Mysteries of the Deep

by whitehorsetiger

Summary

According to old legends, this creature used to be the protector of the ocean and all life in it. Until it was driven crazy by some dark force, or possessed by some dark force, or just went mad with power, no one was really sure. Now it travelled the world, destroying ships seemingly randomly. Weapons couldn’t pierce its scales, your best hope was to abandon the ship and hope that would keep it occupied so you could get away. It hadn’t attacked anyone for almost a year now, apparently, that was about to change.

Years ago, the adventuring vessel the Atlas sank to the bottom of the ocean, taking her captain with her. Now, Shiro's younger brother is determined to find the heart of a sea, a treasure that supposedly can bring those lost at sea back. With his new ship Voltron and some of the old crew, he will find the treasure. But one member of his crew is hiding a secret, one that may very well be forced into light.
Keith winced as he slammed into the side of the ship, trying desperately to not slip on the slick deck. Waves buffeted the ship around, tossing the huge vessel around like it was nothing. Everyone was scrambling around trying to stop the ship from sinking with only the light from the occasionally flash of lightning. Shiro was shouting out orders, striding around the ship to try and help anyway he could. It would be a miracle if anyone could hear him over the pounding rain.

No one saw the wave coming, not until it slammed into the side of the ship. Everyone slipped over, sliding to one side of the ship as it tilted dangerously. There was a scream as someone fell overboard, luckily, they’d predicted this problem so everyone was tied to the ship. Didn’t mean it was an ideal situation though. Especially with who had just fallen overboard.

“Lance!” Keith shouted, pushing his hair out of his face. The wheel was spinning wildly, as their helmsman had been thrown overboard. Shiro ran for the wheel as Keith, the navigator Pidge, her brother Matt and the shipwright and cook Hunk, grabbed the tightly-pulled rope that trailed over the side and into the water. Working together, they hauled the soaking wet and coughing Lance out of the water. Grabbing his shirt, Keith pulled him close, patting him on the back to try and help clear the water from his lungs, the others hurrying back to help try and keep the ship afloat.

“Lance? Are you alright?” Keith asked, rubbing up and down his back. Lance nodded, pushing himself to his feet, swatting Keith away. He wobbled over to where Shiro was steering the ship, Keith followed along behind to make sure the idiot didn’t fall over.

“That way!” Lance shouted, pointing. Keith had no idea what he’d seen, why they should go that way, Shiro probably didn’t ether. But Lance had the uncanny ability to steer them through any sea, any storm, anywhere without so much as a scratch on the hull. No one knew how he did this, in the heat of the moment, no one really cared. Another wave hit the boat, causing Lance to stagger and slip on the slick wood. He crashed into Keith, causing both of them to fall.

“Sorry,” Lance groaned, scrambling to his knees. Keith pushed himself up, waving his hand idly.

“Doesn’t matter, are…” he didn’t get the rest of his sentence out.

A horrible blood-curdling roar stopped any shouting, calling, noise from the crew. “Shit.” Lance said softly, Keith had to agree.

“Abandon ship!” Shiro shouted, roping down the wheel. A monstrous head and neck exploded from the water, huge teeth and vivid yellow eyes. Waves were still tossing the ship around, rain hammering down, even so, everything seemed frozen for a few seconds as they were stared down. This monster, was the sea dragon.

According to old legends, this creature used to be the protector of the ocean and all life in it. Until it was driven crazy by some dark force, or possessed by some dark force, or just went mad with power, no one was really sure. Now it travelled the world, destroying ships seemingly randomly. Weapons couldn’t pierce its scales, your best hope was to abandon the ship and hope that would keep it occupied so you could get away. It hadn’t attacked anyone for almost a year now, apparently, that was about to change.

The sea dragon opened its huge mouth, letting out another roar. It was painfully loud, a horrible screeching sound that made the hair raise on the back on Keith’s neck. Everything about the monster screamed danger, the thing was huge and all they could currently see was its head and probably only
half its neck. Ink black fins spread around its face, long whiskers flicking forwards to curl around the mast. Its eyes darted along the boat, taking the whole thing in until they settled on the quarterdeck. This seemed to snap Shiro out of whatever terror-fuelled spell that had the rest of the crew frozen.

“Move!” he shouted, “Go! Go! Go!”

The storm was almost completely forgotten, the sea dragon the far bigger threat. It lunged, heading straight towards Keith and Lance. Grabbing the other man, Keith dragged the two of them out of the way, slipping down onto the main deck. The sea dragon hit the quarterdeck, splintering the wood like it was nothing. A huge finned tail raised up from the other side, slamming down onto the deck, whipping violently from side to side. It hit the mast, causing it to creek and fall, smashing into the deck.

There was a lot of screaming, everyone sprinting to the rowboats. Lance’s hand gripped the top of his arm, pulling them towards the boats. They stumbled slightly over the splintered wood, hanging on tightly to each other. Hunk and Pidge were gesturing them over from one of the boats, Lance sped up slightly. The entire boat rocked again, whether it was from a wave or the dragon hitting the boat was a mystery. The two of them hit the side, Lance yelping and Keith hissing in pain.

Hunk reached out to grab Lance as they reached the boat, pulling out his knife, Keith cut through the ropes tying them to the boat that was currently being torn apart. Hunk basically hauled Lance into the boat, dropping him unceremoniously into the bottom of the boat. He reached out to grab Keith until, over the thunder, pounding rain and crashing waves, Keith heard a familiar shout.

“Shiro!” Keith shouted back, “Shiro!”

“Keith! We need to go!” Hunk shouted.

Keith shook his head, “I’m going to help Shiro, you guys get going.”

“What?! We can’t leave you,” Lance shouted, trying to clamber to his feet.

“Yes, you can,” Keith shouted, “Go, now!”

He turned and began to run back over the deck.

The ship creaked under the force of the sea dragon’s attacks, huge coils were curling around the ship, purple scales glinting in the flashes of lightning.

“Shiro!” Keith shouted, dodging around the shattered wood.

“Keith!” Shiro called back.

Skidding on the slippery wood, Keith spotted Shiro.

“Shiro!”

The other man was laid out on the deck, his arm and some of his body trapped under a piece of the fallen mast. The boat rocked again, the sea dragon giving another screeching roar. Keith slipped over, skidding on his knees over to Shiro’s side.

“Keith,” Shiro said, “You need to go.”

“I’m not leaving you,” Keith said, looking around, “We need to get this off you.”

Grabbing a plank of wood, that was probably once part of the deck, Keith shoved it under the piece of mast as far as he could. Keith threw his entire weight behind it, trying to ignore the pained shouts from Shiro as the mast shifted on his arm.

The ship shuddered and creaked, the sound of wood splintering. Keith looked up. The sea dragon’s coils were tightening around the ship, crushing and splitting it in half.

“Come on,” Keith grumbled, “Come on, move!”

The plan he was using snapped, causing Keith to hit the deck hard.

“Keith, you need to go,” Shiro said, “You need to go now! The ship won’t hold much longer.”

“No!” Keith shouted, “There’s got to be a way.”

With a crunch of splintering wood, the ship was split in half.
“There’s no time,” Shiro said, “You’re going to have to leave me.”
Shiro grabbed Keith’s shirt as he paced past, smiling weakly at him.
“See you around kiddo,” he said.
“Wha…?” Keith started.
The sea dragon slammed into the half of the ship Keith and Shiro were stood on, causing the whole thing to rock. Shiro used this opportunity to shove Keith as hard as he could. He fell. The water icy cold as he hit it. A flash of purple scales, until Keith was hit with the thrashing body of the sea dragon.

Most of the air was knocked from his lungs from the impact, Keith swam desperately towards the surface. He managed to take a gasping breath before the waves pushed him back under. He was going to die out here, he couldn’t keep his head above the water for very long. The waves were brutal, tossing him around, dragging him under. By some strike of luck, a flat chunk of the ship floated past. Keith grabbed it, enabling him to keep his head above the water.

He could still see the sea dragon, tearing the ship to pieces. It roared again, throwing its head back with a bright flash of lightning. Keith could only watch on in horror as the Atlas, along with her captain, sank to the bottom of the ocean.

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Keith would never forget that night, although the days afterwards were a bit of a haze. By some miracle, the rest of the crew survived the attack, although most refused to ever set foot on a boat again. Those remaining had worked their asses off to buy this new ship and fix it up from the pile of junk it had once been. Voltron was smaller than Atlas had been, but it was theirs and it carried their hopes with it. There was supposed to be something, something that allowed you to bring back those lost at sea. That would allow them to bring their captain back, it would allow Keith to see his brother again.

Keith shivered slightly in the breeze, drumming his fingers on the side of the boat. He should really be getting some rest, Voltron was finally sea worthy, all they needed now was a direction to go. Everyone should be asleep by now, Keith really should be asleep too. He just couldn’t escape his own thoughts, his memories of that night. Dropping his head, Keith pinched the bridge of his nose, squeezing his eyes closed. He was exhausted, they’d done a lot today and there was so much more to do tomorrow. With a sigh, Keith pushed himself away from his place watching the sea, making his way back to the captain’s quarters.

The door opened smoothly, a vast difference from when they’d first bought the ship. There was a slight rustle of movement from the corner. Cosmo, the big black dog Keith had managed to acquire one drunken night, was curled up in the corner along with three of the ships cats. Why did a ship this small have three cats? It didn’t, it had five and Keith was weak to pretty blue eyes and adorable animals. One of the cats looked up, blinked at him then immediately went back to sleep. Cosmo’s ear twitched, he was an amazing guard dog.

His quarters weren’t particularly decorated, or had much past the basics. Everything that he owned had gone down with the Atlas and he hadn’t gathered much in his time repairing Voltron. Honestly, he hadn’t really settled as captain yet, trying to claim this room as his own just felt wrong. The furniture was nice though, a gift from one of the old crew members that had given up sailing and became a carpenter. Apparently he was doing very well from himself.

Wandering over to the bed, Keith smiled down at the one good thing that had come out of this clusterfuck. Lance, the helmsman, Keith’s first mate and now his boyfriend, was splayed out on the other side of the bed, close to the windows. Tugging the covers back, Keith slipped into the bed
alongside Lance. Pressing a soft kiss to his temple, Keith snuggled into the other man’s side. Lance barely even stirred, sleeping peacefully as Keith settled in bed. Good, Lance had gone above and beyond what was expected of him and the bags beneath his eyes had become worryingly dark.

Keith draped one leg over Lance’s legs, pressing himself as close as possible to the other man. This was nice. Resting his hand on the other man’s chest, Keith let Lance’s soft rhythmic breathing lull him into a relaxed state and eventually to sleep.
The dock-side bar was always filled with merchants, mariners, adventurers and people who totally weren’t pirates in fact they didn’t even know what pirates were I don’t know what you’re talking about shut up. If you want to know anything about the ocean, or find anything, this was the place to be. It was also a good place if you wanted to get drunk.

“Lance’s round!” Pidge shouted, “Buy the beer!”
“Awh! Come on guys! You’re going to drink me dry!” Lance moaned, sliding down in his chair.
“You know the rules, you agreed to the bet!” Pidge said, banging her tankard on the table.
“I know, I’m an idiot,” Lance groaned, slipping off his chair onto the floor.
“Yes you are, now drinks! Drinks! Drinks!” Pidge started to chant.
“Fine,” Lance said, hopping to his feet.

They were a rowdy group, it offered good cover for Keith to check out the area. Originally they were to trade with an old man for the map they needed, but it had been stolen from him before they could complete the transaction. So, they were going to steal it. Keith wasn’t worried that they’d have left, the map was supposedly unreadable.

Lance was lent against the bar, chatting merrily with the barmaid as she poured their drinks. Hunk wandered over to him to help carry them back to the table, Pidge was slumped against Matt, giggling wildly. Hunk’s girlfriend, Shay was biting her lip, trying not to laugh, her brother Rax was back on the ship. There didn’t seem to be anything very interesting going on, then again he couldn’t see much. The bar was packed. Pidge snorted and fake-hiccupped, wobbling away from Matt to lean against Keith.

“You seen anything yet?” she asked, voice immediately losing the drunken slur.
“Nothing of interest,” Keith mumbled back.
“Damn,” Pidge replied, “Think they’ve left the city?”
“I don’t know,” Keith sighed, “I don’t think so?”
Pidge hummed, until shifting back to her drunk persona, giggling and slumping on the table.

Lance and Hunk made their way back over, placing the drinks down on the table.
“You’re going to drink me out of house and home,” Lance said, pouting.
“You don’t have a house!” Pidge shouted, wafting her hand.
“Rude,” Lance huffed, “Maybe I’ll want one one day.”
Lance dropped into the chair beside Keith, draping over his shoulders.
“She’s being mean to me!” he declared loudly, “Make her stop!”
Keith rolled his eyes, wrapping his arm around Lance’s waist.
“There’s a guy over by the bar,” Lance whispered in Keith’s ear, “He’s bragging about some things he’s acquired.”
Keith grunted softly, tilting his head back so Lance nuzzled his neck.

He keeps his stuff in the bag by his feet,” Lance murmured, nibbling at Keith’s earlobe.
Keith squeezed Lance’s hip, before knocking him away slightly. Lance let out a dramatic wine, slumping to lean against Hunk.
“You gotta bail me out buddy!” he said, “I can’t afford all these drinks.”

Keith lent against the table, knocking into Pidge lightly. She groaned and rolled her head towards him.
“You had too much to drink?” he laughed, shaking his head.
“Nuuu! I’m good,” Pidge hiccupped, then giggled, leaning closer. “Guy by the bar, bag by his feet,” Keith mumbled softly. Pidge grunted lightly, rolling her head. “Shay!” she said, “I gotta pee. Come with me to the outhouse!” Shay chuckled, shaking her head. “Alright, alright,” she said, standing up. The two of them wove through the bar, Keith forcibly dragged his eyes away. It would be much more suspicious if he watched them while they worked, instead he turned to Lance. Curling his fingers around Lance’s fingers, tugging him over.

Lance lent against his shoulder, snuggling close. They were probably overplaying their relationship a bit, but it did allow them to talk without the issue of people overhearing or getting suspicious. “Take Pidge back to the ship once she comes back,” Keith said softly. “I know the plan,” Lance muttered, slightly irritated. “Sorry,” Keith replied softly, squeezing Lance’s hip, “This has to go right.” Lance turned his head, pressing a kiss to the skin of his neck.

There was a commotion from near the bar, looked like the plan was in action. Shay was their distraction, no one could ever get mad at her, or stop talking to her. Pidge was the extraction, no one would notice the tiny gremlin slip under the table. Lance squeezed Keith’s hand lightly, draining the last of his drink. Eventually, Pidge and Shay made their way back over, Pidge with something shoved down her shirt. She was staggering, probably milking the drunk act a bit too much but whatever worked.

“Right, come on, you’ve had enough,” Lance said, standing up. “Nuuu!” Pidge protested, “I haven’t drunk you dry yet!” “Yeah, no, that’s it, I’m taking you back,” Lance said, wandering over to her. Pidge winged dramatically as they helped her up to Lance’s back, completely hiding the fact that she had something shoved down the front of her shirt. “I’ll see you guys later,” Lance said, “Come on, let’s go.” The two of them left the bar and Keith let out a long breath, hopefully he wouldn’t realise they’d stolen something for a while.

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They set sail the next morning, back to where they all met, back to where the Atlas was launched. They hadn’t been there in years, first out on the ocean with the Atlas, then saving up to get Voltron sea worthy. After all this time, those who had a family wanted to see them and Pidge and Matt’s father may help them figure out the mysteries of the map. They were both already pouring over the map, trying to figure out how the hell they were supposed to read it.

Keith’s fingers curled into a fist as he stood on the bow of the boat, staring out over the ocean. There was a slight trepidation being out on the water again, but more than that he felt relief. Out here, on the ocean, where he finally felt at home, relief and relaxation and the gentle rocking of the boat. Letting out a huff of breath, he turned to head back to the wheel.

“You know you don’t have to say up with me,” Lance said, leaning against the wheel, “I can manage on my own.” Lance smiled at him, Keith felt his cheeks go red. “I want to,” Keith shrugged, moving to lean against his side, “Nights are boring alone.” Lance’s arm wrapped around Keith’s waist, pulling him even closer. His eyes were far away, looking out into the night’s sky, out to the ocean in front of them. “What are you thinking about?” Keith asked, leaning against his shoulder.
Lance’s eyes were unfocused, he didn’t even seem to have heard Keith.
“Lance?”
He blinked, shaking his head.
“Oh? What? Sorry?” Lance said, leaning his head against Keith’s, “I was just thinking.”
Keith snorted slightly, rolling his eyes.
“I figured,” he said, “What were you thinking about?”
Lance squeezed Keith’s hip, squeezing his eyes closed and letting out a long breath.
“Nothing important,” Lance sighed, “It doesn’t matter.”
Keith frowned, turning to look at him.
“Lance.”
“It’s nothing,” Lance shook his head, “Those markings on the map look vaguely familiar, I can’t really think where from though.”

Keith frowned, glaring slightly at Lance.
“Maybe there’s something there that will help, if I can remember where it is,” Lance continued, ignoring Keith’s glare.
“Lance.”
Lance let out a long breath, “I was thinking about my family.”
His eyes dropped to his hands, huffing out a breath.
“Oh,” Keith replied.
Lance didn’t talk about his family, or well he did but very rarely and always with a pained expression on his face. Lance never pushed Keith to talk about his family, so Keith never pushed Lance to talk. Instead, he knocked into the other man gently, smiling lightly at him.
“Love you,” Keith said softly.
“Love you too,” Lance replied.

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The general consensus was that the map needed to be folded, how no one really had any idea. Pidge, Matt and their father were studying it intently, Hunk, Shay and Rax had gone home to their families. That left Keith and Lance at a bit of a loss at what to do, so they split their time between checking up on the ship and going to the beach.

Lance was digging a hole, literally that was it, he was just digging a hole. It was oddly hypnotic, especially when he started to hum to himself. Keith had heard the other man sing to himself, it was always in a language he didn’t know, but there was something peaceful and relaxing about it. Suddenly, Lance’s spine stiffened as he froze.
“Oh my god,” he said.
“Lance?”
“Oh my god!”
“Lance, what’s wrong?”
“I remember where I saw those markings!” Lance said, scrambling out of the hole.
“What?”
“The markings! On the map, I remember where I’ve seen them before,” Lance said, before sprinting across the beach.
Keith remained seated for a few more seconds, blinking, until he realised what had happened. Scrambling to his feet, Keith sprinted over to where Lance had run.

There was a cluster of caves not far from where they were, Lance was clambering up some of the rocks, before slipping inside.
“Lance!” Keith shouted, “Wait up!”
Lance’s head popped up, “Hurry up then.”
Keith clambered up the rocks, wincing as they dug into his bare feet. The cave Lance had slipped
into was a bit below the level of the hole, the other man smiling and holding his hand out. Rolling his eyes, Keith took it and slid into the cave.

It stank of fish and rotting seaweed, the rock walls dripping with water to a small pool underneath. “This cave probably floods when the tide comes in,” Keith said. “We’ll be quick,” Lance smiled, squeezing Keith’s hand, “Come on.” Keith let himself be tugged through the cave, trying not to slip over on the rock. “It smells horrible in here,” Keith said, wrinkling his nose. “Really?” Lance said, “Imagine that! A beach cave smelling bad? Who’d have thought that?!” Keith punched him in the shoulder, Lance pouted.

The cave became darker as they got deeper and deeper, only slight cracks in the rock lighting their way. Keith yelped as he fell into a shallow pool, luckily the water only came up to his waist, but it was freezing. Lance just laughed, Keith splashed him as he tried to scramble away.

“Are you sure it was in here?” Keith asked, shivering slightly. “I’m pretty sure,” Lance said, “I mean how many smelly ocean caves do you think I’ve explored.” “Ehhhh,” Keith shrugged, earning him a huff. “You can head back if you want, I’m sure I can manage this on my own,” Lance said, hopping across stepping stones. “I’m fine,” Keith said, following him. “You’re shivering.” “I’ll be fine, but you won’t be if you drown down here on your own,” Keith grumbled. “But I’ll be good if we drown here together?” Lance laughed, scrambling up a small rise, “Ah hah! Found it.” Keith didn’t need the hand up that Lance offered him, but he was appreciative. “See, here,” Lance said.

