at her, ruffling her hair a bit.

“Transformation time!” Pidge shouted, fist Pumping the air. Keith sat down in a chair that Pidge had provided and Pidge brought out a makeup palette and while Pidge did his makeup, they talked all about Rolo’s date, who was a kid from film club.
“Well, Mr. Kogane, you are indeed a mess twenty-four seven, but I think I’ve absolutely transformed you!” Pidge said and handed Keith a hand-held mirror, making him smile looking at his reflection.

Pidge had brushed and gelled Keith's hair back on one side, the other half flopping over his one eye. Sofia had done his eyeliner, and surprisingly steadily too for an eleven year old, making a small wing at the corner of his eye. Pidge had also dusted on slightly purple eyeshadow very faintly to his eyelids to bring out his eyes.

“I actually look, decent for once.” Keith complimented and Pidge flicked his forehead. “Sir Keith, you look great all the time you just look extra great today.” Pidge said and grinned, pinning a piece of their hair behind their ear and pulling Keith up to stand.

“Now c’mon, Rolo will be here any second so put on your shoes and let’s a go!!” Pidge said and Keith pinched the bridge of his nose. “Please never imitate Mario again.” He groaned and Pidge ignored him, slipping their feet into their Oxford dress shoes and gesturing for Keith to do the same.

Once both their shoes were on and they both had their phones and cash, they said goodbye to Sofia and walked outside, just as a tannish-yellow van pulled up in the driveway. “Get in losers!” Rolo called out and you could faintly hear someone say “We’re going shopping.”

Go into the car and shut up, leave them alone.

Keith and Pidge ran up to the van as Lance opened up the door for them. “Waddup losers.” Lance said as he settled back in the backseat. Pidge hopped in the seat next to Nyma and Keith crawled into the back next to Lance, noticing someone kinda familiar in the front.

“You’re L’s friend, right?” Keith asked, ignoring the Voice, as Rolo started to pull out of the driveway and the other guy in front turned around. “No, absolutely not.” The other guy said and Pidge sighed. “Jake shut the fuck up. He is.” Pidge said and Rolo chuckled a bit.

“Yeah, Jake is my fake date for the dance. He didn't have a date either so we’re kinda just going as friends I guess.” Rolo said calmly and Jake nodded. “Besides, L can’t be the only one who’s a
“What?” He asked and Jake shook his head. “Nevermind, I’m putting on music.” Jake turned around and Lance burst into laughter. Suddenly, Fergalicious filled the car as Jake started to sing along and Pidge and Nyma joined in.

“Ugh, why do you guys listen to this crap?” Keith groaned and Lance laughed again. “It’s music, dude.” Lance said and shoulder bumped Keith, making Keith’s face flush a bit.

He’s only a friend.

Friends do that all the time.

Don’t get hopeful.

“This is the complete opposite of music.” Keith complained and scooted away from Lance a bit. “What? How could you say that?” Pidge gasped from in front of him. “This is one of the greatest songs that has ever been created!” they argued and Keith rolled his eyes.

“I’m just saying, put on like Britney Spears or something.” Keith said and crossed his arms and Lance looked at him, finally actually looking at him.

Lance had to bit back a gasp as he took in Keith’s whole appearance, the eyeshadow and eyeliner, the half gelled back hair, the red bowtie and, uhm, rather tight black pants Keith was wearing. Along with his-

“Are you seriously wearing those to the dance?” Lance asked, pointing at Keith’s hands. Keith looked at his hand and rolled his eyes. “Yes, can everyone shut up about them?” Keith said, tugging at the bottom of his fingerless gloves. Keith avoided looking at anyone in the car despite feeling Lance’s, Pidge’s and Rolo’s (through the rearview mirror) eyes on him.

“Well, I just wanted to know why you were those all the time,” Lance said, voice a little softer than before as he tried to look at Keith properly, but the raven haired teen kept turning away.
“I just like them is all.” Keith said and Pidge scoffed. “Yeah right, they have to mean *something* if you wear them all the time.” they said and Keith scrunched up in his carseat a little bit.

*Just tell them you loser.*

*They’re gonna think you hate them*

*If they think you hate them then they’ll leave you*

*Forever.*

“Keith,” Lance said and put a hand on Keith’s arm, making the korean teen jump in his seat. “You don’t *have* to tell us.” Lance reassured.

*He’s just saying that because you’re making him feel guilty.*

*Tell them why you kept those gloves, you fuck.*

“They’re from my parents, like, like my actual parents.” Keith said and Lance and Pidge gave him a strange look, Rolo paying attention to the road now and Nyma turned, Jake oblivious to what was happening.

“Why would you keep them? Your parents were jerks!” Pidge shouted and Keith flinched. “Because it’s my fault an-and they were bad people yes, bu-but they were still human. And they still deserve to be remembered by someone. So-so these were my dad’s gloves, an-and I kept them, to-to remember them.” Keith stuttered out and Lance smiled a bit.

“Keith, even after they gave you shit you still thought they deserve to be remembered.” Lance said quietly, then loudly shouted, “You nerd!” as he ruffled the ungelled side of his hair and Keith smiled a small bit.

*He hates you, he’s making fun of you. Stop talking to them all.*
“That is really nice of you Keith.” Rolo said from the front and Lance narrowed his eyes for a split second before grinning again. “Yeah! Now moving on from this depressing moment!” Lance said jokingly and Fergalicious ended, changing to Toxic by Britney Spears.

*You ruined the car trip.*

*You made it depressing.*

“Fuck yes!” Keith said half-heartedly and everyone laughed as they hummed, off-key, to the opening of it, bursting out into song.

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“Mi amigos, we are here!” Rolo said as the pulled up to McDonald’s. They had all done a vote on where they wanted to go to eat before they went to the dance.

Despite the fact that there was going to be food at the dance, everyone wanted to get some actual food, or, well, fast food, before eating snacks and chips all night long.

Keith got a McDouble and fries along with Pidge, Rolo and Lance, Jake got like fifty 20 piece nugget things and Nyma got a salad and fries.

They didn't get drinks because one of the things that had been advertised in the dance poster was that there was going to be a whooooole ton of drinks for them.

Lance plopped himself next to Keith as they all sat down and Keith scooted a few inches closer to Pidge, feeling his side closest to Lance burning up.

*Friends stay near each other all the time.*

Nyma, Jake and Rolo sat in the bench seat across from them and Jake grinned wickedly at Keith’s
obvious discomfort. “Your name is Keith, right?” Jake asked and Keith blinked realizing he had never really introduced himself.

“Uh, yeah. How did you know?” Keith asked, assuming he had just heard the others saying his name a ton in the car.

Jake looked at Lance briefly before looking back at Keith. “People talk.” was all he said before he decided to bury himself in his food.

_People talk bad about you._

_L was never really your friend, she just wanted to make fun of you._

Keith looked at Pidge who just shrugged and he leaned back, flinching a bit when his shoulder touched Lance and Lance blushed.

Pidge watched the exchange and rolled their eyes at the two, wishing they could just up and scream at them about how idiotic they were being and how they both liked each other and needed to get over this stupid crush phase but didn't.

Pidge knew that they would both kill them if the two ever found out they knew they liked each other, but they were doing this for Keith and Lance's own good.

If Pidge were to just simply tell them that they liked each other, then neither of them would grow, or have any courage. Once one of them finally asks the other out, then they will have a much more easy relationship, and have more confidence with each other.

But for now, they would stay quiet.

“...Right Pidge?” Lance said and Pidge shook their head looking at Lance and Keith, who were staring at them. “What?” Pidge asked and Keith snorted behind his hand and rested his head on the table as the rest of the table erupted into laughter.

“I don't get it,” Pidge said, pouting and Keith tilted his head a bit to look at them. “Lance said,
'Pidge never listens to me, I bet if I told them the world was going to explode, they still wouldn’t hear me, Right Pidge?’ So you just proved his point.” Keith said and laughed again, closing his eyes and Pidge rolled theirs.

“Okay gang, time to hit the road once more, or we’ll be late.” Rolo announced, sitting up and everyone else followed suit.

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“Holy mother biscuits.” Nyma said as Rolo pulled into the driveway of the school. “Holy fuck is right,” Keith said, leaning over Lance to look out the window.

The outside of the school had been spray painted, Keith’s assuming with washable paint, on the sides ‘Voltron’ with rainbow paint. The doors had blue and red streamers hanging over the door and a glow-up lion was sitting outside the door, lights flashing around it.