Clearly man-made carvings littered the walls of this cave, and Lance was right, they did match the ones on the map. “Told you I’d seen them before,” Lance grinned, “There’s got to be something to help us!” “Or this is where the map was originally,” Keith said, crossing his arms. Lance huffed, “Don’t be such a downer.” “I’m being realistic,” Keith said, “Just don’t get your hopes up.” “Too late! They are risen!” Lance declared, marching forwards. Keith couldn’t help the smile twitching up the corner of his mouth, following his daft boyfriend.

The cave steadily opened up as they got deeper and deeper into it, the carvings becoming more and more elaborate. It was also becoming even and even darker, the tunnel becoming deliberately carved and more sturdy, less and less cracks letting light in. There was a clatter in front of him, followed by several swears. “You all right?” Keith asked, before promptly tripping up himself. He caught himself on a shell-shaped fancy wall sconce, infinitely grateful it was tough enough to hold his weight. “Fine,” Lance grumbled, “I can’t see for shit though, are you alright?” “Yeah, I’m fine,” Keith said.

Finally, the tunnel opened up into a large cavern, a huge crack in the ceiling offering plenty of light for them to look around. The entire thing was incredibly elaborate, smooth carvings and chipped off mosaic depicting the ocean and life under it. Even the lighting seemed to ripple slightly, causing the illusion of waves. At the other side from where they’d emerged was a huge, circular door. “Is that the sea dragon?” Lance asked, stepping forwards. “Yes?” Keith replied.
The paint had faded and peeled off the rock, but there was still the impression of it on the carving. A long purple body spiralled around and around the door, black fins at intervals around it. Its head was sticking out from the centre, whiskers trailing on the ground, mouth wide open to show off all its teeth.

“So, we’ve found a door,” Lance said, “How do we open it?”

Chapter End Notes

I swore I wouldn't write another multi-chaptered fanfiction...so here's another multi-chaptered fanfiction! Why do I do this to myself? I don't know...apparently I hate myself.

So, I will be updating this every Friday, unless something drastic happens and I can't.

Hope you enjoyed these two chapters, comments and kudos are appreciated, thanks for reading!
The cave was huge and open, but very bare. There were a few long empty torch brackets, Keith gave them all a tug but nothing happened. He wasn’t going to push every single mosaic to see if the door opened, well, not yet anyway.

“Nothing over here,” Lance called from his side of the room.

“No,” Keith said back, wandering back over to the door.

He scanned over the carving, looking for something, some clue as to what he had to do. Wait, was that a leaver inside the dragon’s mouth. He didn’t even think before reaching for it, shoving his hand in the dragon’s jaw. In hindsight, not his best idea.

The stone jaw of the dragon clamped shout on his arm, Keith shouted in surprise.

“Keith?” Lance called, “What hap…”

He finally spotted what had happened, looking between the stone dragon and Keith.

“Seriously?” he said.

Keith huffed, “Just, get me out of here ok?”

“So, out of this stupid situation you got yourself into?” Lance asked, tilting his head to one side.

“There might be something on the side of its head,” Keith said, ignoring the smug smirk Lance was giving him.

“Maybe,” Lance shrugged.

Keith sighed, “Please Lance, help me out of this situation I got myself into by not thinking. Ok? Happy?”

Lance hummed, moving from side to side to look around the head of the dragon.

It took Keith a minute to realise, but the grip on his arm was getting tighter and tighter. He felt around in the dragon’s mouth, hoping there was something there. All he achieved was cutting his arm on the sharp rock tooth of the carving. Lance was still feeling around the fins of the dragon, trying to find something to push or pull. It was really starting to hurt.

“I can’t find anything,” Lance frowned, “There’s nothing in there?”

“Nothing,” Keith confirmed, trying not to pull a face at the painful pressure.

“I don’t know,” Lance said, “I can’t see anything.”

Keith hissed as the pressure increased, his arm was going to get crushed if they didn’t hurry this up.

“Keith?”

“Nothing, it’s ok,” Keith replied.

The last thing they needed was for Lance to panic, he had a habit of becoming a bit useless when panicking. Lance began poking at the nose and eyes of the carving, before tugging uselessly on one of its teeth. The only thing that achieved was cutting Lance’s hand. Keith bit his lip, he couldn’t really concentrate on what Lance was doing anymore. Suddenly, the pressure was gone. Keith stumbled back, clutching his arm. Lance snorted, before jumping back as the door began to roll to the side.

There was light pouring in from where half the cave had fallen in, covering the what was probably the once elegant room in rubble.

“Is your arm ok?” Lance asked.

“I’m fine,” Keith said, striding past Lance into the room.

Lance dropped it for now, following him in.

There was an air of elegance long lost about the place, most of it having fallen down with the roof.
Huge columns rose from the floor, twisted with what looked like eels. The paintings on the walls were faded far beyond recognition, they were probably brightly coloured at one point. Right in the centre was a huge stone table, well it was more like a shrine.

“Wow,” Lance said, taking easy steps forwards to look at the table, “Maybe there was something about all those old stories.”
Keith hummed, walking over to stand beside Lance. He was still holding his arm to his chest, Keith didn’t really want to look at it, later when he could focus on fixing it. The table was covered in what was once an embroidered tablecloth, now just a stiff rag. It was carved with fish and covered in golden bowls, candlesticks, the remains of offerings all in front of a big statue of the sea dragon. Whoever built this place clearly worshiped the sea dragon.
“What’s this?” Lance asked, grabbing something randomly from among the things on the table.
It was a metal box, completely unremarkable when compared to the rest of the treasures. Keith had no idea why Lance picked it out, or why he was so interested in it.

“Lance,” Keith said, “We need to find how to read the map, you can play with that later, after this cave floods.”
“Alright,” Lance sighed, tucking the box under his arm, “I’ll look around, see if I can find anything else.”
Keith nodded, “Look for map pieces, or similar paintings or carvings.”
“You got it captain,” Lance grinned, with a wink.
Keith couldn’t help but snort, shaking his head with an unintentional smile.

They searched for long enough that water was beginning to rise, almost covering their feet.
“Keith, we need to go,” Lance said.
Lance was right, they’d be trapped if they waited any longer and the water would not rise high enough for them to swim out of the ruined roof.
“We can come back,” Lance said, rubbing his shoulder, “Come on.”
Keith nodded, trailing after Lance who still had his box clutched in his hand. The water continued to rise as they wove through the tunnel, soon it was up to their waists. Pain was starting to creep into the forefront of his mind, the icy water probably wasn’t helping.

Hissing in pain when he accidentally bumped into Lance’s back, Keith glanced up to see why he’d stopped. Turns out they’d reached the cave where they’d entered, the crack they’d slipped through was quite high up, it shouldn’t be too difficult to reach. Keith clambered up first, Lance giving him a boost, so he didn’t have to use his arm. He slipped down the side of the cave, rolling onto his back in the sand. He panted harshly in pain, shaking slightly.

Lance screamed suddenly, and Keith sat up bolt upright.
“Lance!”
“I’m ok,” his voice was shaking, “I just fell.”
“Are you sure?” Keith asked, pushing himself to his feet.
“Yeah, yeah, I’ll be out in a second.”
A hand appeared out of the crack, Keith breathed out a breath he didn’t realise he was holding. Lance hauled himself out from the cave, sopping wet but perfectly fine.

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Keith’s arm was badly bruised, but it would get better, still hurt like hell though. Lance was glowering the whole time Keith was getting checked over.
“Why didn’t you tell me it was hurting?” Lance grumbled.
“Other than freak you out, what would that achieved?” Keith said, raising his eyebrows.
Lance let out a huff of breath, looking away. Rolling his eyes, Keith padded over to Lance, pressing
a kiss to his jaw.
“Come on, let’s see if Pidge and Matt have made any progress,” he said.
“Oh,” Lance replied, “I want Hunk to look at my box anyway.”
“I don’t even know why you picked that out, of all things,” Keith said, shaking his head.
“It just looked strange,” Lance shrugged, “It just looked so out of place among all the gold and jewels.”
“Right,” Keith said, intertwining their fingers, “I got it, you’re just a bit odd.”
“Keith!” Lance winced, “You’re so mean.”
Keith hummed, tugging Lance over so his arm was resting around his waist.
“So mean,” Lance mumbled, pressing a kiss to his temple.

Pidge and Matt hadn’t made any progress, Pidge was face-down on the table, Matt was on the floor.
“There’s got to be something!” Pidge shouted, sending their dog off barking.
“Just leave me here to die!” Matt groaned, “I won’t make it.”
“We might have found something,” Keith said, leaning against the cabinet.
“What?” Pidge said, sitting bolt upright.
Keith began to explain what they’d found, while Lance and Hunk began to play with the box. Pidge asked for every single detail he could possibly remember, Keith could practically see her brain working. Pidge hummed, drumming her fingers on the table, glancing back to the map. Matt wriggled out from under the table, looking up at Keith.
“Describe the wall again,” he said.

The two of them began to work on the map again, intently leaning over it. Hunk and Lance were still playing with the box, prodding around the carvings, trying to open it.
“No, no,” Hunk hissed, “Press here.”
“This seems to be moving,” Lance muttered back.
“How about this?”
“No, no, move it this way,” Lance replied.
Suddenly the box clicked, something opening up from inside the box. Lance and Hunk looked at each other, bright gins on their faces. They continued to poke and prod it again, the box continued to click and unfold, opening up until it made a square metal frame.
“What are you two doing?” Keith said, smiling lightly.
“Look at what my box does!” Lance said proudly, holding it out.
“Very nice,” Keith tilted his head to one side.
“Hang on,” Hunk said, “Hang on!”

He walked over to the table, holding the frame out.
“Look at this!” Hunk said brightly.
As they gathered around the table, he fit the map inside the frame. It fit perfectly, the lines all matching up.
“No way,” Pidge said, she punched Lance on the shoulder, “Lucky bastard! Of course you would have found what we’re looking for!”
Lance laughed, rubbing his shoulder, “What can I say, I’m amazing.”
“It still doesn’t make any sense,” Matt said, gesturing.
“But we’re closer!” Lance protested, jabbing at the frame.
The frame began to whirr, twitching and folding back in on itself. All of them watched as the frame, and map, folded again and again, until it formed an almost-circle.
“Ok, now, that’s a map,” Pidge said.

They had a map, they had a direction, there was a chance they could do this. Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, the route they would have to take was very dangerous. They’d have to contend with
sea monsters, storms and ship graveyards. Basically, it was very high risk and people were likely to die, yet everyone seemed willing to go. In spite of this, Keith was excited and hopeful.

Keith stretched out in bed, frowning when his hand met nothing. He sat up, the other side of the bed was empty. Lance had gone to bed with him that night, although it looked like there was something on his mind. Seems he hadn’t been able to sleep.

Rolling out of bed, Keith padded over to the door. Cosmo’s bed was empty, he was probably with Lance. Pushing open the cabin door, Lance was easy to spot after all, he was the only one up on deck. He was bent against the side of the boat, Cosmo by his side, stood on his hind legs with his paws by Lance’s arms. He noticed Keith walking towards them almost immediately, hopping down and trotting over, tail wagging.

“Hey boy,” Keith said, rubbing his neck. Cosmo’s tongue was hanging out, entire back end wagging as he tried to lick Keith’s face. Lance hadn’t even noticed he’d lost his companion, still staring out to sea.

“Go on, I need to talk to Lance,” Keith said, pushing Cosmo away. The dog bounced away, scrambling down the stairs to the crew quarters. Keith made a mental note to apologise whoever he bothered tomorrow, for now though, he had Lance to focus on.

Lance didn’t really seem to be there, his eyes completely unfocused as he stared, not even noticing as Keith got closer and closer to him. Reaching out, he rested a hand on Lance’s shoulder, trying not to laugh as he jumped.

“Keith? Where did you come from?” Lance said, smiling weakly.

“The cabin,” Keith smiled, “I just walked up behind you.”

“You’re too quiet, we need to put a bell on you,” Lance said, looking back out to sea.

Keith snorted, sliding his hand down to Lance’s waist to tug him closer.

“What are you thinking about?” Keith asked, leaning against him. Lance looked down at his fingers, scratching lightly at the wood.

“I’m, I’m just worried,” Lance sighed, “I suppose you could say I’m scared.”

“You’re, scared?” Keith asked, that was understandable.

Reaching out, he tuned Lance’s head so they locked eyes. Leaning forwards, he gently pressed their lips together.

“We can do this,” Keith said, “Alright? The sea will be tough, but we’re tougher.”

Lance suddenly wrapped his arms around Keith’s shoulders, pulling him into a tight hug. Keith tensed for a second before wrapping his arms around Lance, squeezing him.

“Lance, what’s wrong?”

“Home,” Lance whispered softly, “We’ll be heading close to my home.”

“What?” Keith said, trying to pull away. Lance clutched him close, refusing him to let him go.

“We won’t actually go there,” Lance muttered, “But it will be close enough.”

He buried his nose into Keith’s neck. Reaching up, Keith curled his hand in Lance’s hair. Keith knew Lance didn’t want to go home, he didn’t know why and he didn’t expect this reaction out of him. They simply stood up on the deck, holding each other tightly.

“You don’t have to come with us,” Keith said softly. Lance snorted, finally pulling back.

“Don’t be stupid,” Lance said, “You guys would be dead six times over if I didn’t come.” Keith let out a huff of breath.

“Yeah, ok, I’m sure we’d manage,” He rolled his eyes, crossing his arms. Hissing in pain, Keith very quickly dropped his arms.

“I’m fine,” he said, before Lance could say anything, “I just forgot the bruise.”
“Look Lance, we need you to come with us,” Keith continued, “But, if you don’t want to, you don’t have to.”
“It looked like it physically pained you to say that,” Lance smiled, “Don’t worry, I’ll get through it.”

“We’re here for you,” Keith said.
Lance snorted, shaking his head.
“Alright,” he said, “I don’t need the uplifting speech buddy.”
“We’re dating Lance, and you still call me buddy,” Keith sighed, starting to head back to his cabin.
“Alright sweetcheecks.”
“Lance.”
“Honeypie.”
“Lance.”
“Shmoopy.”
“What the hell?” Keith laughed, shaking his head.
“Oh, come on boo-boo.”
“I hate you.”
“Love muffin?”
“I want to break up.”
“Love you too.”

Chapter End Notes

I've been really busy this week...but I can't break my I will update Friday rule on the first week. I also didn't really know how to end it, but oh well. I'm trying to make it a mixture of adventure and character moments, I don't know how well I'm doing but oh well, the only way is forward!

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed the chapter, thanks for reading.
“No one has ever gotten past here,” Pidge said, pointing to a specific point on the map, “and come back alive, they call it the ships graveyard, for obvious reasons.”
“Then who drew the map?” Matt said, tilting his head to one side.
“No one in living memory has gotten past this point,” Pidge said, glowering at him, “Luckily, we know what the first challenge is and how to overcome it.”
“Syrens,” Matt said, nodding. “We have earplugs and rope in case anyone wants to listen to the syren song.”
“It’s supposed to be very informative,” Pidge said, “Finding out your heart’s desire.”
“It’s alright,” Lance shrugged, “I wouldn’t call it life changing.”
“And apparently Lance has been there before which he didn’t think to tell us until yesterday,” Pidge grumbled, glowering at him.
“It didn’t seem important,” Lance shrugged, “It changes nothing.”
“Other than the whole you’re supposed to sail us through the ships graveyard, and didn’t manage it last time,” Matt said, tilting his head to one side.
“I wasn’t sailing the ship,” Lance said.
“Anyway,” Keith said, bringing their attention back to the map.
“Anyway,” Pidge parroted, “Once we’re past the ships graveyard, we’re on our own, whatever happens we’ll have to work out how to deal with it. We’ll know when the syrens are about to attack because a magical fog with descend, that’s when we set everything up.”
“Right,” Keith nodded, “Everyone get ready!”

The ocean was empty and flat, nothing to see for miles and miles. You could cut the tension with a knife, everyone waiting for something to happen. Keith stood on the quarterdeck with Lance and Pidge, the two of them working together with only the map and a compass to guide their way. No one had ever seen the syrens, or the island where they lived. The magical fog was just too thick, if you got close enough to the island to see it, you would die.

Keith stood at the side of the ship, looking out over the seemingly endless nothingness. Cosmo and the cats were all shut under deck, the didn’t know if syrens would affect animals and they weren’t willing to risk it.
“Shouldn’t be too much further,” Pidge said.
Keith nodded, moving to look over the deck.
“Everyone ready?” he called out, “We won’t have much time when the fog sets in.”
Everyone made a confirming nose, Keith looked down at the ropes where he would be tied to the mast. Sue him, he was curious over what all the fuss was about.

The fog descended suddenly, one moment it was clear, the next he could barely see in front of his nose. Keith made his way over to the mast where Hunk and Rax stood, ready to tie him up. They already had their earplugs in, and Keith had insisted they don’t go easy on him. The ropes needed to be impossible to escape from, even around his bruised arm. They were quick and efficient about it, Keith tugged and it hurt, he kicked out his legs, twisted to try and free his waist. There was no way he was getting away. With a nod to the two of them, they vanished into the fog, back to their posts.

He couldn’t see anything, her anything. Not the creaking of the ship, not the waves, not even the
footsteps of his crew. Keith could believe he was completely alone here, only the deck and the mast against his back. In the fog, that’s all that existed. That’s when the music started.

It started as a soft, lyric less tune. It was pretty, not jump off the boat to almost certain death pretty, but pretty none the less. As they sailed closer to the syrens, the song became louder and louder, seeming to come from all directions. The entire fog was filled with the most beautiful song he had ever heard, Keith lent forwards, the pain in his arm seemingly gone with the music that surrounded him.

They could offer him everything, everything he ever wanted. If he went to them, he could get Shiro back. With them, they could live together happily. It was more than that though, over there, with them, he could live with his whole family. His mother, who had vanished before he could even remember her. His father, who had died in a fire on the docks. Over there, Lance would never leave him, him and his crew would be together, forever. All he had to do, was get over there.

Keith was screaming, calling out, pulling desperately on the rope. He needed to get over there, he needed that happiness. Please, why weren’t they letting him have that happiness, why aren’t they letting him save Shiro. Tears were running down his face, he needed to get over there. He shouted, begged for his crew to let him go, to join him in the happiness they offered. He didn’t really know what he was shouting, just that his throat was raw and his cheeks wet.

As the singing got quieter as they got further away, Keith grew more and more desperate. As quickly it had come, the fog was gone as was Keith’s belief the syrens would bring him the happiness, the family, he craved. His arms felt like they were on fire, his shirt had ridden up and he probably had very bad rope burn. Keith didn’t care though, he just felt empty, tears flooding down his face.

There was shouting, the ropes were untied, and Keith collapsed forwards into a warm chest. He was wrapped up in a pair of arms. There was more shouting, and Keith was transferred to someone else’s arms.

“It’s ok, it’s ok, I’m here,” Lance said softly, hushing Keith gently.

Keith burrowed his face in Lance’s chest, clinging tightly onto his shirt.

“Ok, ok,” Lance said, “I’m going to take you to your cabin ok?”

Keith nodded, nuzzling into his neck. Lance scooped him up, holding Keith close to his chest.

“Drop the anchor, check the ship over, I’ll be back in a bit.” Lance said.

He carried Keith into the cabin, over to the bed. Tears were still flowing down his face as Lance tugged his boots off, settling the two of them down in bed. Keith didn’t care how pathetic he looked, burying his face in Lance’s chest and crying himself to sleep.

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Keith blinked his gummy eyes open, groaning into Lance’s chest. He felt like garbage, face blotchy and sticky.

“Keith?” Lance asked softly, “You awake?”

With a mumble, he looked up at Lance.

“Oh boy,” Lance said, rubbing his thumb under Keith’s eye.

“I’m going to wipe my face,” Keith said, voice thick and congested.

Lance nodded, letting him go. Cosmo was curled up at the bottom of the bed, Black, Red and Blue curled up behind him. The bed was no where big enough for them, but it was oddly comforting to be surrounded by that warmth. Clambering over Lance, he padded over to the basin.

Feeling much better without the gunk all over his face, Keith clambered back into bed. He got a few meows of protest from the cats as the bed dipped with his weight, Cosmo shuffled up to lay across his knee as he tucked himself into Lance’s side.
“You want to talk about it?” Lance asked, running his fingers up and down Keith’s side. Keith’s immediate response was to say no, but he was trying this new thing, where he actually talked about his feelings.

He looked down, burying his fingers in Cosmo’s thick fur. “They told me they’d bring Shiro back, that I could be with my family, that I could be with you guys forever,” Keith said, “They told me I could be with my dad again.” Silence fell between them, Lance reaching out to pull Keith against his chest. Keith sniffed softly, snuggling close.

“We’re going to get Shiro back,” Lance said, “We are, your dad…” “I know he’s dead Lance, I know he’s not coming back,” Keith muttered, “But for as long as I heard their song, I believed it.” “Yeah, that’s what the syrens will do. It’s rough, knowing what you really want,” Lance said softly. Keith remembered suddenly that Lance had heard the syrens too.

“What did you hear?” Keith asked looking up. Lance let out a long breath, looking into the cabin. The same thing you did I suppose,” Lance said, letting out a long breath. Keith’s eyes widened, he squeezed Lance’s hand that was rested around his waist. “It was not long after I…left…” Lance said, “I wanted nothing more to be back with my family.”

“Why didn’t you go back?” Keith asked, rubbing his knuckles. “I couldn’t,” Lance said, “But this isn’t about me, I’m supposed to be comforting you!” Keith lent against him, “I’ll be fine. I know it was just a lie.”

“It’s a hard lie to let go of,” Lance said softly. Keith let up, pressing their lips together gently.

“You should get some sleep,” Lance replied, “You going to be ok on your own? I should head back on deck.” Keith nodded, he needed some time to process.

“Alright,” Lance smiled, slipping out of bed, “I’ll come get you when we get close.” He headed out of the door, giving a wave before closing it behind him.

Keith flopped backwards, opening up his arms to allow Cosmo to curl up in them. “Good boy,” he said, “Who’s my good boy.”

Cosmo wagged his tail, licking Keith’s neck and face. He smiled, cuddling him closer. Lance was right, Keith was exhausted. He closed his eyes, almost immediately falling asleep.

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Keith woke up a while later, feeling so much better than before. Cosmo was splayed across his chest, twitching slightly in his sleep. There was still a bit of hollowness in his chest, but he couldn’t spend the whole time moping in his cabin. Pushing Cosmo off him onto the floor, he clambered to his feet to try and make himself look presentable and not like he’d just sobbed his eyes out. Cosmo wagged his tail, tongue hanging out. The cats blinked at him, before curling back up to sleep.

The ocean was still peaceful when Keith emerged from his cabin, they hadn’t reached the ships graveyard yet. “Keith!” Hunk shouted, wrapping him up in a tight hug, “You had us worried man.”

“Yeah sorry,” Keith muttered, “It was just a bit much.”

Hunk gave him one last squeeze, before letting him go and causing him to stumble back. Cosmo barked as Keith almost stepped on him, dancing out of the way with his tail wagging. Pidge punched him in the arm, everyone else offering a smile or a hug. He moved up onto the quarterdeck where Lance was steering.

“Hey,” Lance said softly, smiling, “You feeling better?”
“Yeah,” Keith replied, moving to stand beside him, “I’m alright.”

Lance smiled gently, reaching out to squeeze his hand.

Keith and Shiro had found Lance years ago, on the beach just outside of town. He was laid out on the beach, dressed in ragged clothes, clearly the victim of a shipwreck. He could barely walk, couldn’t stop shaking. It took a long time before he told them anything about what happened to him.

“We’re not far,” Lance said, “You see those rocks?”

Keith followed Lance’s pointing to the horizon, a huge arching spiky black rock rose out of the ocean.

“That’s the ship graveyard,” Lance said.

Keith nodded, “Ok, you’ve got this?”

“Oh, of course,” Lance smiled, “This is me we’re talking about.”

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The clouds thickened, and the sky grew darker as they got closer and closer to the ship graveyard. This whole route was likely enchanted, the brewing storm having arrived too suddenly and too inconveniently to be coincidence.

“Everybody ready!” Keith shouted, moving down to the deck.

Lance would be completely in charge from here onwards, Keith joined the others on deck to help out.

“Let’s go!” Lance shouted, sailing them right through the archway the big rock formed.

Ships were smashed to pieces on the rocks, masts sticking up from the water, others with huge holes in the side. Thunder rumbled, lightning flashed across the sky, rain poured down on them as they worked. They moved slowly through the water, weaving among the rocks. They seemed to appear out of nowhere, how Lance was so easily navigating them was a complete mystery.

The wind and waved began to pick up, making it difficult to do anything. They stumbled across the deck, trying to do whatever Lance was shouting.

“Rapids!” Pidge shouted suddenly, “We’re going to hit some rapids!”

“Everyone stay vigilant!” Lance yelled over the storm, “We can get through this!”

The rapids pulled them all over the place, rocks seeming to appear out of nowhere. Keith swore they were going to hit them several times, but Lance made them slip past with millimetres to spare. He was shouting orders at a rapid rate, all anyone could do was follow them.

Keith swore he’d slipped over onto the deck about twenty times, seen so many smashed ships and felt his heart hammer in his mouth whenever a rock got too close. Lightning struck the rock right beside them, lighting everything up.

“Everybody hang on!” Lance shouted.

They clung to whatever they could as the ship suddenly began rushing uphill, powerful surges of water forcing them up.

They shot into a dark cave, the whole thing almost pitch black. This was it, this had to be it. No one could steer through complete darkness, they were going to smash against the rock wall, or hit something. Keith clung on and did the only thing he could do, put his faith in Lance.

Chapter End Notes
itself and corrupted the file I was currently working on, which happened to be this story....I managed to get most of it back, except this chapter so I had to rewrite the entire thing from scratch...which sucks.

But anyway, here it is now, bit of a cliffhanger ending (Although you can probably guess how its going to end up) I hope you enjoyed, comments and kudos are always appreciated, thanks for reading.
The exploded out of the cave in a rush of water, rising into the air for a few seconds, before hitting the ocean again. Everyone clung to whatever they could while the boat rocked, before stabilising and floating forwards again. They were surrounded by a ring of rocks, broken bits of ship that had been launched out of the cave scattered all around. They were headed directly for a big archway, formed from two mer raising tridents, crossing them over each other. The went straight through the middle, straight out of the storm, into calm waters.

There was a stunned pause, before a great cheer rose up from the deck. They’d done it, they’d made it through the ships graveyard. Keith grinned, making his way back up to the quarter deck. Lance looked like he was going to throw up, a white-knuckle grip on the ships wheel. Hunk made his way over from the other side, slapping Lance on the back.

“You did it buddy!” he shouted, wrapping his arm around Lance’s shoulder. Lance’s knees gave out, he melted to the deck. Keith hurriedly grabbed the wheel as Hunk carefully lowered Lance to the deck. He was shaking, badly.

“Go lay down,” Keith said, “You did well.” Lance nodded and offered him a weak smile. Hunk hauled him to his feet, basically carrying him down to the cabin, Lance protesting the entire way. Hopefully nothing drastic would happen and Lance could have a good rest.

The sun slowly dipped below the horizon and nothing happened, just clear skies and a gentle breeze. It was eerie and a bit unnerving after what they’d been through, but there had been a bit of calm ocean between the syrens and the ships graveyard. Pidge clambered up to stand beside him, looking down at the map spread across the table. She drummed her finger lightly on the surface, humming thoughtfully.

“That must have been tide’s gate,” she said, “Well, that’s what it says on the map, we still need to pass through moon’s gate apparently before reaching our destination.”

“Does it have anything on what’s next, anything at all,” Keith asked, leaning against the wheel.

“Sort of?” Pidge frowned, “It has rough sketches and names, but they give very little away if you don’t already know what they are, the next section we’re going through is called the empty ocean.”

“That’s good isn’t it?” Hunk said, making his way up the stairs, “There can’t be anything scary in the empty ocean?”

“Sounds a bit foreboding though? Right?” Pidge added. Keith let out a long breath, “Tell everyone to get some rest, but be ready to go at a moment’s notice.”

“All damage to the ship is superficial,” Hunk said.

“Good,” Keith nodded, “You can go rest too, I'll take watch.”

“No you won’t,” Matt said, sidling up. “I’ll take watch, you need to rest too, don’t think we’ve forgotten what happened with the syrens.”

Keith opened his mouth to protest, but Matt was right, he needed the rest. With a long-suffering sigh, Keith relinquished the wheel.

Lance was sat up in bed, his hand running absently through Red’s fur. He looked up when Keith entered.

“Am I needed?”

“No, we’re taking a rest for now, Matt’s on watch, we need to get some sleep,” Keith replied,
starting to strip out of his day clothes.
Lance nodded, eyes returning to the cat in his lap.
“You did amazing today,” Keith said, walking over, “You got us out of there alive and undamaged.”
“Yeah,” Lance said softly, “I can’t believe I managed it.”
“I can,” Keith said, leaning over to press their lips together.

It was a lazy kiss, a smooth rhythm of lips moving together. Running his tongue along the seam, Keith liked into Lance’s mouth, flicking around the familiar space. Lance’s hand reached up for his hair, tangling among the smooth strands. Keith hummed, displacing Red so he could slide into Lance’s lap. They made out for a little while, Lance’s fingers tracing up and down the bare skin of Keith’s back. Eventually, Lance’s movement began to slow down, he lay back on the bed with Keith on his chest.
“I’m tired,” he mumbled between their lips.
Keith sat up, running his fingers softly over Lance’s cheek.
“Yeah, me too.”

****

Keith felt infinitely better after his sleep, stretching as he lay on Lance’s chest. This lasted for exactly half a second, before Keith realised what had woken him up. Someone was hammering on the door. “Keith! Captain! Captain Keith!” Matt shouted through the door.
Keith launched himself out of bed, Lance grunting in pain as he got elbowed and kneed. Keith flung the door open, startling Matt.
“What?”
“Nice abs.”
“Matt.”
“There’s no wind, no current, nothing, we’re dead in the water.”
“What?”
“We’re dead in the water.”
“Shoot.”
“You might want to put a shirt on first dude.”
“Here sweetie,” Lance said, stepping up behind him and draping a shirt across Keith’s shoulders,
“Let’s see what’s going on.”

There was nothing, the sails were hanging limp, they weren’t going anywhere. Everyone was stood on deck, staring up at the sails.
“So?” Matt said, “Now what.”
Keith stared, “I don’t know?”

****

They soon found out why it was called the empty sea, because there was literally nothing. No wind picked up, no miraculous current appeared. There were no seagulls, no fish, no life of any kind. There wasn’t much anyone could do, other than hope for a breeze to pick up before they ran out of supplies. There weren’t even any clouds, the sun beating relentlessly down on them, the only relief coming from the night, or by swimming.

Keith pulled himself out of the water, stretching up and smiling as he noticed Lance’s eyes on him. The other man was sat on deck, tucked up against the mast, book in hand. He’d always been unwilling to swim in the ocean, probably a side effect of being in a shipwreck. After going overboard when they lost Shiro, he’d been almost fearful. He’d paddle, but no deeper.
“You know the water feels great,” Keith said with a smile, “Especially after being in the sun.”
Lance hummed, “Bet it is.”
Keith nodded, water dripping down his torso. He could tell as Lance followed it with his eyes. “You should join us,” Keith said, holding out his hand, “Everyone’s having a great time, although Shay did almost drown Hunk by making him laugh.”
“I’m alright here, someone needs to keep an eye on the ship.”
“It’s not going anywhere,” Keith smiled, “Come on.”
“Nope, I’m fine,” Lance said.
There was sudden barking and the two of them watched as Cosmo ran full-pelt towards the edge, springing into the water.
“See, even Cosmo’s enjoying himself,” Keith said, “Come on, join us.”
Lance hesitated, biting his lip.
Keith wandered over, sliding down to sit beside Lance. Reaching over, he curled his arm around Lance’s shoulder. He pulled Lance into his side, pressing a kiss to his cheek.
“You thought of a way to get out of here?” he asked, nuzzling gently under his ear.
“No,” Lance sighed, “We’re trapped here, unless you want to swim behind the boat and push? We don’t know how far this stretches though.”
“We could push the boat,” Keith said, resting his head on Lance’s shoulder, “It’s better than sitting here.”
Lance tucked his knee under his chin, humming thoughtfully.
Keith stood up, “Feel free to join us.”

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By that night, even with pushing, they didn’t get very far. Everyone was frustrated and no one had any ideas. Lance took watch that night, so Keith went to bed alone. Well, Cosmo was with him. He dropped asleep almost immediately, exhausted by his earlier efforts.

Lance woke him up the next morning, heading to bed from his watch. “I’ll keep watch tomorrow too,” he said, settling down. “Oh?”
“Well, you’ll all be working today,” Lance shrugged, “Besides, it’s the full moon tomorrow and I like looking up at it.”
“Yeah, of course,” Keith said, leaning over to kiss him.
“See you later,” Lance said softly.
“See you tonight,” Keith mumbled.

Again, they didn’t make much progress. Everyone slumped down for dinner that night looking despondent, even Hunk’s dinner seemed to reflect his dejected mood. Lance was trying to perk everyone up, but he only got angry glares and the accusation of laziness. Keith felt bad enough about this to pull him into a kiss before heading to bed.
“Don’t worry, I don’t take it personally,” Lance said softly.
“I don’t know if we can do it,” Keith mumbled, “We may die here.”
“We won’t,” Lance said, “We’ll find a way out of here ok? Something will come along, something will happen, we’ve made it this far.”
Keith tilted his head back to look at him.
“I hate your optimism,” he mumbled, “But I love you.”
Lance smiled, “I love you too.”

Keith couldn’t fall asleep that night, the windows were open, hoping for a none existent breeze. He sat up, leaning on the sill, looking out at the full moon. It was like the water didn’t want them to leave, wanted to keep them here to make up for its lack of other living things. Like with the syrens and the ships graveyard, there was magic at work here. How they were supposed to break free from this spell, he didn’t know.
There was a soft whisper, a slight sound in the back of his mind. Keith’s eyes snapped open, he lent slightly out of the window. There it was, that same whisper, that same calling. A ripple of power through the air, a soft shift in the magic. Cosmo jumped off the bed with a slight yip as Keith threw the covers off, springing to his feet and running to the door.

He flung the door open, feeling the soft change in the air. Lance was rested against the wheel, eyes half-lidded.
“’We’re moving again,” Keith said, sprinting up to the quarter deck.
“What?” Lance said, standing up straight.
“We’re moving,” Keith said, looking over the back of the boat.
He was right, they were moving again, a light current had picked up, pushing the boat along.
“Well, would you look at that,” Lance smiled.

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The current stopped when the sun rose, appearing again as the moon rose into the sky. This continued for two days, the current appearing with the moon and sending them along slowly.
“The moon’s gate!” Pidge called out, hanging off the front of the boat, “We’re almost there.”
The current was slower than before, but still keeping them going.
“The empty sea ends after that, right?” Hunk asked, “Please?”
“Yes, it ends,” Pidge said, “Well, it should, according to the map, I think.”
“You think?” Keith said.
“We hope,” Pidge replied.

Two figures formed the moon’s gate, a man and a woman, arms raised to meet around a torus. The ring seemed to be shining, casting light on the ocean, light they were floating right towards. The ship came to a stop as they reached the centre of the circle of light, a steady glow starting to encase the statues, starting at their feet. The stone eyelids opened, revealing brilliant pits of blinding light.

The two statues were speaking, softly mumbled words Keith could barely understand. He could hear crashing waves, the roaring of the sea dragon, a soft, beautiful song, shouting, screaming. Keith closed his eyes against the intense light. The singing grew louder and louder in his ears, before it seemed to consume him, forcing every other thought out of his head. It was like the syren song, but instead of offering his greatest desire, it was fearful. He wanted to help whoever was singing, well, all who were singing. Suddenly it went dark, silent.

Apparently, they’d passed through the gate while the light was blinding them, the wind had picked up again, filling the sails. They’d finally left the empty ocean, passed the moon gate.
“The moon’s gone,” Lance said suddenly.
“What?” Keith asked, frowning and looking up into the sky.
Lance was right, they couldn’t see the moon anywhere, just a sky full of stars.
“This place is magical,” Keith said, “Just, keep it in mind, keep going.”
“Now what?” Lance asked.
“We need to find this island,” Pidge said, “And X marks the spot.”

Chapter End Notes

I lowered the rating, I just didn’t think it really warranted the M rating.

So yeah, thanks for reading.
Sailing to the island was, surprisingly easy. No monsters, no storms, just nothing but the ocean and the sky. Keith was relieved, he was exhausted and couldn’t wait for this to be over.

“I got a bite!” Hunk shouted from the side of the boat. Sounded like they were going to have fresh fish for dinner tonight too.

He made his way over to where Hunk, Lance, Shay and Pidge were fishing. Well, Hunk was fishing, Pidge was studying the map again, Lance and Shay had forsaken their rods to cheer Hunk on.

“It’s big!” Hunk said.

“That’s what she said!” Pidge shouted suddenly, “Wait? What are we talking about?”

“Hunk got a bite,” Lance explained, bouncing lightly on the balls of his feet.

“Oh, nice,” Pidge said, putting her map down, leaning over.

Keith grinned, leaning over Lance’s shoulder.

Everyone slowly drifted over to where Hunk was struggling to reel the fish in, grumbling lightly under his breath.

“Come on Hunk!” Lance said brightly, “You can do it!”

“I am dying for fresh food,” Pidge added.

“Oh,” Hunk said, “I can just imagine what it’s going to taste like.”

He kept going, steadily working to reel the fish in, it was taking a long time.

“Oh no,” Shay said softly, “Cut the line.”

“What?” Hunk said.

“Do you not see that shadow?” she said, “Cut the line!”

“Holy crow,” Lance said softly.

A huge fish sprung out of the water, mouth trailing with the line. Everyone simply stared at the huge creature as it breached the water, fins flared. It hit the water with a loud slash and the entire boat rocked with the force of the waves, Keith had expected this and braced accordingly. Unfortunately, he didn’t take into account Lance falling over on top of him. The two of them hit the deck, Lance’s fall cushioned by Keith’s body.

The two of them scrambled back to their feet, Lance apologising profusely and Keith rubbing his gut. Darting forwards, Keith pulled out his knife, cutting the line with one strike. Hunk fell backwards as the tension vanished, still staring out to the ocean.

“So, no more fishing,” Keith said.

Everyone nodded in agreement.

They saw several more giant fish as they continued to sail, mostly huge rippling fins rising above the water. They seemed to be ignoring the boat though, passing by without even a ripple. Keith was steering the ship as Lance was far too distracted by the fish to do it, he didn’t mind. Lance’s bright and shining eyes were enough. Also, it meant Keith could watch Shay gently encourage the cats away from the side, although the others probably wouldn’t, Red was likely to go jumping in after them. Keith was just glad he’d shut Cosmo away in his cabin.

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Lance was humming lightly, lazily brushing his fingers along Keith’s stomach.
“Hey,” Keith said softly, stretching and pressing back against Lance’s front.
“Hi,” Lance said in reply, pressing a kiss to the back of Keith’s neck.
Keith rolled over, burying his face in Lances chest. Lance’s hand trailed down his spine to settle just above his ass, rubbing lightly.

They were so close to their goal, Pidge had said they should reach the island today. Keith should be excited, and he was but, he couldn’t help but think that something was going to go wrong. Lance was humming again, lazily drawing patterns on Keith’s back. It helped so much, Lance seemed to have this uncanny ability to calm Keith’s mind, help him sleep and comfort him by just being there.

“Breakfast!” Hunk called from outside the door.
“Looks like duty calls.” Lance said, yawning widely.
He moved to get up, but Keith didn’t let him get far. Latching his legs around Lance’s waist, he rolled them over so Lance was pinned against the bed. He lent over, resting his hands either side of Lance’s head. The other man looked a mixture of scared and aroused, just the expression Keith liked on his face. Swooping down, he captured Lance’s lip in a searing kiss. Thrusting his tongue easily past Lance’s slightly open lips, Keith thoroughly ravished Lance’s mouth. Lance’s hand slid down, grasping the firm globes of Keith’s ass, giving them a squeeze. Pulling back, Keith panted roughly for a few seconds before smiling.