“I WANNA SEE INSIDE!” Pidge shouted, practically flying out the door and Nyma unbuckled quickly, following her enbyfriend into the dance. Rolo laughed as he and Jake got out, Lance and Keith climbing out from the back.

Guess who’s all alone Keith.

“Aw, shit, everyone else has a date,” Keith mumbled as he and Lance followed behind everyone into the building. “Then I guess we’ll just have to be alone together,” Lance replied as they opened the doors to lights wonderland.

He doesn’t want to be alone by himself is all, it means nothing.

Keith looked at Lance and rolled his eyes. “That’s an oxymoron,” he stated before looking around. The stage was decorated with lights and more streamers, a DJ booth sat in the center.

A whole buffet of snacks and drinks lined the left wall, seats lining the other. Artworks by the art students were hung up around the room and Keith recognized his, which had a light shining on it.
“You’re an oxymoron!” Lance retorted, also looking around the room with wonder. There were games set up on one side of the room and a door opened into the hallway for bathroom access and what Lance assumed was more activities or games.

“How the Hell did you graduate?” Keith asked and Lance just grinned, playfully punching his shoulder and Keith smiled a bit.

“So, where to first, Sir Keith?” Lance asked, bowing a bit and at the name Keith’s face flushed. “Uh, let’s go check out food.” Keith said and pointed over his shoulder.

Lance grinned and nodded, straightening out his shirt. “We shall acquire some food.” Lance announced and Keith snorted as they walked.

“I didn't know someone like you would know what the word acquire meant.” Keith joked and Lance laughed. “Well, I didn't, but Rosie was helping me study for the English final for like eight week straight so….” Lance trailed off as he looked down at the food.

“Woah, didn't know the school could afford getting this catered.” Lance commented and laughed.

“I legit think they spent more money on this then they did on prom.” Keith added, grabbing a small bowl of fries as Lance grabbed a plate, filling it up with food.

“Prom sucked,” Lance added and suddenly someone was shouting and Keith could barely have time to react to the sound of high heels running at him.

“WHY THE FUCK IS ROLO HERE WITH JAKE?!??!” L was shouting, hands fisted at her sides and Keith burst into laughter as Aaren caught up with her.

“It’s just, I wish I could verbally keysmash.” L said and stomped her feet. “It’s so weird!” Keith laughed again and looked down at her outfit.

L was wearing a white dress with multiple layers of tulle underneath to make her dress fluff out and she was wearing a white button up over the top with a black vest buttoned up. Her hair was pinned off to the side and a small black bag was strung over her shoulder. She was also wearing black high heels.
Keith looked at Aaren to see them wearing a black mid-sleeve button up with dark blue jeans and black dress like shoes with a small heel to them.

“I guess it is a little weird, like our friend group merged in a weird way.” Keith responded and L nodded.

“Like, your friends are cool and everything, but I do not want our friend groups to merge. I like my friends seperate.” L said and before Keith could respond, Happier played and L’s face lit up and she grabbed Aaren's hand and ran over to the dance floor without saying anything.

“Everytime I talk to her, she gets weirder.” Keith said to Lance, who just laughed and walked over to the row of chairs.

“Well, people do that.” Lance said as he sat down. Keith sat next to him and watched everyone around them as he ate.

Rolo and Jake were talking to L and Aaren’s friend group, Pidge and Nyma were dancing….. If you could call it that, and Keith thinks Shay and Hunk went play some party games in the other room.

All you have to do now is:

Stay silent,

Leave everyone alone,

And don't make this night about you.

Keith inhaled shakily as he quietly ate his food, Lance talking to a few people around them before they left to dance. Keith, while he was trying to be happy, because this was a happy night, already felt like he was suffocating.
“So, we’re graduates now.” Lance said, breaking the silence between the two of them. Keith hummed in acknowledgement.

“So, I haven’t told anyone this, not even Rosita yet but..... I got in.” Lance said and Keith turned to him wide eyed.

“Wait, like, into CUNY?” Keith asked and Lance nodded. “And Pidge said you’re going to SVA, which, and I had to look this up, is only 38 minutes away from CUNY via the subway.” Lance said and Keith looked at him with fake surprise.