“When all this is over,” Keith growled, “We’re not leaving the bed for a week, you’re going to wreck me so thoroughly I won’t be able to walk.”
Lance groaned lightly, giving Keith’s ass another firm squeeze.
“I think I can work with that.”

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“Are you sure we’re going in the right direction?”
“I swear, if you ask me that one more time…”
“But I don’t see anything.”
“It’s magical…like everything else here maaaaggggiiicccccalll.”
“I see it! I see the island!”
“Finally!”

The island itself wasn’t particularly big, just a few rocks sticking out of the water. The water was too shallow for them to sail too close, so Hunk, Keith, Pidge, Lance and Cosmo got out the rowing boats, even so, they had to walk the last few meters. But finally, they were on the island.
Unfortunately, all they found was smooth rock and some statues. Cosmo seemed to be enjoying himself though, romping around the island and paddling around in the water. Keith decided to just leave him too it, poor boy was probably going stir crazy on the boat.

“This is where the map marks,” Pidge said, standing on a small pedestal.
She was surrounded by four statues, but that was it. There was nothing else on this island, not a plant, not an animal, not a building, nothing. No sign of what they needed to do either, so they all just sort of, moved around the statues and pedestals.

One was of the sea dragon, one of a creature human-like but with pointed ears and markings under their eyes the last two were of mer, but two different kinds of mer. One with long, silky looking fins and a patterned tail, a koi. The other with more solid, shorter fins, a shark. Keith had no idea how any of them were related, or what the pedestal in the middle signified.

“Guys! There’s something here!” Hunk shouted suddenly, from where he was over at one side.
Everyone immediately made their way over to Hunk, who was kicking off some rocks from a patch
of ground. Bending down, he used his hand to scrape some away, revealing a hole. Keith collapsed onto his knees to help out.

A square-shaped hole with familiar carvings. Pulling the map out, they returned the box to its usual shape. It slipped into the hole easily and the entire thing began to whirr and click, followed by a deep rumble. Instinctively, Keith reached out, grabbing Lance and Pidge and pulling them away behind himself. The statues began to rotate steadily and the ground around the centre pedestal began to move down, forming a spiral staircase.

“This seems like a terrible idea,” Hunk said, standing at the top of the staircase.
Lance used the hand not holding the box to slap Hunk on the back.
“How about we go down there!” he said, “What’s a little dark hole in the ground to syrens?”
“Not sure, but we managed that!” Hunk grumbled.
“Didn’t know what the empty ocean was and we managed that!” Pidge said brightly.
“And we still don’t know how,” Hunk muttered.
Keith rolled his eyes, “I’m going down there, on my own if I have to.”
“You’re not going alone, don’t be so dramatic,” Lance said, “You can go wait on the ship if you want Hunk.”
With a long-suffering sigh, Hunk descended with them into the darkness.

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The only light was from the lamp Lance had thought to bring, everyone else had been too preoccupied to think about that. They descended down and down, Hunk clinging onto Lance’s arm like a lifeline. Even Pidge seemed to have edged slightly closer.

The staircase opened into a big room, or what was probably a big room. Lance held up the lantern and something glimmered and rippled slightly in its light, oil. Tearing a page out of Pidge’s notebook and lighting it, they tossed it into the basin. The entire thing went up in flames, following a long trough all around the wall. Mirrors were placed in strategic locations to boost the flame’s light, lighting up the entire room.

They were stood on a small balcony overlooking a sand-filled pit. Surrounding it was a rail where four metal statues stood, matching the ones above them. A crumbling stone staircase led down to a walkway just above the sand pit, about halfway up the huge statues.
“Now what?” Lance asked.

They searched around for a bit, until they found another place to slot the box. Pidge seemed to take issue with this.

“Why the box again? If we didn’t have it there was no way down here!?”
Keith ignored her as he took the box off Lance, slotting it in. That section of the wall swung around, revealing a big square with four points around it, each representing a statue.
“I’m up here,” Pidge said, “Get your asses down there.”

“Ok Lance, two steps to the left,” Pidge said, “Hunk, move the seadragon slightly to the right.”
They shuffled around, the statues making a slight creaking sound as they were moved.
“Keith, left, left,” Pidge said, “Little more, ok right there!”
There was a clicking sound, and the statues began to move. They began tracing in the sand, Hunk, Lance and Keith clambering back up to the balcony. The statues were moving the sand, revealing the dark stone below.

After a while, the statues ground to a halt, revealing what they had been drawing. It was another map.
Keith laughed bitterly, “Of course, of course it’s another map.”
He buried his face in his hands, rubbing his eyes harshly until spots danced in front of them.
“I’ll draw this out,” Pidge said softly.
“Yeah, ok,” Lance mumbled in reply.
A warm hand rested on Keith’s shoulder, Lance squeezing lightly.
“Come on,” he said, “Let’s head up.”

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“Keith?” Lance said softly, resting his hands on Keith’s shoulders.
“It’s another map Lance,” he said, dropping his head, “I should’ve known.”
“Keith,” Lance sighed lightly, smoothing his fingers up to rest on Keith’s cheeks.
Leaning forwards, Keith rested their foreheads together. He loved how Lance could calm down, even with just one word.
“I love you,” Keith said softly.
“Love you too?” Lance said.
There was a wine by his feet, Cosmo leaning against his leg.
Keith laughed softly, “And I love you too boy.”

“We have the map,” Pidge said brightly, emerging from the underground.
“And it looks much easier than how we got here!” Hunk said brightly.
Pidge nodded, “The only problematic place I can see is the mer reef, we’ll have to pass really close and they’re having a bit of a tiff at the moment.”
“In short,” Hunk said, “They’re all riled up and will attack pretty much anything.”
Keith nodded, “Yeah, I know, We should be able to talk them down though.”
“Hopefully,” Pidge nodded, “Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t.”

Lance made a squeaking noise, hand over his mouth.
“Lance?”
“I…nothing…” Lance said, “I, I’ve been to the reef before, I just didn’t…have a good time.”
“Is there anywhere in the ocean you haven’t been?” Pidge asked, “Maybe you can just tell us so we don’t have any more surprises.”
Lance laughed softly, “Sure, if I can think of any.”
Keith curled their fingers together, squeezing Lance’s hand lightly. His eyes were darting slightly, smile not quite reaching them. Something was wrong, Lance wasn’t telling them the whole truth.
Cosmo seemed to sense this too, licking Lance’s hand. Lance didn’t even look down before ruffling his fur, scratching right behind his ears absently. There was definitely something on his mind.
“Come on,” Keith said, “Let’s head back to the ship.”

Chapter End Notes

...I don't really know what to say about this chapter...stuff happens...Lance is still being mysterious...they haven't found what they're looking for...yeah...

Comments and kudos are always appreciated, thanks for reading
According to the map, they were surrounded on all sides by mer cities. This wouldn’t be a problem, if the mers were known for letting people sail over and past their cities. There was a reason the only way to get to this part of the ocean was through the dangers they had faced, it was all due to the mer. They couldn’t go back the way they came though, so they had to take a chance.

The sea was incredibly calm, with only a light breeze pushing them along steadily. Everyone was reasonably calm and relaxed, moving around the ship with practiced ease. The only one who seemed on edge was Lance, he was much jumpier and seemed almost constantly on edge. He spent a great deal of time cuddling Cosmo and the cats. Keith was worried, but not really all that sure what to do about it.

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Keith stretched out in bed, reaching over to the other side of the bed. It was empty, and cold. Keith sat bolt upright, looking at the empty bed beside him. Where the hell was Lance? Swinging his legs out of bed, Keith pulled on a shirt and stepped out onto the deck.

There was a shadowy figure sat on the bow of the boat, legs dangling over the edge. Keith made his way over, crossing his arms and tucking his hands under his armpits. It was a bit chilly, especially in only his thin sleeping clothes. He hoped Lance had changed before leaving the cabin, but he had a feeling he hadn’t.

Lance was leaning against the side of the boat, looking out into the water. Red was curled up on his knee, occasionally batting Lance’s hand when he stopped petting her. As Keith suspected, he was still in his sleep clothes.
“Hey,” Keith called gently, moving to sit beside him.
“Hi,” Lance replied, still staring out into the water.
“You alright?” Keith asked, reaching over to take Lance’s spare hand.
Lance hummed, tilting his head thoughtfully.
“I don’t know,” Lance said softly, “That place, I never thought I’d have to go there again.”

Lance dropped his head, scratching Red behind the ears. Keith did a double take, eyes widening at the tears running down Lance’s face.
“Lance?” Keith said, “Oh Lance.”
Shifting so he was pressed against Lance’s side, curling his arm around Lance’s waist.
“Hey,” Keith said, reaching up to brush his thumb against Lance’s cheek, “What’s wrong?”
Lance lent his face into Keith’s hand, humming.
“I, mer reef, that’s where I lost my family,” Lance said quietly.

Keith gave a sharp inhale, reaching his other hand to cup Lance’s other cheek. Brushing his thumbs under Lance’s eyes, leaning forwards to press kisses to his eyelids. Lance sobbed quietly, dropping his head.
“I don’t know if they’re dead,” Lance said softly, “But it’s been so long…”
Keith pulled Lance close, causing Red to grumble and jump off his knee. Keith pulled Lance close, tucking the other man’s head under his chin.

They sat like that for a little while, Keith letting out long breaths and trying not to let his own tears
fall. He knew, he knew the second he started crying Lance would jump to comfort him. This was not about him and Shiro now, this was about Lance and anyway, if all went to plan, he would get Shiro back.

“Can I ask what happened?” Keith asked, proud of how stable his voice was. Lance sniffed softly, then shook his head.

“Sorry, I can’t…” Lance hiccupped, “I just can’t.”

“It’s ok,” Keith breathed, “When you want to talk, I’m here.”

Lance pulled away after a few minutes, rubbing his eyes with a groan.

“Oh, I bet I look like a mess,” he grumbled.

“Nah, you always look beautiful,” Keith said, smiling.

Lance groaned lightly, “You’re a big sap.”

“I learnt from the best,” Keith said with a grin, leaning forwards to kiss him.

Something caught Lance’s attention though, causing him to gasp and turn away causing Keith’s lips to land on his cheek. Keith grumbled, pulling away and pouting slightly.

“Keith look!” Lance breathed.

Keith let out a slightly irritated huff of breath, but decided to indulge Lance. He was glad he did.

The entire ocean was glowing and glittering, Keith didn’t know what it was but it was lighting up the water surrounding them.

“It’s amazing,” Lance said, “Look at it Keith!”

“I’m looking,” Keith laughed.

Lance was pressed right up against the side, staring right down at the glowing rippling water. He suddenly scrambled to his feet, surprising Keith as he ran right to the front of the boat.

“Look!”

Rolling his eyes but smiling, Keith clambered to his feet to follow Lance at a much more reasonable pace.

“Yes?”

“It’s showing us the way!” Lance said, pointing.

The shimmering water was forming a path through the water, shining and glittering. It must be producing its own light, the stars couldn’t light up that much and the moon was still missing from the sky.

As the two of them watched, some little spots of light rose up from the water, higher and higher until they surrounded the boat. Keith automatically moved back, grabbing Lance to pull him back too. The little dots of light didn’t land, instead they began to drift forwards on the sudden breeze. They caught in the sails, causing them to puff out more, pushing the boat forwards faster.

“Huh,” Lance said softly, “Cool.”

Glancing over at Lance, Keith watched the way the lights lit up his face. Keith wasn’t lying when he said Lance always looked beautiful, in this mysterious light he was nothing short of stunning. Keith let out a long breath, frowning lightly.

He needed to do something for Lance. The other man was coming with him to a place where something had clearly traumatised him, for what? Because Keith needed him to? He didn’t deserve Lance, he didn’t deserve everything that Lance was giving him and would probably continue to give him. But Keith was nothing but determined, he would do something to make it up to him. Keith didn’t know what yet, but he would find something.

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“There’s an island just up a head,” Pidge said, “We should hopefully be able to get some supplies
there.”
Keith let out a long breath, “Good, that’s good, there’s nothing on the map about the island is there?”
“Nope,” Pidge said, “There could be something really dangerous on there and we have no idea.”
“That sounds fun,” Hunk said, groaning, “It’s going to be the fishing all over again isn’t it?”
“It’ll probably be fine,” Pidge said, wafting her hand.
“I hate it when you say that,” Hunk grumbled, crossing his arms.

Although the lights were appearing every night and pushing them along faster, it was still a long journey. They weren’t dangerously low on supplies, but some fresh stuff that couldn’t eat their entire boat would be a nice change.

The island jutted out of the ocean and Keith was relieved to see the trees growing on it, this was not just another rock.

“Ok,” Keith shouted, “Rax and Shay, are you two ok to watch the ship?”
The two of them nodded, as everyone worked together to sail the ship into a small bay. The anchor was dropped and the rest of them clambered into the rowboats. The water was almost completely clear, small fish flitting away as they rowed past.
“We can probably fish if we find a lake,” Matt said, dipping his hand in the water, “Please, fresh fish sounds so nice right about now.

Lance, Keith and Cosmo went on the hunt for fresh water, Hunk, Pidge and Matt went off to look for food. Cosmo was sprinting a head of them, diving in and out of the bushes as he spotted small animals, or the slight movement of leaves. He always came back though, so Keith wasn’t too worried about him.
“It’s really warm here,” Lance groaned lightly, fiddling the collar of his shirt.
Keith hummed, pushing away the big leaves blocking his path. With a lazy smirk, he let one of them go so it would directly hit Lance in the face.
“Keith!”
Bingo.

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It took a while to get the water back to the boat, and several trips. Hunk, Pidge and Matt had found a saltwater river and were fishing for some dinner. There was also a big pile of fruit they had found, alone with some odd-looking vegetables. They’d already got quite a haul of fish, the fish here were not used to getting caught. There wasn’t any animals bigger than a mouse on the island, or the several small lizards Keith had seen running around. Looked like they’d only be able to get fish, not that anyone was complaining.

Matt and Pidge were having a fishing contest, both of them talking absolute crap about each other. Lance ‘accidentally’ pushed Matt into the lake, getting himself dragged in, kicking and laughing for his troubles. Keith and Pidge were also thrown in by Hunk for laughing at him. Cosmo, thinking all of this was a game, sprang in after them.

Keith tried to avoid inhaling more of the lake as he laughed, pushing Lance under the water. It was nice, being able to take this short break. Even coughing and spluttering, Lance’s entire face was lit up with laughter. Lance adored to swim, never in the ocean, but in lakes and rivers he was always enthusiastic to join them. Maybe he’d take Lance to one of the inland lakes after this for a holiday, yeah, that would be nice. He could imagine it now, relaxing together, swimming together, skinny dipping in the moonlight.

Keith was in the fantasy for too long, his head shoved under the water.
“Daydream about your boyfriend on your own time!” Pidge laughed.
“What can I say?” Keith said, “He’s so dreamy.”
“Boo!” Matt shouted, “Boo! Too cheesy!”
“Awh!” Lance cooed, draping his arms around Keith’s shoulders, “I love the cheese!”
“You two are disgusting!” Pidge laughed.
“You two are adorable!” Hunk said at the same time. Keith laughed, knocking his head into Lance’s lightly.
“Come on, we need to get out.”

Hauling himself out of the lake, Keith stripped his shirt off to squeeze the water out of it. Lance stood beside him, emptying out his boots. Matt was still trying to get out of the water, Pidge blocking off his route, making sure he couldn’t get out very far before being pushed back in. Cosmo was dancing around Keith and Lance, dripping with water. He seemed to realise this, suddenly shaking off and sending water everywhere.

“Remind me not to go swimming in my clothes ever again,” Lance groaned, “Wet socks are the worst!”
“You’ll make the mistake again,” Keith said, “Pidge, let him out, we can’t just leave him on this island.”
“We could!” she said, “He’d live!”
She let him get out, before pushing him in one last time before walking away.

They made their way back to the ship as the sun started to get low, ready to get going before the sun fully set. Cosmo had brought a stick on board with him, it was better then that dead mouse he’d tried to bring on. Everyone was in high spirits, the short rest had done everyone the world of good and the fresh fish only improved that.

Keith stood with Lance on the quarter deck, helping guide them out of the bay. Not that Lance needed the help, although Cosmo was trying to give a good distraction as he hit his stick into everyone’s legs. Keith grinned as he wrestled the object out of his mouth, tossing it down to the lower deck and sending him sprinting after it.

A horrifying screeching roar filled the air, an uncomfortably familiar one that made Keith’s heard plunge to his stomach. It couldn’t be, not out here, not now, please. The ship began to rock, another piercing roar.
“No,” Keith said.
“Sea dragon!”

Chapter End Notes

Dem dem dem! Cliffhanger! Lil bit of angst...lil bit of fluff...pretty much sums up all my writing but...yeah...

I would say more but I don’t want to give anything away...

Comments and Kudos are always appreciated, thanks for reading and brace yourself for next week...unless you’re reading this after its done...then brace yourself for the next chapter...
The Sea Dragons

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Keith’s heart was hammering in his ears, no, no, not now, they were close. He was shaking, when had he even started shaking? What the hell? Keith’s breaths were coming out in sharp pants, hands curling into fists. The boat shook as the sea dragon moved beneath it, huge head rising from the water. It was just like last time, but this time there wasn’t a storm hiding the details of it monstrous head.

Lance didn’t seem to have the same problem Keith was having. He’d sprung into action, realising Keith wasn’t functioning, trapped in the memories of that night.

“Abandon ship!” Lance shouted, “Everyone get off!”

The carving on the door, the statue, the sea dragon did not look like either of them. Or it did, just a twisted impression of it. Broken scales glowing with a strange purple light, fins ragged and broken, lip indented with a broken-tooth on display.

“Keith!” Lance shouted, “Move!”

Lance grabbed his hands, pulling him down to the deck. Keith had just enough processing power to grab the map before he was tugged away.

The sea dragon’s body hit the boat, rocking the whole thing and sending them crashing to the ground. Keith landed directly on top of Lance, knocking all the breath from him. The sea dragon roared again, the familiar sound making Keith’s stomach drop to his feet.

Lance hauled the two of them to their feet, making their way to the lifeboats. The sea dragon hadn’t attacked yet, instead it was knocking the boat around, toying with them. Keith tightened his grip on Lance’s hand, allowing himself to be pulled along. He couldn’t go through this again, they’d taken so long to get Voltron, they’d travelled so far, how could they get through this?

Keith could almost see it happening in slow motion, the head of the sea dragon moving towards their boat, ready to break a hole right in the centre of the deck. They were hugging the edge of the boat, but they wouldn’t make it to the lifeboats before the sea dragon hit. They’d have to jump over the side, they wouldn’t have a choice.

It happened in a second, one moment it was there, the next, the sea dragon was knocked away with a pained screech. Everything seemed to stop as it hit the water, sending the boat rocking again. Everyone seemed to have stopped trying to abandon ship and, all at one, moved to the side of the boat to see what the hell just happened.

They couldn’t really see anything, just foaming water and a slight glow from the sea dragon’s face. Something was happening just below the water, kicking up waves and pushing the boat away. All in one second, Keith snapped back into himself.

“We need to move!” he shouted, “While it’s distracted, come on!”

Everyone moved quickly, sprinting to their stations to get the boat moving again. Lance sprinted up the quarter deck, Keith moving right to the side of the boat, shouting out instructions. There was no glow this night to move them along faster, but the sea dragon seemed fully distracted so maybe they would have a chance to get away. Or so Keith thought, he just hoped he was right.

They were making good time, moving away from the churning water. Keith let out a long breath, facing out to the dark ocean. The ship was swinging less now, the water in this area slightly calmer. “Oh no,” that, didn’t sound good.
Keith whipped around and what he saw, made his heart migrate to his throat. Two huge heads had risen out of the sea, the purple glow emanating from one of them lighting them up. Two sea dragons, the one they’d seen earlier, half the scales on its face ripped off. The other looked much more like the statues and carvings. Shimmering purple scales, pure white fins. It lunged towards the old one, clamping powerful jaws around its neck. Two sea dragons, fighting each other.

Heads were slamming into each other, both trying to tear the other too pieces, jaws snapping and howling. Tails occasionally whipped out of the water to strike, bodies thrashing under the water to stir the whole thing up. They twisted around each other, trying to crush each other’s necks. Fins were torn off, powerful jets of water shot at each other. Both sea dragons were injured, bloody wounds and broken scales, but the old one seemed to be worse for the wear.

The fight didn’t go on for very long, until the white-finned sea dragon darted forwards, sinking its teeth into the other’s neck. It pulled back, glowing purple blood pouring from its neck. The sea dragon gave one last gurgling roar, before it began to sink into the water. The other, roared in victory.

Keith took several deep breaths, turning back to the ocean. He could see the glowing lights just a head of them, hopefully they would be far enough away that the other sea dragon would forget about them. Relish in its victory enough that they could slip away.

Keith had thought they’d made it, they were so close to the shining lights. If they could get to them, the lights could push them forwards, they could get them away. They were so close, close enough he thought they were in the clear. He shouldn’t have let that hope appear, he shouldn’t a bitten off scream, stopping as air was wrenched out of someone’s lungs. It had been too much to hope for, a break was always too much to hope for.

“Lance!” Pidge shouted.
It felt like rocks were settling in Keith’s stomach as he turned, sprinting his way up to the quarter deck.
“No, no, no,” Keith hissed, “Please no.”
Why had he not joined Pidge and Lance up there, why had he stayed down on the deck? What was happening? Pidge was stood at the back of the boat, the wheel was left untended. The sea dragon’s head was just behind the ship, someone, Lance, tangled in its whiskers.

“Lance!” Keith shouted, “Lance!”
He didn’t know if the other man was shouting back, he couldn’t hear. All he could see was the shadow of the other man struggling.
“Give him back!” Keith shouted, “Don’t take him! Lance! Give him back!”
Of course the sea dragon wouldn’t listen, of course it wouldn’t give them Lance back. The sea dragon turned, Lance still tangled in its whiskers, plunging into the water. It did not return to the surface.

Keith had shouted until he was horse, heart shattered into a million pieces. Lance was gone, taken. Keith was sobbing, knees buckling and he hit the deck. Warm arms wrapped around him, ones he recognised at Hunk’s. The other man was also sobbing, clutching Keith close to him.
“It’s ok, we can get him back, we’ll get him back,” Hunk said.
Keith slumped against him, letting out a light hiccupping sob.

The ship was glowing again, the lights pushing them forwards. It only made Keith cry harder, remembering the first time they’d seen them, seeing Lance under those lights. He let out a long, shuddering breath, pushing away from Hunk’s chest and too his feet. Hunk was right, they needed to keep going, they could find it, find the heart of the sea, bring back both Shiro and Lance. Keith just
had to hold it together.
“Keep going!” Keith shouted, “We can get him back.”
Hopefully they wouldn’t need Lance’s talents, the last thing they needed was to go into their own watery graves.

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Keith sobbed into Cosmo’s fur, burying his head in the dog’s neck. Cosmo was wining, turning to try and lick Keith’s face, pawing at the covers, looking around. He was looking for Lance. Keith squeezed him close, causing Cosmo to jump up, draping his paws over Keith’s shoulders, causing him to collapse backwards on the bed. He was practically suffocating under Cosmo’s weight and fur, but he didn’t care, he just didn’t care.

****

The sea was so open and empty, nothing but water and sky. Without Lance, it seemed even emptier. The boat was much quieter, even Cosmo seemed to have lost his energy. He spent much of his time looking around the boat, searching the cabins, the decks, anywhere he could get. Keith had to shut him in the cabin when he was looking like he was going to jump ship, search the water.

Keith was steering the ship, Pidge stood beside him. Keith’s eyes were unfocused, staring out into the horizon. Whenever he was sailing, whenever he was out of the cabin, Keith stamped his feelings down. Everyone else was, although he could see tears still shining on Hunk’s face. They had to keep going. Keep soldiering on.

****

“Why would it have taken Lance?” Pidge asked suddenly, picking at her dinner, “Why Lance? Why not destroy the ship? Just, why?”
It was the first time anyone had spoken at dinner since Lance, being taken. If he was being honest, these questions had been running around in Keith’s head, over and over again. Repeats of Why? Why? Why?!
“He wasn’t even up there on his own!” Pidge said, “Why didn’t they take both of us!? Why couldn’t I do anything!?”
She suddenly shouted, throwing her bowl down and burying her face in her hands.

Keith couldn’t help but watch as she broke down, Matt pulling her into a hug. Keith dropped his head, looking into his uneaten dinner.

“Come on Pidge, you can’t fight a sea dragon,” Matt said softly, “You know that.”
“But I could’ve done something! I should’ve at least tried!” Pidge protested, shaking her head.
“You would’ve gotten hurt, there wasn’t anything you could have done,” Matt replied softly.

Pidge couldn’t have done anything, but Keith could’ve. If he hadn’t frozen, if he hadn’t lost his mind, it he had just been a bit quicker. If he’d have gone up to the quarter deck, if he had just stuck by Lance’s side. Maybe, they could have got away, Lance would still be here. He’d wrap Keith tight in his arms, press kisses all over his face. Make Pidge laugh and complain, not cry, not sob in her brother’s arms. Hunk would be crying with laughter right now, not simply crying.

“We can get him back,” Matt said, “We can find the heart of the sea, get him back.”
Pidge slumped against him, hiccupping softly.
“Yes,” she said, “That’s what we’re after, isn’t it…find the heart of the sea, get Shiro and Lance back.”
Keith squeezed his eyes closed, putting his bowl down. Funny, it was much more difficult believing in the heart of the sea without Lance here. He stood up.
“I’m going to bed.”

****

Matt was stood beside him this morning, Pidge still in bed after her breakdown.
“We should be nearly there,” he said, “I think? It’s really hard to navigate without landmarks.”
“Anyone worked out how we’re going to get past the mer?” Keith said, voice rough from crying and misuse.
“No,” Matt said, “We’re hoping that if we go through this way, they won’t bother us?” Matt replied,
“Maybe? I mean, possibly they’re only protecting this place?”
Keith nodded, looking down at the wheel. There was a heart with K+L carved into it, wonky and poorly carved but Keith had appreciated the effort at the time. Running his thumb over the carving, he let out a long breath.

“Alright,” Keith said, “Everyone be ready, we’re almost in mer territory.”
Everyone mumbled in agreement, nodding, heads dropping right back to their work. Past mer reef, it wasn’t much further to their goal. But something about this area sent shudders down his spine. Maybe it was the way they were just heading straight towards what could possibly be their death, or they could be trapped here forever. Or the fact the moon was still absent. Keith was scared, but that hadn’t stopped him jumping into danger before, and it certainly wouldn’t this time.

Chapter End Notes

I did tell yo to brace yourself...didn't I? I can't remember...I'll just...Yeah, I did. Ending on another sort of cliffhanger...if you though everything would wrap itself up in a neat little bow, sorry not sorry.

If I put anything else it'll be giving something away.

Anyway, comments and kudos are always appreciated, I read them all even if I don't reply, thanks for reading!
There was a nervous tension in the air, one Keith was intimately familiar with. Everyone was waiting, looking out for the first signs of life. There weren’t any glowing lights last night, that had to mean something, anything. Keith was gripping the wheel almost painfully tight, Pidge about as tense beside him. Keith glanced over to her, before looking back out to the ocean. He was going to get her out of here, he was going to get them all out of here. Whatever it would take.

Matt ran up the stairs, “We’re there, you can see the reef below us.”
“T he water’s that clear?” Pidge asked.
Matt nodded, “You can see right to the bottom.”
Keith let out a long breath, “Can you see anything else?”
“No, no mer, nothing,” Matt said, “No one’s spotted anything, most of the coral is destroyed, the bottom dug up.”
“Ok, keep a look out, shout if you see anything, any movement,” Keith said, “Even if it’s just a fish.”
Matt nodded, moving back to the deck.

Mer reef was huge, and apparently empty. It was unnerving, something felt so very, very wrong.
“Wow! Humans!” Keith whipped around, to spy a mermaid on the back of the boat, “I haven’t seen any of your kind in years.”
Both Keith and Pidge were frozen, looking at the mer. She tilted her head to one side, blue hair falling across her shoulders and face. Pushing up, she rolled onto the deck, tail glinting slightly.
“Don’t worry,” she chirruped, “I won’t hurt you, we don’t hurt those coming from this direction.”
“Wait,” Pidge said, holding up her hand, “We can pass?”
The mer nodded, “Sure, although.”
She looked thoughtful, “I’ll be back in a second.”
Pushing herself off the deck, the mer plunged into the sea.
“What?” Keith said.

The mer returned after a few minutes, along with a whole lot more of them. They all hopped onto the ship, startling everyone.
“It’s ok!” Keith shouted, “They don’t want to hurt us.”
The yet was left unsaid, but it didn’t need to be. Everyone relaxed slightly, but still ready in case of an attack. Keith was proud of them, hopefully they’d all be ok.
“We are here to guarantee your safe passage,” another mer said, holding her head up regally, “I am Queen Luxia, this is Plaxum, we haven’t seen humans come from this direction in many, many years.”
“Our safe passage?” Keith said, “What is going on?”

Queen Luxia let out a long breath, curling her tail around herself.
“You are allowed to pass over mer reef from this direction,” she said, “Not from the other direction, you must pass the trials to be allowed in the court of our lady. You have passed the trials, you may see her.”
“Her?” Pidge asked.
Luxia nodded, “We can guide you most of the way, but you must pass into koi territory and we cannot go further than that. You may be able to convince the shark-mer to go with you, but it is unlikely.”
“Ok,” Keith said, eyes returning to the front of the ship. “I’ll make sure they don’t guide us in the wrong direction,” Pidge hissed under her breath. Keith nodded, “Good, I don’t know what they’re thinking, but for now, we’ll trust them.” “I’ll ask Hunk to keep an eye on Matt,” Pidge sighed, “The last thing we need is for him to piss them off with inappropriate flirting, or any flirting, or just talking to them, you know what, I’ll gag and throw him in the hold, it’s probably the safest option.” Keith smiled lightly, drumming his fingers on the wheel.

Reef-fish mer were the least vicious of the mer, they could even be quite friendly. The shark-mer were the ones stopping ships going to mer reef, mostly in the open water. They were kind, provided you didn’t cross them. The koi, surprisingly, were the most vicious. You couldn’t pass through their territory without your ship being torn apart. Luckily, if they took the correct route, they should pass through only a small part of it, far away from the main inhabited areas.

They continued on peacefully over mer reef, Queen Luxia guiding them carefully and Plaxum talking excitedly about being a mer. As they sailed deeper into the reef, more and more mer appeared, of more and more different kinds. Every single one of them brightly coloured, glittering as they passed close to the surface. “Since the new sea dragon has appeared, most of the mer will be moving back out into the open ocean,” Plaxum said, “They all had such interesting stories, it’ll be a bit boring without them.” “It will be nice for them to go back, to go home,” Luxia said, glaring at her.

****

They passed over mer reef completely, out into the open water. This was where they came into contact with the shark-mer. Plaxum dangled over the side of the ship, chirruping down at them. They continued to converse for a few minutes, until the sharks dove back beneath the surface. “They say they won’t help,” Plaxum said, “The koi seemed to have gotten even more vicious, they can’t risk anyone.” Keith blinked, that sounded just, brilliant. “More vicious,” Pidge hissed, “That’s just what we need.” Keith nodded, “Get Matt up here, he can steer for a while.” Pidge nodded, trotting down the stairs.

Keith relinquished his hold on the wheel, heading back down onto the main deck. Most of the mer had cleared off the ship, leaving them to do their work. He should be afraid, he should be terrified. This was practically a suicide mission, then again, this whole thing had been. But he was going to get Shiro and Lance back, he had to believe he would or, or, he couldn’t think about the or. Something Luxia had said though, reignited a small amount of hope in his chest that had been completely extinguished when Lance had been taken.

Our lady, something, someone they were protecting. You had to pass trials to see her, the way they talked about her, with such reverence. There had to be something behind it, there had to be someone. Unless. No, he couldn’t think like that.

“We’re getting them back,” Hunk said, making Keith jump. “Yeah,” Keith nodded, crossing his arms. Hunk’s hand rested on his shoulder, squeezing lightly. Keith turned to look at him. He’d never seen Hunk look so determined, the hard line of his mouth, the grim expression. “We will get them back Keith,” Hunk said, “Lance would want us to believe we could.” Keith dropped his head, feeling his eyes burn a little. “He was so convinced this was a real thing, that we could get Shiro back, return to the land and never go sailing again,” Hunk smiled, “I can’t wait. Working on all the different ships, cooking with
actual ingredients, not almost dying every other day.”
“Wake up in the morning and just lay there for a while,” Keith said softly, “Going out together, relaxing in the sun…”
He trailed off, feeling a sharp pang in his chest.
“This will happen,” Hunk said, “With all this? There has to be something.”

****

They sailed into koi territory, Luxia and Plaxum left them, with directions to just keep going forwards. They shouldn’t stop, don’t fish, don’t swim, just sail. Cosmo was getting stir crazy, tearing the covers and chewing the furniture. They couldn’t risk letting him out though. Even the cats had been shut below deck, they didn’t seem to mind as much though. Everyone took shifts, not leaving the ship with only one person keeping an eye out. They couldn’t risk anything.

The first day and night were, luckily, uneventful. There was a tension though, one there was no way of shaking until they left the territory. Apparently, a statue marked the edge of it, according to the map, they could only hope they’d adhere to it. Keith’s lip was chewed to the point of bleeding, having to resist the urge to pace like a restless animal.

Keith was curled up around Cosmo, trying to get some sleep, when it happened.
“Koi!” someone shouted.
Keith had never scrambled to his feet so fast. Without Lance telling him not to, Keith had resorted to sleeping, or at least trying to, in his day clothes. His cabin door burst open, to see complete insanity on deck. Everyone was working like a well-oiled machine, in spite of the panic. The insanity was how the boat was rocking, koi knocking into it. Everyone seemed to have learnt from the sea dragon fiasco though, coping with the jarring movement much better.

“How many!” Keith shouted.
“Four!” Rax shouted back, “I can’t see if more are coming?”
Nodding, Keith moved to the front of the boat. The sun was just starting to set, visibility was going to become a problem very soon.
“Ok, we can get out of this, how far from the gate are we?”
“Not far!” Pidge shouted back, “It should come into sight soon.”
Keith nodded sharply, “Hear that? We can make this.”

Shouting out orders, Keith marched up and down the deck. This is what he needed, the distraction. He fell back into the roll of captain easily, with only slight hiccups when he was expecting Lance to pitch in. It was all going great, until the four koi jumped onto the ship, that was when Keith noticed something off about them.

Crossbreeds, two of the four of them were crossbreeds. It didn’t really make a difference, just unexpected from the way they were behaving lately. One of them held up a hand, giving a low hiss. She, and one of the others, began to chirrup to each other, along with some rumbling. Everyone seemed to be frozen, Keith edged forwards slightly, reaching to grab his knife.

“Do not try it,” the female koi hissed lowly, “You will not win.”
Keith froze, tightening his grip on the handle.
“Let it go,” the one she had been talking to said, “And we will leave you alone.”
“Leave us alone?” Keith said.
“You can pass,” the female koi said, there was something familiar about her, “You’re wanting to see her right? You want to see Allura?”
Keith jolted slightly, that name, he’d heard that name before. How could he have heard that? Why was this koi so familiar? Who was Allura? Why did he think seeing her was a good idea?
“You can go, but you must be fast, we cannot hold off the others. We can delay them,” she continued, looking over the side.

“Who are you?” Keith asked, stepping forwards, “How? I know you?”

She turned, smiling sadly at him, “You need to go.”

“No,” Keith snapped, surprising himself, “Who are you?”

One of the other koi smiled at her, giving a light chuckle.

“I can see it,” he said, looking to the others, “I can really see it.”

The others all nodded. She glowered at all of them, before looking back to Keith.

“You look so much like your father Keith,” she said, “But I need you to trust me.”

Keith blinked, “How do you know…?”

He trailed off, staring at her. She was familiar, the shape of her face, her features, her eyes. The same things he saw when looking in a mirror.

“We need to move!” Keith shouted, “Get out of here.”

She smiled lightly, “We can talk, later, when you’re out of here.”

Keith nodded weakly, pushing it out of his mind for now. Freak out later, later, now, they needed to move.

There it was, the statue. A figure, arms raised above their head, hands cupped. The koi had jumped off the ship and Keith was shaking, but he had to focus on keeping his crew alive.

“Do you think they’ll respect the boundaries?” Shay asked softly.

“Yes,” Keith said, determined, because if they didn’t.

No, he was thinking positively. Shay nodded, slipping past him. There was a crystal in the statue’s hand, glowing slightly in the light of the setting stone. All they could do was watch, try to keep an eye out for any other koi, watch as they got closer and closer to the statue.

For a second, Keith didn’t believe it, couldn’t believe it. Something had to go wrong, anything, it couldn’t be that easy. But it was, they passed by the statue and some of the urgency fell away. The crystal flashed, blinding them all for a second. When it dimmed again, the female koi was back on the boat and the moon was back in the sky.

“Follow the moonlight,” she said, “That will lead you to Allura.”

Keith nodded, hands now properly shaking. He melted to the deck, putting distance between the two of them.

“You know who I am?” she asked, tilting her head to one side, “I’m assuming you’ve worked it out?”

Keith swallowed, biting his lip before opening his mouth.

“You’re my mom.”

Chapter End Notes

I don't know if I'm 100% with this chapter, some things seem a bit rushed to me but idk how I could make them better...so I'm posting it, yeah...mermaids...also...strange things are happening...

Thanks for reading!
It was too much, it was all just too much. He needed Lance, he needed Shiro, he needed someone, someone to hold him and tell him it was all going to be ok. He was exhausted, mentally, physically, laying down and napping for a year sounded good right about now. But he couldn’t, he didn’t have that option, no, he had to keep going. This whole thing with his mum though, this might just break him.

After he’d made sure everyone was working, checking over the ship for damage, organising them to follow the moon. The koi was sat at the front of the boat, watching him work. Keith did his best to ignore her, but he couldn’t do that forever. But he could do it for as long as possible. He just needed to keep finding things to do, anything, no matter how mundane.

There didn’t seem to be anything horrendously wrong with the boat, which was some form of miracle. There were a few bits and pieces that needed fixing, but nothing urgent. They were going in the right direction, everyone was returning to mundane jobs, Matt was at the wheel and Keith couldn’t put if off any longer. Stupid efficient ship, stupid intelligent crew that could work well on their own. Stupid.

“You command a boat well,” she said, flicking her fins, “You’re a ships captain, has it really been that long?”
“What do you want?” Keith asked.
“I suppose you have a lot of questions,” she said.
“I have a ship to run,” Keith said, turning to walk away, “I don’t have the time.”
“Keith,” she called, “There is a lot of ocean to cover, please.”
“I always wondered,” Keith said softly, “Wondered why, even after everything, I was drawn to the ocean.”
“It’s in your blood,” she said.
“What do you want?” Keith snapped, whipping around.
“To talk Keith,” she said, “I want to explain, I won’t make excuses. I will tell you what has been happening, why this is all happening, if you want nothing to do with me after that, that’s ok. It is important for you to know too.”
Keith hesitated, glancing around at his crew. They were all getting along just fine without him, a few minutes, just a few minutes.
“Ok, you want to talk, talk.”

“Only a sea dragon can beat a sea dragon, but only the koi or those particularly connected to water magic can become one. Unfortunately, the koi all followed the old sea dragon, meaning we could not have another one. Until, finally, someone was born with enough connection to magic to transform, it was my job to protect them,” she let out a long breath, “I didn’t want to leave you, but the best way to protect you and all the other humans, was to make sure he grew up, became the new sea dragon and defeated the old one. That, unfortunately, didn’t happen, they tried to force him into it too early, so he ran away. I didn’t try to stop it, I was also getting impatient, I don’t know what happened to him…but I should have stopped it, I should have helped him and this whole thing could have ended years ago.”