_As if you, the creepy stalker, didn't already know_

“Really? Cool, we could hang out, I guess.” Keith said tightly and Lance grinned. “Yeah, and also, I did, okay, I did a lot of research, but there’s an apartment building in between them called Madison Court Apartments and I was wondering if,” Lance paused, face flushing red and Keith, though hopeful, had no clue what was gonna be said next.

“I was wondering if you would wanna share an apartment with me?” Lance asked and looked away from Keith. “Like, cause I figured that it would be easier cause we could pay the rent together so it’s easier? And wouldn’t have to worry about random roommates? An-” “Lance,” Keith interrupted Lance as he started talking quicker.

_You have to._

_This isn’t because he likes you._

_This is because how bad of a friend would you be if you said no._

_He would be all alone, without the ability to pay for his apartment, and sad._

_So say yes, but for him, not for you._

“I’ll share an apartment with you.” Keith said and Lance looked at him with a huge smile on his face. “Really??” He asked and Keith nodded and Lance hugged him before pulling back away
quickly. “Yeah, cause uh, like you said. It’ll be easier to pay, i don't have to worry about strangers, and you’re cool.”

Lance bounced in his seat with the world’s hugest smile plastered on his face. “College is gonna be so much cooler and easier now!” Lance said and Keith laughed as the two fell into easy conversation, talking about nothing and everything.

Occasionally a song Lance knew would come on and Lance would stand up, talking as he danced and Keith would make fun of him. Some people would stop by and everyone would say “congrats grad” to each other. A few times people would flirt with Lance or Keith and the opposite would glare until the person left.

The two talked for the next hour or so, and Keith could say he was proud to announce that the Voice was at least mostly silent for the rest of the night as he talked to Lance.

While the night went on, the two slowly would lean more into the other and at some point, while Lance was telling a story about how Miguel got 17 stitches, their knees touched and Keith felt his entire body flame up, looking at Lance only for their eyes to meet.

Lance’s face turned red from Keith’s staring and they both turned away quickly. The air around the two became awkward and they were facing opposite directions now.

Not long later, after the awkwardness had slowly decapitated, Bailando came on and Lance’s face lit up, jumping to his feet immediately and singing along.

“Why everytime this song comes on?” Keith groaned and buried his face in his hands and Lance laughed. “C’mon Keith, don't be such a bum.” Lance teased and Keith glared at him.

“Hi, my name’s Keith Kogane. Been the Party Pooper since 2001.” Keith joked and Lance rolled his eyes, grabbing his hand and dragging him up to his feet.

“C’mon, dance with me.” Lance said and Keith felt that rush of fire through his body again at Lance’s touch but simply looked at his feet.

“I don't dance.” Keith mumbled and Lance chuckled. “I’ve seen you dance, I know that’s a lie.” Lance said and Keith threw his head back. “Ugggggh,” Keith whined as he allowed Lance to pull
him up to his feet.

Lance grinned and continued singing along to the song as he dragged Keith towards the dance floor. “Ugh, people,” Keith joked, catching glimpses of random people he knew attempting at dancing.

“Keith, just deal for a few minutes the song’s almost over.” Lance pleaded and Keith walked with him now instead of being dragged.

The moment Lance got to the center, he pulled Keith so that they were standing in front of each other. Lance laughed a little awkwardly as he began to do what Maria called his ‘Dad Dancing.’ Keith rolled his eyes and swayed a bit to the beat as the song ended.

Lance pouted and Keith laughed until the next song began and people around him groaned as his face flushed. “WHO THE HELL PUT ON ELVIS PRESLEY?!?!” someone yelled and Lance laughed, cheeks red from what Keith was guessing heat as couples started to pair up.

“Can’t Help Falling In Love” blasted as multiple single people, or tired couples, left the dance floor to go do anything else.

Keith turned to go sit back down but Lance grabbed his wrist and turned him around, making the already flushed teen turned even redder. “And where do you think you’re going?” Lance asked teasingly.

“I’m gonna go sit down now.” Keith said and Lance sighed. “C’mon, I just got you to dance, don’t chicken out now.” “Hey-” “Is it ‘cause the Oh-So-Great-Keith-Kogane can’t slow dance ?” Lance teased again and Keith stomped.

“I’ll have you know one of the foster homes I was at taught lessons, and waltzing and ballroom dancing aren’t hard.” Keith said and Lance raised and eyebrow.

“Mmm, doesn't prove anything. I think you’re all talk and no bite.” Lance said and Keith made a small growling sound and moved closer to Lance.

“Fine, whatever, I’ll dance with you.” Keith said, ears red. “But this is just to prove you wrong and show I can dance.”
Lance grinned as he place his hands on Keith’s waist, Keith placing his hands on Lance’s shoulders and the two slow danced along with all the other couple around them.

Keith had to admit that dancing with Lance felt, right. Like this was how it was supposed to be, the two of them in each other’s comfort forever. Lance and Keith slowly gravitated closer to each other, now more comfortable than awkward as the song went on.

And I----- Can’t Help, Falling In Love------ With You.

Lance thought it to be slightly ironic looking at Keith as this song played, slow dancing with who he’s recently discovered he’s madly in love with. But he couldn’t, by any force of nature, tell himself to pull away.

Keith seemed to think the same as the two moved closer together as the song went on.

Closer, closer, closer.

Keith could feel Lance’s breath on his lips and he felt his eyes closing as he moved closer, tilting his head to the side. Lance gripped his waist and pulled Keith closer, closer, closer-

The song came to and end and another song turned on, one with a lot more bass and the two jumped away from each other, looking up into the other’s eyes for a moment before Keith ran off the dance floor, leaving Lance stranded.

Keith ran to L’s group of friend’s, grabbing Rolo’s arm and running to the boys bathroom before collapsing against a wall.

Rolo looked down at the floor for a moment before kneeling next to Keith. “What’s going on?” He asked slowly and Keith looked at him.

“I almost kissed Lance.” Keith spat out and Rolo looked at him with a raised eyebrow.
“Good….For….You?” Rolo said questingly and Keith shook his head. “No! We were just dancing during the friggin, Can’t Help Falling In Love, and we were slow dancing-’
“You guys were slow dancing?” Rolo asked and Keith nodded. “Who’s idea was that? Lance’s?” Keith nodded and Rolo looked sad for a moment before looking at Keith again. “And almost kissing him is bad, why?” Rolo asked and Keith threw his hands up.

“Because! I could’ve ruined our whole friendship and he would’ve hated me and then he would’ve told everyone and everyone would hate me and I’d be all alone and-” “Okay is this the voice talking or just you being melodramatic?” Rolo asked and Keith punched his shoulder.

“Hey!” Keith shouted and Rolo just looked at him. “Ugh, It’s me being melodramatic.” Keith said angrily. Rolo chuckled as Keith leaned against the wall again.

“Okay, one, what was the exact situation that happened?” Rolo asked and Keith buried his face in his hands and brought his shoulders up to his ears. “We were slow dancing,” Keith mumbled.

“And we started getting closer, and I leaned up to kiss him because I was so in the moment and then when the next song started playing I like, got shot back into reality and I, uh,” Keith trailed off and Rolo waited.

“You what?” Rolo asked softly and Keith groaned, lifting his head with his eyes shut. “I ran away and grabbed you.” Keith groaned out and Rolo burst into laughter, making Keith flush. “Hey!” Keith shouted and Rolo waved his hand around.

“I’m sorry, it’s just, to me, hysterical that you would run away from kissing Lance. Like, both times we were dating you were like, 80% of the one initiating kisses. So like, for you to wimp out is funny to me, sorry.” Rolo said.

Keith growled again and rolo laughed harder, ruffling Keith’s hair up. “Well, so-rry I was more confident when I was actually dating someone vs. me accidentally almost kissing someone I have a crush on.” Keith said and Rolo smiled at him.

“Saying you have a crush on Lance is like saying the Holocaust was just a ‘misunderstanding’. You’re fucking...in love , with Lance.” Rolo winced while saying ‘love’ and Keith noticed with a pang of guilt.

“We both kinda moved away at the same time.” Keith responded and Rolo sighed out. “Did he seem like he hated you?” Rolo tried and Keith shrugged once more. “I dunno, I kinda just…. ran away.”

Rolo stood up, dragging Keith to his feet. “Okay, so here’s what I think. I think, Lance only jumped back, because of the sudden change, I mean, that’s what you did, and I don’t think Lance hates you for it.