Keith stared at her, blinking.
“That’s why you were away? That’s why you left?” he said, “You wanted to make another sea
dragon? Another one of those things?"
“The sea dragon is supposed to protect the ocean, not destroy ships and kill mer, we needed a new one after the old was corrupted. Now he has been defeated, the koi have been thrown into disarray. But humans should be safe, you should be safe,” she said.
“Safe? That new dragon stole Lance away!” Keith snapped, “Just snatched him right off the deck! Safe? I don’t feel any safer.”
“I am sorry Keith,” she replied, “I wish there was more we could do, I wish we had done more, I had done more.”

“Can she bring them back?” Keith said, “Who we’re going to see, can she bring people back who were taken by the sea?”
“I don’t know,” she said, “I have never met lady Allura, no one I know has. She is immeasurably powerful though, if anyone can do it, she can.”
With a sharp nod, Keith curled his hands into fists.
“Is there anything else?”
She let out a long breath, “No, that is all. I was not making excuses, I just wanted you to know what was happening, why I left. Not for me, but for you, I am sorry I could not tell you sooner. Keith, I am, sorry.”

Keith blinked, huffing out a breath. He was shaking, this had been a bad idea. He shouldn’t have heard all this, not now, not while he didn’t have time to digest any of it.
“I need to go now,” she said, “I was pushing my luck coming into this territory, I was only allowed so far in to talk to you. Keith?”
“I need to think,” Keith said, “I need time to think.”
Nodding, she shuffled to the edge of the boat to jump in. Keith squeezed his eyes close for a second, taking a deep calming breath.
“Ok, I understand, I’ll wait, take your time.”
“Yeah.”

For a second, Keith let himself feel. He let himself feel the pain. The agony of his loss, the exhaustion, the confusion and just the pain, the unbelievable pain. He stamped it all down, crushing it into a tiny box in the back of his mind to lock away. Maybe he’d unpack it later, or maybe he’d just leave it to fester. Depends on how this all ended. Everyone seemed to have stopped with what they were doing, watching him. They all had sympathy in their eyes, Keith hated it.
“You heard her,” he shouted back to everyone, “Head towards the moon.”

****

When dawn came, they were forced to drop anchor. You can’t follow the moon when it’s not in the sky.
“Keith?” Pidge asked, stepping up to him, “Are you alright?”
“What do you think?” Keith said dryly.
“Well, duh, I was being nice asshole,” Pidge crossed her arms.
“I know,” Keith said, “I’m trying not to think about it.”
Keith’s breath left him as Hunk grappled in a hug, crushing him tightly to his chest. They shook as other people joined in the hug.
“Guys,” Keith’s voice was muffled, “Guys, bring Lance and Shiro back, then emotional moments.”
“It’s ok Keith,” Hunk said, “We’ve got you.”

The hug was drawn out for far too long, Keith face squished to Hunk’s chest. It was like they were expecting him to break down, to talk to them, to do anything but stand there stiffly. That was not going to happen, not right now.
“Come on guys, we need to rest,” Keith said, trying to pull away.
Hunk gave him one last squeeze, practically picking him up before letting him go.

“Alright, as long as you actually try to get some rest,” Hunk replied, crossing his arms, “We know you haven’t been sleeping.”

Keith crossed his own arms in reply, looking down at the deck.

“I’m trying,” he said.

“Lance will be so mad at you, not taking care of yourself,” Hunk nodded.

Keith let out a quick huff, “Ok, I’m just going to let Cosmo out for a bit.”

They finally left him too it, Keith opened the cabin door, watching Cosmo bounce out of the cabin. Keith let him wander around for a while, he needed some time outside. But there was no way Keith was risking him being out here alone, he was not losing Cosmo.

“No,” Keith called sharply, “Stay on the boat.”

Cosmo looked up from where he was about to jump into the water, looking back like he was going to disobey, but turning around to nose around the deck instead.

Keith watched Cosmo play around for a bit longer, his tail flicking happily from side to side as he nosed around the deck. It was getting late though and Keith needed to at least attempt to sleep.

“Come on boy,” Keith called out, “Back in.”

Cosmo looked reluctant, but padded in anyway. He hopped onto the bed, splaying out and looking over at Keith.

“Yeah, ‘m comin,” Keith mumbled, kicking his boots off.

He thought, like the past week, he would not be able to sleep. Or at least barely sleep. There was so much whirling around in his mind, too much. It seemed his body had had enough though, darkness overtaking him the second he lay down.

****

The moon was back in the sky, but there was no reflection of it on the water. So they followed the huge orb in the sky, just keep following the moon. There was something a bit eerie about it. The ocean was so quiet, only the gentle lapping of the waves. The boat was being pushed along quite quickly, sails puffed up with the breeze. Matt was stood at the helm that night, Keith at the very front of the boat.

There was a glow in the water, a huge shining circle in the water. There it was, the reflection of the moon in the water. It was perfect, an exact mirror of the moon.

“That’s, interesting,” Pidge said, “You’d think after all this, nothing would surprise me.”

Keith hummed.

“Just, follow the moon that has only just appeared again, right to its reflection that hasn’t been anywhere else,” she continued, “This is insane.”

The two of them watched as they approached the reflection, until the entire thing started to swirl. The whole thing began to spiral down, driving towards a hole in the middle.

“And now it’s a whirlpool,” Pidge said, “Fantastic.”

Hunk shuffled over to stand beside them.

“We’re heading right into that aren’t we?”

“Yup,” Keith nodded.

“Right into the probably very deadly whirlpool that will pull us under the water?” Hunk said.

Keith nodded and made a noise in confirmation, looking over at him.

“It’ll be alright.”

“We’ve survived this much,” Pidge shrugged, “What’s a whirlpool?”

“What’s a whirlpool,” Hunk squeaked slightly.

Everyone scrambled around the ship, only Pidge seemed to grasp that they wanted to head into the
whirlpool, the others were all waiting for Keith to give the order to turn. He was not, there was no going back. Relieving Matt of the wheel, Keith took a steadying breath. He’d never steered into a whirlpool before, he wasn’t that stupid. But there was no way he was going to make anyone else do it, Keith was confident with his sailing abilities, he could do this.

The bow of the ship dipped as the pushed over the lip of the whirlpool. There was a sharp intake of breath, a pause, a second of hovering. Before they pushed over the edge. Everyone clung onto the side, the ship rocking dangerously as it swirled around the whirlpool. Water sprayed up, soaking them all.

They were going down, heading closer and closer to the centre. Keith felt his own trepidation starting to build, especially as the ship almost capsized. The entire whirlpool was glowing with the light of the moon. Keith held the ship as steady as possible, sending them spiralling down and down. They reached the centre of the whirlpool, rocking, and shuddering, the wood of the boat creaking ominously. The water formed a funnel around them, pressing in closer and closer around them. Keith took a deep breath, squeezing his eyes closed. There was a panicked shout as the ship was dragged underwater.

Chapter End Notes

There's a particular reason that only the koi can turn into dragons..its the same reason magikarp turns into gyarados. Anyway, new chapter...yay! I have nothing more to say...
The muffled sounds as the water surrounded them, Keith clung to the wheel as they were dragged under the water. His feet were practically above his head, entire body floating up as they were dragged down. This had to be right, there had to be something down here. Keith tried to open his eyes, but there was nothing but bubbles and swirling shining water. Keith squeezed it closed again, the swirling making him feel a little queasy.

They kept going down, or at least, Keith thought they were. It was really difficult to tell, it was difficult to tell anything really. There was a slight hissing sound and suddenly, Keith was pushed down, feet hitting the deck. A very loud splash and they suddenly surfaced, Keith’s fingers slipped off the wheel and he hit the deck, hard. The boat rocked slightly, water splashing all around them. Pushing himself back to his feet, Keith hesitantly took a breath. Air, salty, sea air. Cautiously, he opened his eyes, looking around.

What. The. Hell. Keith had to stop thinking he’d seen everything, that nothing on this journey could surprise him anymore. Keith’s jaw dropped, an surprised sound emerging from his throat. A huge glass-like dome shimmered around them and the city they seemed to have found themselves by, it shimmered and rippled slightly. The city itself seemed to be suspended in the water, shining vividly like a beacon.

Everyone very slowly seemed to come back to themselves, standing up on shaking legs. Hunk ran to the side of the boat to throw up, Keith was a little tempted to join him. Eventually everyone got their heads back in order, on shaking legs they all moved to get the ship into the ruined dock of the tiered cities. Even as they watched, the land crumbled, sinking into the water. Deep cracks appeared in the stonework, a huge chunk dropped off, taking a building with it.

The city was huge, but in almost complete ruins. What were once big, shining city, had become stones scattered over the streets. Right in the centre, on the highest tier was a huge palace. It was the only building that didn’t seem to be completely destroyed, standing tall, the very top of it seemed to be emanating the shining dome. With one last glance at each other, they began to make their way through the city.

Plants were starting to take over the rubble, vines curling over the stones, huge white flowers shining slightly. Trees, ancient and twisted, rose from what probably used to be gardens.

“This place is amazing,” Pidge hissed, “Look at it! Look at this light look at these buildings! What is that!”

“Pidge, stay close,” Keith said, “We don’t know what might be here.”

There didn’t seem to be anything here, no animals anyway, no people, only the plants. There wasn’t any sound, only them making their way through the ruins. There didn’t seem to be any evidence of people either, no skeletons, nothing to signify there was anyone ever there.

They clambered up the stairs towards the palace, the handrails carved with sea dragons. Huge statues with raised arms, overgrown trees and flowerbeds, giving all the signs of it being abandoned. Finally, they reached the huge carved doors, inscribed with symbols of the moon.

“Are we seriously doing this?” Hunk asked, “This place is giving me the creeps.”

“If anyone wants to go back to the ship, they can,” Keith said, turning to them all, “I’m going in there, I need to know if there’s a way to bring Shiro and Lance back, but I wouldn’t blame you for going back. That’s fine.”
There was a pause, everyone looking over at each other.

“Are you kidding?” Pidge snorted, “I want to know what’s going on here!”

“I’m going to help you save Lance,” Hunk nodded.

“We can’t just let you go in there alone!” Matt exclaimed.

“If you go in, we all go in,” Shay said, Rax nodding along.

Keith nodded, turning back to the doors.

“Ok, here we go.”

The doors smoothly slid open on their own. Pidge looked for a second like she was going to ask to stay and study the doors, but a sharp look from Keith stopped her. There was no time, and it could be dangerous, it probably was dangerous. The sconces on the wall burst into flames, lighting up a huge entrance hall. Up the stairs, weaving through the maze of corridors. They didn’t know where that going, but the lights were leading them somewhere, so what could they do other than follow?

There was another huge door, the lights ended here.

“Last chance to turn back,” Keith said.

No one took him up on the offer, and as he stepped forwards, the door slid open.

They seemed to be at the very top of the castle, in what seemed to be a reverse fish-bowl. A big crystal stood in the centre of the room, a person in front of it. Other than that, the entire thing seemed completely empty and a very strange shape. Jagged and spiked, uneven, almost like a natural rock formation. The crystal didn’t look quite right though, like it had been sheered off something bigger. The person in front of the glowing crystal turned, her eyes shining white for a moment until they shifted into an inhuman piercing blue.

“I was wondering when you would show up here,” she smiled lightly, eyes flicking between them, “you’ve been on quite a journey haven’t you?”

She led them down stairs, into a room just below the one they had just been in. She moved gracefully, white hair floating like it was in water. Part of the crystal was poking through the ceiling.

“Sit,” she said, gesturing to the curved sofa.

Glancing at each other, they shuffled over awkwardly. She moved to stand under the crystal, making her hair and skin glow. Her eyes flicked thoughtfully between them as an awkward silence filled the room.

“My name is Allura,” she said suddenly, “First things first, I would like to apologise for the pain the sea dragon has caused.”

“What?” Pidge asked.

Keith’s brain seemed to have ground to a halt, responses not forming. Allura let out a long breath, looking at them, but not looking at them.

“I am a moon spirit, one of the last of my kind. It was our job to watch over the ocean and all the life in it, we did this with the aid of the sea dragon. The last sea dragon, Zarkon, was corrupted along with his wife by the magic she was studying. That is why he attacked ships, why he took so many lives. But, there is a new sea dragon now, so that shouldn’t be a problem anymore. Now, I have a feeling I know what you want,” she said, eyes finally focusing back on Keith, “You wish to bring someone back who has been lost at sea.”

Keith curled his hands in his shirt, brain finally catching up with what was going on. Dropping his head to look into his lap, Keith clenched his fists.

“I want Shiro and Lance back,” he said, looking up, “Please.”

Allura let out a long breath, lifting up one hand.

“Much of the magic from my people is gone, stolen away, but I will see what I can do,” a glow shimmered down from the crystal, accumulating in Allura’s hand.

It formed a swirling, glowing orb, glowing shimmering silver-blue. Carefully, she lowered her hands,
holding the orb in front of her.

“Here, take this,” she held her hands out, “Drop this in the ocean where you lost the one you want back.”

“But, there are…” Keith started, but Allura held her hand up.

“That magic, will not work to bring Lance back, as he was never lost,” she said, smiling.

“What do you mean?” Keith asked, “I saw the sea dragon take…”

A voice sounding from outside the room, a laugh, achingly familiar.

“Lance was not lost, I asked the sea dragon to bring him here,” she said.

The door opened, Keith felt like the air had been punched from his lungs.

Lance was stood there, talking to a man with bright orange hair.

“Lance?” Keith croaked, tears pricking in his eyes.

“I brought him here to try and lift the curse that has been placed upon him,” Allura sighed, “I was going to return him once I did, but I couldn’t lift it.”

Keith barely heard her, knees shaking as he took hesitant steps forwards.

“Lance!” Keith shouted.

Lance looked up, smile spreading across his face.

“Keith! Guys! Hey!” he said, lifting up his hand, “Fancy seeing you here!”

Keith sobbed and sprinted forwards, slamming into Lance at full pelt. Lance had apparently been expecting this, braced to catch Keith. A dam had burst, tears streaking down Keith’s face onto Lance’s shoulder where he had buried it.

“It’s ok, I’m here, I’m here,” Lance said softly, running his fingers through Keith’s hair.

“Woah! Woah! Woah!” Pidge said, “What the hell is going on!?”

Lance chuckled dryly, “I suppose I owe you all an explanation.”

“I think you owe us more than that buddy,” Hunk said, resting his hand on Lance’s shoulder, “I’m glad you’re alright though.”

Keith grunted lightly as the others joined in the hug.

“Sorry, time moves strangely here,” Lance shrugged, “I don’t really know how long I’ve been here for.”

“Too long!” Keith said, “You owe me everything, the whole story.”

Lance nodded, Keith buried his face deeper into the other man’s neck.

Lance’s hand was warm on the small of his back, rubbing in a soothing circular motion. Keith clung to him, there was no way he was ever letting him go again. Until Lance pushed him gently away.

“You need to take the magic, we can get Shiro back!” Lance said brightly, cupping his face, “This can all be over.”

“You must return to the surface soon,” Allura said, “Even with the new sea dragon, this place is not safe for you.”

Reluctantly, Keith peeled himself away, stepping up to Allura and holding out his hands. Holding hers above his, she allowed the magic to drop into his cupped hands.

It was warm and comforting, reminding him of sitting on the beach on the full moon. Keith let out a soft noise as it came to settle in his palms.

“So we just need to drop this in the water where we lost Shiro?” Pidge asked, tilting her head to one side.

Allura nodded, “He may not come back…complete, he may be missing some memories and…other things, depending on how he reacts to the magic. He should remember you lot though, and he will still be himself. The new sea dragon will guide you to the correct place, make sure you don’t break it, I will not be able to make a new one.”

Keith looked up at her, “Thank you.”

Allura smiled, “I’m glad I could help and I am so sorry for the trouble this has caused you.”
“Also for taking Lance with no explanation,” the orange-haired man chipped in suddenly, “We forget sometimes that many people do not see a sea dragon as a good entity anymore.”
“And Lance?” Allura said softly, “I’m sorry for not being able to lift your curse.”
Lance smiled at her, “It’s ok, I’m ok with it.”

Keith almost regretted taking the magic, it meant he didn’t have his hands free to touch Lance, grab his hand, make sure he was still there, it was actually him. But this magic would get him Shiro back, He’d done it, he’d actually done it. Hope had sparked and surged in Keith’s chest, burning through him and making tears run, seemingly endlessly down his face. He didn’t care though, even as it caused him to trip up several times in the ruins, he didn’t care.

They all clambered back onto the boat, everyone getting to their stations without having to be told. Which really was a good thing, what with Keith currently having a breakdown.
“Um?” Hunk shouted, “How are we supposed to get out of here?”
“Just wait,” Lance said, “It’s really simple.”
Keith didn’t even bother questioning how Lance knew this, he’d get his answers soon enough.

They moved off from the dock, sailing out into the small patch of water surrounding them. There was another bright circle in the water, this one shining much more brightly. The sun, not the moon this time.
“Here we go!” Lance shouted from his place at the wheel.
Very carefully, Keith transferred the magic to one hand, looping the other around the edge fencing of the deck. Making sure he was hanging on tightly, Keith squeezed his eyes closed and held his breath as they were dragged under the water once more.

Chapter End Notes

When you need exposition...but gotta be careful not to dump too much at once...yeah

Also, yay! Lance is alive! You didn’t really think I’d kill him right? Right?
The magic had stuck itself firmly to Keith’s hand, so when they surfaced, at the actual surface, it was still in his hand. Keith just lay limply on the deck, looking up into the daytime sky, breathing. Until a massive head appeared above him, letting out a rumble. Keith sat bolt upright as the huge face of the, apparently new, sea dragon looked down at him.

“Son of a…Lotor!” Lance shouted suddenly, stepping down on deck, “Allura said you were the new sea dragon, but I had to see it to believe it.”
Lance did not seem too impressed with this development, arms crossed over his chest. But he wasn’t freaking out, or getting them to abandon ship, so it was probably fine. The sea dragon huffed and grunted, tossing his head.
“I need a rope!” Lance shouted, looking around, “He’s apparently going to help.”
Everyone was still too stunned to really do anything, so Lance pottered around until he grabbed a rope, tying it around the sea dragon’s horn as he lowered his head. The sea dragon plunged down, causing the whole ship to jolt as he began to pull them along.

Lance made his way over to where Keith was, dropping down to sit beside him.
“Lotor’s an ass, a complete and utter ass, I wouldn’t trust him as far as I could throw him. But I trust Allura, and that’s got to count for something,” Lance shrugged.
Keith was shaking, tears pooling in his eyes again. Lance spotted this, hesitantly curling his arm around Keith’s shoulder. It was a little stiff, but relaxed when Keith lent into him, rubbing his shoulder as Keith curled closer to him.

“Hey, honey, no, it’s ok, it’s ok,” Lance cooed softly, pulling him close.
“I don’t know what’s going on,” Keith hiccupped, “I don’t…I can’t…”
Dropping his head, he curled one arm around his face. Lance curled his arms and body around Keith, rubbing his back and smoothing fingers through his hair.
“All these things happened with you and the sea dragon and I’m just, so confused, and you have a hell of a lot of explaining to do!” Keith said, voice raising to almost hysterics at the end.
“I’m sorry,” Lance said softly, “I’m so sorry.”

It took a while for Keith to calm down, a while where Lance held him close, where the crew recovered from their shock. Finally, Keith pulled away, wiping his face.
“Explain, now,” he said.
“Please,” Hunk added.
Lance took a long breath, curling his fingers around Keith’s.
“How much about the sea dragon do you know?” he asked, looking between them.
Hunk and Pidge quickly talked through what Keith’s mother and Allura had explained to them, Lance nodded along, squeezing Keith’s hand lightly on occasion.
“So, I guess you know the basics then,” Lance sighed, looking out over the water.