“One, he’s not that kind of guy, and two, like I said, the only reason I broke up with you was because I knew you’d have a chance with him. Maybe he wanted to kiss you just as much as you wanted to kiss him.”

Keith looked at him dumbly. “No, why would Lance like me?” Keith asked and Rolo crossed his arms. “Would you like a list?” Rolo asked and Keith rubbed his arm. “Actually n-”

“You’re kind, and funny, and you’re an amazing animator, you’re always looking out for your friends, you put everyone else’s needs before yours, I bet if we had to like, fucking fight aliens or something you’d be absolutely boss at it, and-” “I GET IT!” Keith interrupted and Rolo laughed.

“See? If me annoying you is what it takes for you to accept a compliment, I’ll annoy you forever.” Rolo said and Keith rolled his eyes but smiled a bit.

“I can’t tell if you’re flirting or just telling the truth?” Keith stated and Rolo shrugged, making his way to the exit. “Why can’t it be both?” Rolo asked and walked out.

Keith shook his head as he looked at the ground, thoughts running as muffled music filled the empty bathroom.

**Does Lance really like me?**

**Was he going to kiss me too or was that just Rolo being nice?**

**Did I already ruin our friendship?**
Holy shit we’re going to be living together in college.

Or what if he doesn't want to anymore because he thinks I’m weird?

Oh no, I’ve ruined our whole friendship and he’ll never want to talk to me again and-

I’m glad you at least can think like this on your own.

Without my help, you've already gone even more insane.

You’ve started talking to yourself like this, without my help.

Why Keith, it looks like even you are telling yourself to go di-

“Rolo said you were in here.” Lance said suddenly inside the bathroom and he walked over to Keith, waving his hand a little in his face, making Keith jump.

“Dude, you okay?” Lance asked, realllllly close to Keith and Keith took a step back, flushing.

“Ye-yeah, I’m fine.” Keith murmured and Lance made a face. “I dunno, do you need fresh air? Let’s go outside.” Lance put his hand on Keith’s shoulder and escorted him past the loud music and large crowd to a door that led to the back of the school and opened it.

Lance led Keith to the set of stairs and sat him down.

“Deep breaths.” Lance said, shoulder touching Keith’s, hand on his back and Keith felt the words wash over him, obeying as he inhaled deeply.

After a few minutes, Lance looked at him. “You good?” Lance asked and Keith nodded, standing up and walking a bit into the grass.
“Why is it so cold?” Keith asked randomly, looking up at the sky. “Because it’s Texas and it’s bipolar as fuck.” Lance responded, following Keith.

“Also, it’s not that cold, it just is compared to the daytime.” Lance said and threw his suit jacket over Keith’s shoulder, making the raven jump once more and look down at his shoulders with wide eyes.

Lance didn't say anything as he sat down in the grass and look up. “You can see the stars so perfectly from here.” Lance said, looking up into the dark sky and Keith sat next next to him, looking up as he clutched Lance’s dark blue suit jacket around him.

“There’s Hercules.” Keith said, pointing up and Lance moved close to see where he was pointing. “I thought Hercules was a hero.” Lance stated and Keith turned to look at him, flushing when his nose brushed against Lance’s cheek.

Lance didn't move though, only his eyes did did to look at Keith. “Uh, most of the constellations, even the planets, were all named after greek and roman heroes and gods.” Keith stated and Lance nodded as he flopped backwards, laying in the grass to look up.

“There looks like a dog.” Lance said and Keith flopped back in the grass too, looking where he was pointing. “That one is called the Ursa Major, Lance. And it’s also known as The Big Bear,” Keith looked at Lance.

“And the Big Dipper.” Keith said slowly and Lance turned to him.

“Wait, really?” He asked and Keith nodded, pointing at a spot in the middle of the constellation. “See, right there?” Keith asked and Lance nodded. “Holy shit I’m a dumbass.” Lance said and Keith laughed.


“It is, Cassiopeia’s Chair was a form of torture. She had boasted she was prettier than Poseidon's Nereids and Poseidon had sent a sea monster to attack her village. The only way to stop it was to sacrifice Cassiopeia, so she was tied to a rock. Thankfully Perseus saved her and they got married.”
Keith stopped abruptly, realizing he was rambling and turned to Lance, to find him smiling at Keith. “Why’d you stop?” Lance asked and Keith’s shoulders went up to his ears. “You probably don’t want to hear me ramble on about stars.” Keith muttered and Lance chuckled.

“That’s why I didn't stop you, I wanna hear about the stars.” Lance said and made a motion for Keith to continue. Keith smiled smally and looked back up at the constellations.

“Okay, so uh, Perseus and Cassiopeia got married and some guy named Phineus said he had basically the rights to marrying Cassiopeia and fought Perseus. Perseus used the head of Medusa to kill Phineus but because he and Cassiopeia were fucking idiots, they didn't look away and got turned to stone too.”

Keith finished his story and Lance was staring at him again.

“This is random, but do you think aliens are real?” Keith asked, trying to ignore Lance’s eyes burning on the side of his face.

“Uh, yeah of course I do! There’s no way there’s that much space and we’re the only planet with humans and living creatures on a planet. Of course there are aliens. Maybe in another galaxy, or like, a whole ‘another space, but there’s definitely aliens.” Lance said and Keith laughed.

“Obviously, if you didn't at least believe in aliens I would’ve had to de-friend you.” Keith said and Lance laughed too, making Keith blush at how adorable he sounded.

“No worry, man. Though we may need to talk about your obsession with Mothman if we’re gonna be living together.” Lance said and Keith gasped, sitting up.

“First of all, it’s not an obsession. And two, he’s out there, okay? And he’ll only show himself once everyone else believes in him.” Keith argued and Lance burst out into laughter.

“Omigod, you believe so hard don't you!” Lance cried out and Keith picked up a handful of grass and threw it at him but Lance was quick and grabbed his arm before he could pull back.

“What are you-” Keith didn't have time to finish his sentence as Lance basically judo flipped Keith,
making the raven sit up, grinning and jumping at Lance, both now laughing as they tackled each other.

This went on for a few minutes until Keith pinned Lance down, hands on Lance’s shoulders, straddling him while laughing.

“Omigod, Pidge’s gonna kill me, I messed up the hair.” Keith said, blowing a strand of hair out of his face. Lance reached up and gently touched Keith’s cheek. “And the makeup they did too.” Lance commented, wiping away a strip of dirt off his cheek and Keith’s face heated up.

He then looked down at their clothes, save for a few lines of dirt and their clothes being rumpled, they looked mostly fine still. Well, one of Keith’s gloves had flown off into the grass and Lance’s jacket had fallen off him, but other than that he was fine.

“Keith, you’re crushing me.” Lance said and Keith fell to the side, laying next to Lance and laughing. “We look like we just got in a fist fight.” Keith commented and Lance shrugged. “Well, what else is new?” Lance joked and Keith laughed with him.

Silence fell over the two as they sat on the cool grass, looking up into the stars as an occasional car would pass and the very muted music blasted through the walls. It was a nice night, in fact, Keith realized, the Voice had been mostly silent for the past two hours they’ve been out here now. Since they started dancing in fact.

Keith turned to look at Lance’s face and smiled a little when he met Lance’s eyes. Neither looked away this time, sky blue eyes looking into deep violet eyes. Beautiful clear orbs looking into murky broken ones that hid secrets. The two held each other’s gaze and Keith could feel himself moving towards Lance again, eyelids falling heavy as his breathing deepened.

Lance moved forward slowly too, taking in Keith’s beautiful appearance. His porcelain face, his raven black hair, his beautiful violet eyes. The two were only an inch or so away, if one were to fall or make any movement forward, their lips would touch.

“Hey Keith, I-” “YO FUCKERS!!!” Pidge shouted, slamming the door from outside open as the two jumped away from each other.

“Pidge I told you to give them a moment!” Hunk yelled, tromping after the smaller teen. “Yeah, well I’m tired!” Pidge yelled back and Keith’s face turned bright red as he realized what had
“Almost happened.

“Pidge, I’m gonna kill you,” Lance said from Keith’s side, looking up at Pidge murderously. Keith was pretty sure he looked shocked and flustered but nodded anyway. Despite the two’s obvious closeness and ruffled clothing, along with Keith’s bewildered expression, Pidge was oblivious.

“Why? What did I do?” They asked and Nyma came running out moment’s later, hair sticking to her forehead with sweat. “Ooh, it’s nice out here.” She mumbled before walking up to Pidge.