“I am, well was a mer,” Lance said, “A shark mer if you want to be specific, not that it really matters anymore. So as it turned out, I had water magic, so could become the next sea dragon.”
Keith felt something heavy and cold drop into his stomach. The story his mother told, that was about Lance?
“You, you could’ve been the next sea dragon?” Pidge said, “You were a mer?”
“Wow,” Hunk said, “Just, wow.”
Lance nodded, looking down at his hands. Keith could see the tears pricking the edges of Lance’s
eyes.
“How old were you? When you found out?” Keith asked squeezing Lance’s hand back.
He wished he could throw his arms around Lance’s shoulders, but was worried about disturbing the
magic in his hand.
“Ten,” Lance said softly, “I was ten.”

Anger surged through Keith’s chest.
“You were ten? Ten? They wanted to force you to become a monstrous creature at ten?” he said.
“Yup,” Lance said, “Become immortal, leave my family, leave everything I know, be the monster
that had been terrorising them for years. I know now, the sea dragon isn’t a monster.”
“You didn’t know then,” Keith said.
Hunk shuffled over, crushing Lance in a tight hug.
“What happened after that?” Pidge asked.
Lance let out a long breath, “I ran away, they tried to make me transform, I got scared and ran. My
family tried to stop them, they were attacked, and we were separated. I don’t know what happened to
them, I never saw them again.”
Keith thought he couldn’t get any angrier, he was wrong.
“You were ten!”
“They were scared,” Lance shrugged with a sad smile, “They needed a new sea dragon.”
“And they couldn’t have waited until you were ready?”
“Me transforming, would have stopped Shiro being killed,” Lance said, “If there was no way to
bring him back, if the only way to save him was that, what would you do?”

Keith looked down at the glowing orb in his hand.
“I don’t know.”
Lance let out a long breath, “So I wandered the ocean for a while, spent some time with the syrens,
found some other mer. I met Allura and Lotor too, Allura not in person, it was far too dangerous to
go there. Lotor, well, he was a bit of an outcast too, we…didn’t get along. Eventually, I found
myself at the caves where we found the box.”
“That’s how you knew where it was,” Hunk said.
Lance nodded, “It was probably the magic that drew me there, that, is where I was found by Haggar.
She cursed me. Zarkon is her husband, so she didn’t want any other sea dragon being formed, so she
cursed me so I could never go back to the ocean. That’s when you found me.”
“She made you human,” Shay said softly.
Lance hummed, “Human, and should I ever return to the ocean? I would be hunted.”
“That’s why you never went swimming with us?” Hunk asked.
Lance shook his head, “I should’ve stayed away, I should have just moved inland and dealt with it,
but, I couldn’t. I couldn’t stay away from the water and when you asked if I wanted to join Shiro’s
crew? I just couldn’t resist, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.”

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There were a lot of tears, and a lot of hugging. Keith was so overwhelmed and he just wanted to curl
up in bed and cuddle Lance close, when the sun set, he finally got the chance.

“You can put the magic down you know,” Lance said softly, “It’ll just stay where you put it.”
Keith nodded, hesitantly opening his hands over the desk. Lance was right, it hovered a few
centimetres above the wood, and just stayed there.
“I can’t believe you’re ok,” Keith said, “I thought I’d lost you.”
Lance’s footsteps moved towards him, Keith turned around slowly. The other man’s hands reached
up, resting on Keith’s cheeks, brushing away the tears that had started to spill again. God damn,
surely he should’ve run out of tears by now.
“I’m sorry,” Lance said again, “I was scared and as time went on, it got harder and harder to tell you.”

Keith looked up at him, breath shuddering through his lungs.

“I’m half mer,” he said, not sure that was what he meant to say, but whatever.

“What?” Lance said.

“We met my mother, she’s a koi, she helped us get over their territory,” Keith continued, dropping his head against Lance’s shoulder.

“Wow,” Lance said softly, “That’s, unexpected.”

Keith groaned, “It’s been a rough few days.”

Lance hummed, curling his arms tightly around Keith.

Keith lay curled on Lance’s chest, the two of them wrapped around and tangled together. Cosmo splayed across the bed and the small of Keith’s back, very happy that Lance had returned to them.

“We’re a mess aren’t we?” Lance sighed gently.

Keith nodded, “Just a bit.”

“We could’ve avoided all this,” Lance said softly, “If I’d have just done it.”

“Lance,” Keith growled, “You were ten, all of this could have been avoided if they’d have waited a few more years, asked you when you were at an age where you could make the decision. If they hadn’t chased you out, this still would have been sorted much earlier. So stop blaming yourself, ok? Ok.”

Lance had stiffened under his cheek, but suddenly he let out a long breath.

“Ok,” he echoed.

Keith wasn’t disillusioned, he knew that wouldn’t have fixed Lance’s problems, just how the fact he was half mer didn’t bother Lance wasn’t going to erase his worries.

“Love you,” Keith mumbled, “Don’t you forget it.”

“I love you too,” Lance said back.

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Keith did not let Lance out of his sight, which was really easy when they didn’t have to do anything as the sea dragon pulled them along. They were moving very quickly through the water, they’d easily be at the sinking sight by afternoon.

Lance was lent against the side, Keith’s arms curled around his waist.

“You were a mer,” Keith said softly, “Like, an actual full-blown mer.”

Lance snorted softly, “Yup, a shark-mer.”

“So you were a mer when you went to the syrens?” Pidge asked, suddenly appearing at his side.

Lance jumped, turning to her.

“Yeah, we don’t have the same problems humans do when they hear syrens. They still show you your heart’s desire, but its more comforting than tempting,” Lance said, “They don’t eat mer.”

“Does that mean you’ve actually seen them?” Matt added, popping up on their other side, “Like, seen what they actually look like?”

Lance nodded, “Don’t get too excited, they’re basically giant birds with human faces. They also eat people.”

“I was just curious,” Matt grumbled lightly.

“So you were able to steer us all through the dangerous areas because you have water magic?” Pidge asked, drumming her fingers on the side.

“Water magic meant I knew where the rocks were, I still had to steer it myself!” Lance said, “That skill was all me!”

“So water magic? Can you still do that?” Hunk asked, “You know, as a human?”

Lance nodded, “It’s not as strong, but I can. How do you think I got us out of the empty ocean, that current wasn’t a coincidence.”
“That’s really cool!” Matt said brightly. Lance snorted softly, “You should’ve seen what I could do as a mer.”

The boat slowed to a stop, rocking from side to side slightly as it was knocked. “We’re here,” Lance said, pulling away from the side, “Let’ see if that magic will work.” He wandered to the front of the ship, clambering down and easily walking along the back of the new sea dragon. Everyone’s jaw dropped slightly at the casual way Lance walked along the scales, making his way to untie the robe around the sea dragon’s horn. Once the rope was undone, the sea dragon dove beneath the water, simply leaving Lance in the water.

Lance swore angrily as he swam back, being pulled up on the rope he had just untied. “I told you, he’s a complete ass,” Lance grumbled, “But because he’s not killing us, I guess it’s alright.”

Keith walked back to the cabin, scooping the magic up and carrying it back to the deck. “Wait, why didn’t they use Lotor before?” Pidge asked, “If you knew him for that long?” “We didn’t know if he could be the sea dragon, he’s only half koi,” Lance shrugged, “I don’t know any more than that, maybe he could all along, maybe he couldn’t and now can? I don’t know.”

Keith moved over to stand beside them, holding the magic up. “So I just toss this over the side?” Keith asked, lifting it up.

Lance nodded, “Toss it here!”

He moved to the side, pointing over at a particular spot. Keith raised an eyebrow. “So, assuming all this strangeness is to do with magic from now on?” he asked. “Basically,” Lance shrugged.

Keith made his way over, holding his hands out over the side. With a deep, calming breath, he moved them apart, dropping the magic into the water.

Chapter End Notes

And here we go, the truth comes out...to those of you who guessed the truth about Lance, well done. To that person who commented it two chapters ago...you were killing me, there was no reply I could give that wouldn't have given away that you'd got it.

Anyway, that's it, I got all the exposition out. Hopefully I spread it out enough that it wasn't too tedious to get through or that it was at the very least interesting. Comments and kudos always appreciated, thanks for reading.
The magic hovered for a second, swirling and glowing, before it dropped. It hit the surface, bobbing for a few seconds, before slipping beneath. They watched the glow get dimmer and dimmer as it went deeper and deeper, until it went out. There were a few heart-stopping seconds where nothing happened, until there was a brilliant flash of light spreading out deep under water.

It began to glow brighter and brighter, spreading out and forming the shape of a ship, a sunken ship. The Atlas. The magic swirled and began to pack together in one place, on one of the decks. Keith jumped as Lance’s hand smoothed around his waist, squeezing his hip lightly.

“Shiro,” Keith whispered softly.

The magic swirled and brightened even more, becoming almost painful to look at. It shot back up through the water, spinning and swirling together as it breached the surface, lightening and darkening like a heartbeat.

It hovered in the air for a few minutes, rippling like water. Until it began to descend onto the deck, lowering until it rested right on the wood. With a loud popping sound, the magic dissipated, revealing the figure within. His right arm was missing, there was a big scar across his nose and his hair was white, but the was no doubt.

“Shiro,” Keith said softly, eyes stinging and hands covering his mouth.

The last of the glowing magic dissipated from around Shiro, and he suddenly took a deep shuddering breath. Keith was frozen, until Shiro’s eyes flicked open and his knees buckled. Everyone rushed forwards, Keith reaching out to catch him before lowering him carefully to lay on the deck.

“Hi?” Shiro croaked, “What happened?”

Keith could hear Lance sniffling and a thump as he collapsed to kneel on the deck.

“I’m sorry,” Lance hiccupped, “I could’ve…I should’ve…”

“Hey,” Shiro said softly, “Whatever it is, I’m sure it wasn’t your fault.”

Lance sobbed softly, covering his face.

“Seriously though,” Shiro said, “What happened? I can’t remember anything since we set off, you all look so much older…”

“It’s a, it’s a really long story,” Keith said, “You died Shiro.”

Shiro’s eyes widened and he cleared his throat, “I think I’m too tired to hear this. Nap first then, nap first and then we’ll talk.”

“Ok,” Keith replied, “Rest Shiro.”

Hunk helped him get Shiro to one of the cabins, setting the other man in the bed. Keith was sorely tempted to stay at his bedside, almost did.

“Stop staring, you’re creeping me out and making it hard to sleep,” Shiro grumbled, opening an eye, “Don’t you have anything better to do?”

“I’m just worried,” Keith said, crossing his arms.

“I’m fine,” Shiro smiled, “I’m just tired, nothing hurts, I’m not going to drift off, besides, it seemed like Lance needed your support.”

The smirk Shiro gave him made Keith remember that he hadn’t been here for the past few years, he didn’t know so many things.

“Me and Lance are dating,” Keith said, crossing his arms, “We started soon after we lost the Atlas.”
Shiro’s eyes lit up, a smile spreading across his face. Oh no, Keith did not like that look.
“No way,” he said, “Who asked who out? When? How long have you been together? Where? I need details!”
Keith scoffed, “You’re too tired to hear about how you died yet my love life is fine.”
“Of course,” Shiro smirked, “I can’t tease you about your crush anymore, so I need to know about this so I can tease you!”
“I know what you’re doing,” Keith sighed, “But I get it, I’ll leave you to rest.”
He put his hands up, turning to the door.
“Keith,” Shiro called out.
Keith turned, “Hm?”
“Thanks, for whatever you did,” Shiro smiled, “I appreciate it, also, I will know all the details.”
Keith couldn’t help a smile twitch up the corners of his mouth.
“No problem.”

Apparently the rest of his crew had not forgotten about how little he had slept and how many breakdowns he’d had over the past few days. Keith was basically carried to bed, stripped, forced into pyjamas and made to curl up in bed with Cosmo, Black, Red and Blue.
“Sleep,” Lance said, pointing at him, “You’re not to leave that bed until Shiro is awake.”
Keith grunted, glowering at Lance.
“I’ll wake you up when he’s awake I swear,” Lance said, “But you need sleep, rest, you’ve had a rough few days. Also Hunk told me how little you’ve slept.”
Keith rolled his eyes, “And you haven’t.”
Lance crossed his arms, “Not as bad as you, sleep, I can rest later, once I get us out of here. Sleep Keith.”
Keith huffed, but closed his eyes and buried his face in Cosmo’s fur. Lance’s fingers ran gently through his hair, a light kiss pressed to his temple.
“Think, worry later, sleep first.”
What could Keith do but obey?

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Lance shook him awake as the sun was starting to set, pressing kisses all over his face. He made his way over to the cabin where Shiro was asleep, the crew was setting up to settle down to the night. Relief, Keith couldn’t help but feel so much lighter on his feet. He had his boyfriend back, he had his brother back, Keith was walking on damn sunshine.

Knocking on the door of the cabin, he opened the door as Shiro granted him access.
“Hey,” Keith smiled, “You feel better?”
“Much,” Shiro groaned, “I’m just feeling a bit sore, so, what happened?”
He sat up and lent forwards, grumbling lightly and rubbing his back.
“Urgh, I feel so old,” he said.
Keith smiled lightly, sitting down at his feet.
“You were always old,” Keith smirked, laughing as Shiro punched him in the arm.
“So? Tell me what happened?” Shiro said.

Keith talked, starting right from when the sea dragon attacked them the first time, from Shiro’s death, right through to bringing him back. Shiro didn’t interrupt, but his eyes were very wide and his mouth slightly dropped as the story carried on. To be fair to him, the story did seem insane, if Keith hadn’t lived through it, he wouldn’t believe any of it.

“Wow,” Shiro said softly, leaning back on his cushions, “That’s…a lot…”
Keith nodded, leaning on the wall of the cabin.
“Too much,” he sighed, burrowing his face in his hands.
“You know you didn’t have to do that,” Shiro said softly, pulling Keith into a hug. “Of course I did,” Keith mumbled, “You’re my brother and I’m pretty sure I owed you that much.” Shiro snorted, ruffling his hair. “You did good kid,” he laughed. Keith slapped his hands away with a laugh, “I’m not a kid anymore.”

There was a sound of thumping and loud swearing, then something that could be knocking at the door. Keith rolled his eyes, wandering over to open the door. Lance stood there, a bright smile on his face and two steaming bowls in his hands. “I brought food,” he said, holding them up with a smile. “I can see that,” Keith smiled, stepping back to let Lance in. Lance smiled, stepping into the room. Shiro was eyeing the bowl like a starving man, to be fair he hadn’t eaten in years. “That smells so good,” he said.

Lance smiled, handing one of the bowls over, before turning to hand the other to Keith. “Didn’t you bring yourself one?” Keith asked, frowning slightly. “No, I wasn’t going to stay,” Lance smiled. Keith rolled his eyes, handing his bowl back to him. “I’ll go get my own.” Keith held his hand up when Lance tried to protest, turning to leave the cabin. They needed to talk.

Food in hand, Keith returned to the cabin. Shiro and Lance’s heads snapped up as he stepped in, Lance’s face twitching up in a weak smile. Making his way over, Keith sat beside him, leaning against Lance’s warm side with a light hum. Shiro cooed, Keith flipped him off. It was nice to have him back.

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The sea dragon has sunk the Atlas quite close to home, so they didn’t have too far to go until they spotted land. Shiro was up and about the next day, he was still shaky and weak but seemed to enjoy being on deck, playing with Cosmo.

Keith was probably taking a little bit of advantage of the peace, spending as much time as possible with his lips pressed against Lance’s, tongue down his throat. Pidge basically spent all her time making vomiting noises, but he really didn’t care. He was too preoccupied with the soft noises Lance was making, and his hands resting warm on the small of his back.

“I think you’re enjoying this too much,” Lance chuckled as Keith pulled away to rub their noses together. “I am so unbelievably happy,” Keith said, pressing kisses to the side of his face, the corner of his mouth. Lance chuckled softly, pressing a kiss to the bridge of his nose. Keith ducked down, kissing Lance’s neck. Lance laughed again, turning into a soft moan as Keith mouthed the skin. “I do believe someone promised me a sex marathon when all this was over,” Lance hummed, slipping his hand slightly under Keith’s belt. No one was around, even though they were out on the deck, right at the front. Keith hummed, leaning close and nibbling his earlobe. “Not now,” Keith murmured softly, “When we dock, sex-marathon and I’ll take you somewhere nice.”

Lance let out a huff of breath through his nose, “The sex marathon is plenty.” “I want too,” Keith said, “I’ve got you back, you’ve helped so much, you’ve done so much for me, let me do something for you.”
Lance looked out to the ocean, “You really don’t have to.”
“I really do,” Keith whispered, crowding Lance in at the edge of the boat, “Let me love you.”
“Jesus Keith,” Lance mumbled back with a laugh, “I can feel you undressing me with your eyes.”
Keith growled lightly, pushing away from the side. Lance wined, Keith couldn’t help a light snort.

Keith didn’t think he’d been more grateful to see land in his life, and for the first time since he’d joined the crew of the Atlas, Keith was grateful to see land. Keith called out orders as they drew steadily closer to shore, breathing out a sigh of relief as they drew closer and closer to the docks. “We’re back!” Lance shouted to the sky, “We did it!”
Keith grinned, laughing almost hysterically as they moored. They were finally home.

Chapter End Notes

Everything's all wrapped up in a nice neat little bow...but there is still so much story yet to go. hmm...suspicious

Anyway, comments and kudos are always appreciated, I do read them all even if I don't reply. Thanks for reading
Peaceful Times

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Keith hummed happily, stretching with a happy groan. He was sore, so very very sore, but it was so worth it. He could still feel pleasure buzzing under his skin from their last round, Lance’s lazy fingers dancing over his sweaty skin wasn’t helping much. Keith was pretty sure he had ascended into another realm of pure happiness and pleasure. He’d thought for sure his plans for a week-long sex marathon would not come to fruition, something had to happen, they had to be interrupted, something had to go wrong. One week later, Keith had been proved wrong.

Lance made a soft noise, laying down beside Keith on the bed, nuzzling behind his ear.
“Did I put you in a sex coma?” he said softly.
Keith rolled his eyes, he could just imagine the smug smirk on Lance’s face. He turned his head, looking up at Lance and blinking lazily.
“You’re not that good,” he said, burying his face back in the pillow.
“Keith!” Lance wined, dropping to lay on Keith’s back.
Keith grunted with the added weight, but relaxed easily enough. He laughed softly as Lance brushed his hair to one side, pressing kisses and nipping lightly at the nape of his neck.
“Keith!” Lance wined again, “You’re so mean!”

They lay there for a little while, until Lance got heavy and the drying sweat and…other fluids…on his skin began to feel gross.
“Move,” Keith grunted, swinging his hand out to whack Lance’s side, “I feel gross, move.”
“But I’m comfy,” Lance said, sliding his face down to nibble at Keith’s jawbone.
“And you’re heavy,” Keith said, “Off.”
Lance hummed lightly, but complied, rolling off to lay on the bed.
“Can you even walk right now?” he said, raising an eyebrow.
If Keith was being honest, the answer was no. But like hell he was letting Lance know that.

It was ok, the bathroom wasn’t too far away, he could get there. The fire was roaring in the corner of the room, so it was lovely and warm. It was ok, it was only ten steps to the door, mostly surrounded by furniture. He could make it, he could make it, he couldn’t make it. Lance was laughing from the bed, Keith groaned from his place on the floor. He was sore and his legs really were complete jelly, Lance was an ass.

“Do you need a hand?” Lance asked, slipping out of bed and wandering over.
Keith crossed his arms, turning his nose up and huffing. Lance laughed at his childish actions, dropping to his knees to press kisses all over Keith’s neck and face. Keith couldn’t help giggling, trying, well not really, to wriggle out of Lance’s grip.
“Love you, even if you are a stubborn idiot,” Lance laughed, squeezing him close.
“Love you too, even if you are a complete ass,” Keith replied, lightly knocking their heads together. Lance rubbed their cheeks together, making soft happy noises. Keith rolled his eyes, but relaxed into Lance’s preening. He definitely didn’t make a wining protest noise when Lance stood up, stretching and holding a hand out to help Keith up. Keith didn’t take it, holding both his arms up.
“Demanding,” Lance said as he picked Keith up.