“Pidge wants to go home because they’re tired and we also think maybe a little bit drunk too.” Nyma muttered to last part, but Keith still heard, standing up quickly. “Oh, shit, Matt’s gonna kill me.” Keith said and waved his hand in front of Pidge’s face, the other simply laughing as they backed away.

“Shit.” Keith mumbled. “Did Pidge do this intentionally? Or was something spiked?” The raven went into best-friend mode and Nyma shook her head. “Pidge wouldn’t do this intentionally, others are getting sick and drunk too. Rolo said he thinks he saw someone pour something into the punch bowl, but he can’t remember the face well.”

“I had a dream once, where I got to fly around in a giant green cat and I had tree powers!” Pidge stated randomly, giggling a bit at the end and Lance stood up, linking his arms on one side of her. “C’mon you little gremlin, we’re gonna go to Keith’s house to try and calm you down.” Lance suggested, looking at Keith who nodded.

“Oh! Keith’s house is fun! One time last year, we hid in the attic and threw water balloons down at Shiro while he was mowing the lawn!” Pidge laughed as Keith and Lance picked them up, carrying them to Rolo’s van as Nyma rushed inside to get Rolo and Jake.

“And another time, when we were a lot younger, one of Keith’s parents almost tried to kill him and Matt punched him really hard in the face and we let Keith stay with us for a whole week before Ms. Montgomery came and retrieved him.” Pidge smiled dopily and Keith looked away from Lance’s wide eyed stare.

“One of your foster homes tried to what?” Lance shrieked and Pidge made a whining sound, covering their ears at his shout.

“We’re not talking about this, let’s just get them home.” Keith mumbled. “I’m trying to have a nice
night.” Lance bit his lip and looked at the ground as he opened the door to Rolo’s van, setting Pidge on the backseat as they sprawled out.

“Imma take a nap. G’night.” Pidge mumbled and promptly passed out. Keith laughed at that as he closed the door, leaning against the van as they waited for Rolo.

“I’m sorry, I wasn’t trying to bring up bad memories.” Lance said and Keith shrugged, a small smile still on his lips and Lance smiled too.

“It’s fine, I just, for once in a really long time, I don't feel like stabbing myself and I’d like to keep it like that for now.” Keith said and grinned.

Lance bit his lip at the statement but shoulder bumped Keith. “Got it.” Lance said and the two fell silent as Nyma came running at full speed towards them. “Is Pidge okay? Did they get hurt on the way here? Do they still know their name?” Nyma spat out more questions rapid fire and Lance held her shoulders.

“Dude, they’re okay, nothing happened but they’re sleeping now which I think they need.” Lance reassured and Nyma breathed out. “Are you sure?” She asked and Lance nodded as Rolo walked up to them, spinning his keys in his hand.

“Jake’s getting a ride from Sam, so we’re all good to go.” Rolo said and everyone nodded as Keith and Lance climbed into the middle seat, Nyma taking the shotgun seat and Rolo taking his place at his driver’s seat.

“Okay, so, who am I dropping off first?” Rolo asked as he started the car and Lance slowly exhaled. “We have to drop Pidge off first so I can explain to Matt.” Keith said and Rolo nodded, pulling out of the school driveway and turning on some music.

After that, they had brought Pidge home, Keith gave Matt a really long explanation, Nyma walked to her house and Rolo dropped Keith and Lance off at their houses.

When Keith had gotten home, Shiro made him tell him everything that had happened and basically had fangirled over Keith talking about the two almost kisses.

Keith had told him to shut up or he’ll carve his guts out and then the two went to sleep.
Shiro sleeping peacefully and Keith’s nonstop thoughts keeping him awake until 3 in the morning, sleeping in until 12 the next day.

And then his summer break began......

Chapter End Notes

SHORTER UPDATE THAN USUAL BUT THAT'S BECAUSE SHIT'S GONNA GO DOWN NEXT CHAPTER AND I MAY NOT HAVE A LOT OF TIME TO WRITE SO I TRIED TO GET THIS CHAPTER OUT FAST WHOOOOOOOOOOO

-L

End Notes

Have a wonderful day. Follow me on Tumblr @l-the-art-nerd or on Instagram @l_the_art_nerd

See you guys next time!

~L

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