Keith stretched out like a cat on the bed where Lance had dropped him, grinning up at the other man.
“Fine, I’ll prepare you a bath, I thought you wanted to indulge me,” Lance said with a huff, turning.
“Please,” Keith scoffed, “Like you don’t love looking after me.”
Lance stuck his tongue out as he slipped into the bathroom. It shouldn’t take too long, they’d set the water over the fire before they’d started on their…activities. Keith hummed, rolling onto his front again and closing his eyes. Tomorrow, tomorrow he’d take Lance to one of his favourite spots as a kid. Keith hadn’t been there since he’d lost his dad, too many memories. But he wanted to go back, it was a nice place and, most importantly, a good place to think.

“Hey,” Lance said softly, causing him to jump. He didn’t even hear him come back into the room, Keith smiled, blinking sleepily.

“You’re the one who wanted to get up,” Lance said, rolling his eyes, “Don’t fall asleep on me.” He poked Keith lightly on the nose, Keith grunted, snapping his teeth. Lance giggled, poking his cheek. Keith wriggled slightly, protesting lightly as Lance poked him. Lance laughed, leaning down to press kisses against his face.

“Get off me,” Keith grumbled, covering Lance’s face with his hand, shoving it away. Swinging his legs out of bed, Keith pushed himself to his feet, groaning. His legs were still slightly wobbly, but he could just about manage. Lance’s arm slipped around his chest, nuzzling the skin below Keith’s ear.

“Come on cutie,” Lance chirruped, pinching his side.

“I hate you,” Keith grumbled, leaning into his side.

“Love you too.”

The bath water was just right, as Lance always managed to do. Keith had melted in the hot water, only Lance’s arms around his chest keeping him up.

“You’re falling asleep?” Lance laughed, chest shaking behind Keith. Keith hummed, leaning his head back against Lance’s shoulder.

“You’re comfortable,” Keith purred lightly, closing his eyes, “So warm, so amazing, so perfect.” “Sap,” Lance said, “You’re such a sap.”

“Just for you,” Keith hummed happily, nuzzling lightly at the skin, “If you tell anyone I’ll kill you.” Lance laughed, pulling Keith’s hair back away from his face.

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The carriage rumbled and bumped along, swaying slightly from side to side as they moved down the country road. Keith stared out of the window, watching the farmland go by. They’d set off early that morning to catch the carriage heading inland, Lance was nodding off by his side. How he was managing that, Keith had no idea, it wasn’t like the other occupants of the carriage where quiet. Turning back to the inside, he curled his arm around Lance’s waist gently, causing the other man to huddle closer.

The next town over wasn’t far, which was why Keith’s father would take him there on his days off. The horses snorted as they were pulled to a halt, the carriage jolting slightly. Lance grumbled and blinked his eyes open, groaning lightly.

“We’re here?” Lance slurred slightly with sleep.

“Yeah, come on, we have a bit of a walk,” Keith said, shaking his shoulder.

“Walking?” Lance protested, “You didn’t say anything about walking!”

“Because I know you’d protest,” Keith smiled, “Come on, get up.” Lance protested but complied, pushing himself up to standing. Keith grabbed their bags, holding Lance’s out for him to take.

“Did it have to be so early? And what’s even in here?”

“Yes, and it’s a surprise,” Keith said simply, turning to walk through town, “Come on.”

He bought Lance a pastry on the way through town, they actually didn’t have to be out this early but he didn’t like travelling in carriages later on and wanted to spend as much time as possible here. Lance was mumbling angrily into the steaming pastry, but it was nice, distracting, kept Keith out of
his own head.
“We’re not going up that hill, are we?” Lance said.
Keith remained silent, walking right towards the hill.
“Keith? We’re not?” Lance said, “Keith?”

Keith ignored Lance’s complaining as they made their way up the winding path, for one he knew it wasn’t malicious complaining and if Lance actually had a problem there would be silence instead of the never-ending string of complaints. It could get a little annoying, but Keith had long since gotten used to it. He didn’t really mind, it would’ve been too quiet.

Lance steadily got quieter and quieter, he needed to take a break, but they were almost to where they wanted to be, he could push them just a bit further. Finally they made it, Lance collapsing on a nearby rock as Keith watched in amusement.
“You alright?” Keith asked, tilting his head to one side.
Lance held his hand up, groaning slightly.
“’m fine, give me a minute,” he said.
Keith snorted, “It’s worth it though.”
Lance grunted, once he’d gotten over Keith’s ‘betrayal’ Lance would appreciate it too.

They were about half way up the hill, beside a lake tucked into the rock and a bubbling spring. They were on a small ledge, so Keith could look out over the fields and forest of the countryside. He took a deep breath of the air, rather appreciating the non-salty air and the solid ground beneath his feet.

“It is rather nice up here,” Lance said, “Not that it was worth it.”
Keith snorted, turning around to look at him.
“Obviously not, you can look in the bag now,” Keith said, “We can go swimming and I brought a picnic.”
Keith fiddled with his fingers a bit nervously, smiling lightly. Sure, Lance could go swimming in the ocean now, so he didn’t really need to take him somewhere to swim. But he should like it here.
Lance smiled brightly, “Sounds amazing.”

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They’d skinny dipped, giggling like teenagers as they made out in the shadow of the small cave. They’d eaten their lunch, still naked, and then Lance had decided to sunbathe, still naked, on the blanket they’d brought. Not that Keith was complaining. But Lance had nodded off now, completely relaxed out in the sun. Keith couldn’t help the soft, completely smitten smile on his face if he tried. Damn, he was so far gone for this man.

Keith reached out, lightly brushing his fingers against Lance’s arm. Lance was a mer, Keith was half mer, what sort of a complete mess was this. Keith really needed to think through, think through where the hell they would go from here, where he would go from here. He wasn’t bothered about Lance being a mer, and he hated himself for the small part of him that was upset at Lance for not becoming the sea dragon, for not stopping Shiro getting killed. Keith sighed, burying his face in his hands, this was not a productive train of thought, he couldn’t be resentful towards Lance for being scared at ten.

The other, more pressing matter, was what Keith was going to do about his mother. Honestly, Keith didn’t know. He had always wondered about his mother, always wondered why he loved the ocean so much, despite it claiming so many people he loved. Now his father sometimes staring longingly out to the ocean made sense. Keith tucked one knee to his chest, staring out over the cliff. Should he get to know her? He supposed she had a good reason for leaving, but she still left. Keith groaned, ruffling his hair.
“You’re thinking too hard,” Lance grumbled, opening one eye, “I can’t sleep with your mind whirring that much.”
“Sorry,” Keith said, “I’m just, I’m just thinking.”
Lance snorted, “Are you now?”
Keith huffed, turning away, “Sorry.”
“Come ‘ere,” Lance said, holding out an arm.
Keith hummed, laying down with his head on Lance’s chest.
“What’s wrong?” Lance asked.
“I’m just wondering,” Keith let out a long breath, “Should I talk to my mum?”
“Your mum?”
“A koi, a mer, my mum,” Keith said, “Should I talk to her? Have anything to do with her? I just don’t know.”
Lance tilted his head from side to side thoughtfully, curling his arm around Keith’s shoulders.

They lay like that in silence for a while, for so long Keith thought Lance had fallen asleep again. Until he took a deep breath and spoke.
“I don’t know what to suggest,” Lance said, “Unfortunately, it’s all your choice, you need to decide what you want.”
“I don’t know what I want,” Keith grumbled, tossing his leg over Lance’s, huddling closer. Lance’s fingers smoothed up and down his back, tracing lightly over his shoulder blades.
“I’m a bit bias,” Lance said softly, “But talk to her Keith, give her a chance.”

Keith propped himself up on his elbow, looking down at Lance’s face.
“That’s what we’ll do next, we’ll find your family!” he said, tapping Lance’s shoulder.
“Don’t change the subject.”
“I’m not, we should find them!”
“The ocean’s huge Keith! How the hell would we do that?”
“We’ll find a way,” Keith nodded, determined.
Lance smiled that annoying indulgent smile, the ok but I don’t really believe you smile.
“Ok Keith.”
“We will!”
“I said ok.”
“But you don’t believe me,” Keith grumbled, “We’ll find them Lance, I promise you, we’ll find a way.”
“And you’ll talk to your mum?” Lance asked.
Keith dropped his head to Lance’s chest.
“And I’ll talk to my mum, I guess.”

Chapter End Notes

I am so sorry for the later in the day update...I completly forgot it was Friday...so...this is all fluff, only fluff, nothing but fluff...what could possible go wrong?

Comments and kudos are always appreciated, thanks for reading I hope you enjoyed
Allura let out a long breath, lowering her hands from where they were rested on the crystal in front of her. She was glad Lance was able to find peace, even if she couldn’t lift his curse. Sighing, Allura turned away from what remained of the crystal. Now she didn’t have to worry about using its power to protect the human ocean-side cities, she could focus her efforts on maintaining her city, or rather what was left of it.

Even with the crystal and her own magic, she couldn’t restore the city back to its former glory. She could possibly change that, if she could just get back the rest of the crystal. With the sea dragon on her side now, that might just be possible. Shaking out the slight cramp in her wrist, Allura rested her hand back on the crystal. Taking a deep breath, she focused her magic. Looking through the sea dragon’s eyes was an easy thing to do, the crystal and them were intrinsically linked.

Lotor was headed into a deep-sea trench, uncomfortably close to their current location. This was the home of the sea-witch Haggar. The only other moon-spirit, the one who had stolen the rest of the crystal. Lotor continued to swim further and further down, right down into the darkness. Until Allura spotted it, the huge shimmering purple barrier, the reason she’d never managed to get it back before. Now she had a sea dragon though.

Lotor continued to swim deeper, heading directly towards the barrier. Head down, he hit the barrier at full speed. There was a loud thud and everything seemed to shake. Nothing, the barrier looked hardly effected. He tried again, this time swinging at it with his tail. Again, the barrier seemed unaffected.

Allura let out a long breath, dropping her head slightly. She knew it was a long shot, Lotor’s magic had barely been enough to transform him into the dragon and that was even after he’d been on a magic-building journey. Asking him to breath through a magic barrier had been a push.

“Stop,” she said, using their telepathic link, “You’re not going to manage, we’ll have to come up with a new plan.”

“I’m sorry Allura,” was his reply as he began to swim away.

****

A few days later, Allura sat on the steps of the entrance hall. She had done this a lot as a kid, watching the city and people move past. Now though, all she was seeing was rubble. A dying city with no people. She had a feeling she probably wasn’t getting the whole crystal back, she was beginning to doubt it was a good idea. The only moon spirits left alive were her and Coran, the humans didn’t believe in them anymore, or even know they existed. With Lotor as the sea dragon now, she didn’t really need the whole crystal. He could protect the ocean himself, the only thing she needed it for was to heal the city.

Standing up and turning away from the sight of the ruined city, Allura made her way back down the stairs. She moved down into the archive room, hundreds of glowing crystals with all the information of her people, and their lives. Coran was flitting around the room, polishing them all carefully. She watched him for a few minutes, before letting out a long sigh. What was she supposed to do?

“Coran,” she said.

He stopped, turning back to look and smile at her, it dropping slightly when he looked at her face.
“Allura? What’s wrong?”
“T, I’m wondering if it’s time to leave this place,” she said, looking around, “It’s falling apart, find a new place, some people. Start to build something new.”
Coran hummed thoughtfully, stroking his moustache.
“But?” he prompted, raising his eyebrows.
“I don’t know if I can leave this place,” she replied, crossing her arms.
Coran nodded, glancing around.
“It is hard to let go of the old place, I can’t help but remember it back in its heyday,” he said, a light smile on his face, “But it might be best to let the old place go.”
Allura nodded, letting out a long breath.
“Start something new,” she said, “Maybe more inland, somewhere easier to defend from Haggar.”
Coran nodded, “How do you plan on moving the crystal?”
Allura smiled, “It’s ok, shouldn’t be too hard.”

****

She needed to find the perfect place, or at the very least a nice place. Preferably near water, but away from the ocean. She sighed, brushing her fingers over the crystal. They way she could monitor the world was a bit odd, and a little difficult. She’d been cut off from the outside world for so long, only able to observe the area around the city and from the eyes of the sea dragon. She didn’t want to look through the eyes of the sea dragon, she didn’t want to see his destruction, but to keep an eye on anything, she had too. Now though, she was much more free.

All these choices though came with a problem, she had too much to look at. Right now, she wanted to find somewhere new quickly, before Haggar caught wind of what she was planning. Maybe she could see where Lance was, if that would be a good place to stay. Although last time, he had been getting into an…intimate situation with Keith. She’d just take a quick peak, hopefully she wouldn’t see anything too scarring.

They were outside, Lance and Keith, part way up what looked like a mountain. Allura looked around, she didn’t have to look through Lance’s eyes, just use him as a place to start then she could look around herself. They wouldn’t know she was there, which was good because she didn’t want to disturb them, they looked so happy.

The place she’d found herself though was stunning and exactly what she had been looking for. A beautiful pool for the crystal to be in and a stunning view of the land around them for her. It wasn’t a particularly big area, so she’d probably have to do some improvising, but, it would be perfect. There was a slight rustling sound as Keith and Lance got up and began to make their way back down the hill. Allura stood there for a little longer, watching the sun set. It had been so long since she’d last seen it, with her father.

She returned to her physical body with a slight jolt and tears stinging her eyes, hurriedly she wiped them. Curling her arm around herself, Allura glanced around the room. She remembered all the times her father brought her up here, when the room was filled with crystal, not just a shard. Shaking her head, Allura gritted her teeth, she was doing this to save what remained of her civilisation. Which was basically their knowledge and history, better than letting it all sink to the bottom of the ocean. Alright, she just needed to get this all organised.

****

Allura could teleport, not just her mind but her physical body too. She couldn’t teleport the crystal though, which was one of the reasons she hadn’t moved before now. She had a sea dragon to help her now, and she was sure when they reached land Lance would be more than willing to help them
get to where she wanted to go. Her and Coran had packed up their few possessions, not that the two of them had very much between them. Allura stood in front of the crystal, resting her hand on it to summon Lotor to them.

There he was, easily gliding through the water towards them. Allura smiled up at him, before her eyes widened. Screaming, the agonised screams of people seeming to come from the direction of Lotor. Jolting her hand away from the shard of crystal, the screaming stopped.

“Allura?” Lotor asked, “What’s wrong?”

Allura frowned, pressing her hand back on the crystal, listening to the screams.

“Something’s going on with the crystal,” Allura said, “Give me a moment.”

Her father had told her about this sort of thing before. They crystal was a mysterious and powerful thing, some legends even said it was alive, aware. Allura didn’t really believe them, maybe because she had never truly connected with it until his death. She had been waiting ever since that day, for this to happen. She had worried the splitting of it had damaged this particular power irreparably. The crystal wanted to show her something, give her advice. Why it was choosing to do this now was a mystery, but it must be important.

Resting both hands on the crystal, Allura pushed forwards slightly. The crystal seemed to become almost jelly-like, sucking in and covering her hands. She closed her eyes, allowing the magic to flow through her body.

She opened her eyes, disorientated by her chance in scenery. She was out in the ocean, seemingly in the middle of no where. She looked around and spotted a familiar face, Lotor, before he was the sea dragon. He’d always looked a bit odd, strange combination of moon spirit and koi. This mostly accumulated with his tail being two fin-like feet. So, the crystal was showing her something from the past. All she had to do, was see where this was going.

Lotor kept on swimming, seemingly into the middle of nowhere. She vaguely recognised the area, but couldn’t be too sure. All of a sudden, a whirlpool appeared directly in front of him, under water. Allura recognised the magic, it was the same that brought lucky people to her. Lotor vanished into it, and she was pulled along for the ride.

They emerged next to a small island, Lotor surfacing and stepping onto the land with his strange fin-feet. He smiled as there was a shout of his name and Allura looked over to whoever it was. Her heart seemed to shift, from her chest to her throat. It was a moon spirit, alive and well. Where was this? When was this? What was happening?

Lotor continued to walk across the island, more and more moon spirits joining him as he headed towards a small village. This had to be a long time ago, there couldn’t be this many moon spirits still alive, surely, he would’ve told her. He stepped up in the centre of the village, smiling down at all the people there.

“I have an announcement to make,” he said with a smile, “The day we were hoping for will soon arrive, soon we will be free from the sea dragon, you will be free to go home.”

There was soft murmuring from the crowd, before an almighty cheer rose up from them. Lotor smiled at the excited words and cheers, everyone seemed thrilled at this prospect.

“Now, there is just one thing we need to complete this, I need your most powerful magic users to return with me. To help princess Allura bring forth another sea dragon, to defeat the old one and restore the city to its former glory.”

There was another soft muttering breaking over the crowd as they all decided who. Allura was confused. What was Lotor talking about? He hadn’t brought her any moon spirits, this had to be recent, didn’t it?
Eventually, three moon spirits were selected, stepping forwards towards Lotor. He smiled, “Perfect, come with me.” The four of them stepped away from the city, to a dock and onto a boat. They set out into the water, the other residents cheering behind them on the shore. A whirlpool opened, swallowing the boat and dragging them back to the ocean Allura recognised. Lotor stood at the rudder of the small sailing boat, watching the three moon spirits.

“Oh, I haven’t seen the ocean in so long,” one of them said. “I can’t wait to see princess Allura again!” another added. The third smiled, “It will be an honour serving her.”

“Yes,” Lotor said, walking towards them, “However, it is not you we actually need, it is your magic.”

It seemed to take only a second, one moment all she could see was their surprised faces, then Lotor was reaching out. A scream, the moon spirits ageing at a rapid rate, before they crumbled to dust. “I’m sorry,” Lotor said, “But I need your magic.”

Allura jerked away from the crystal, gasping sharply. Her hands curled into fists. “Allura? What’s wrong?” Lotor asked, circling around the crystal room. So that’s how he came back with enough magic for her to transform him into the sea dragon, she thought it had taken a suspiciously short amount of time for him to build up his magic., She’d been so relieved.

“Why didn’t you tell me,” she said, “Why didn’t you tell me there were other moon spirits?”

His eyes widened fractionally, “I didn’t wish to burden you with that knowledge, after all, there was nothing you could do for them. Nothing, yet.”

“You killed three of them,” she continued, anger growing, “You killed three of them to take their magic, just so you could become the sea dragon.”

“It was a necessary sacrifice,” Lotor said, swimming closer, “You needed a new sea dragon, for that, I needed more magic.”

“We could’ve waited,” Allura said, “We could’ve found someone else, there was no need…”

“Of course there was a need,” Lotor snarled slightly, “This city is falling apart, you say I should’ve told you about the moon spirits and you expected them to live in this place, in these trashy ruins.”

“They could’ve helped!” Allura snapped, “They could have used their magic to help me, to keep the city going until we found a new sea dragon. But you couldn’t have that could you? No, you had to keep them all to yourself, so you could exploit their magic!”

“I did it to help you!”

“You did it to help yourself!” Allura snapped back, “You just wanted the power, to be the sea dragon. You are just like your father!”

Lotor’s eyes narrowed in anger, teeth bared.

“I am nothing like my father,” he said, before whirling around and swimming away.

Allura dropped to sit beside the crystal, feeling tears fill her eyes. She thought she’d got this whole thing sorted, had fixed what little she could. Now, she’d just given someone else greedy incredible power. “Why did you show that too me?” she said, looking at the crystal. Would it have been any better, she didn’t know. All she knew it she’d screwed up, and didn’t know how to fix it.

Chapter End Notes
Yay! Allura POV...I had all this stuff that was going to happen and was like..humm...how can i have her telling them without exposition dump...I know! her POV! Also I make most of this up as I go...I have a sort of plan...but nothing concrete. Also, for all those who said don't trust Lotor...yeah, don't trust Lotor.

Anyway, comment and kudos always appreciated, thanks for reading! Hope you enjoyed.
Keith draped his arm over Lance’s bare chest, pulling himself up to press a kiss to the other man’s lips.
“Nu,” Lance complained turning away, “’S too early.”
Keith chuckled softly, moving to press a kiss to Lance’s jaw.
“Did I tire you out old man?” Keith smirked lazily.
“You’re older than me,” Lance grumbled, opening one eye.
“You’re mentally older,” Keith said, tapping Lance’s nose.
Lance snorted, smushing his hand on Keith’s face and pushing him away. Far away, almost pushing him right out of bed.
“Bog off,” Lance sighed, rolling onto his side, “Lemme sleep.”
Keith smiled, shuffling back over so one arm was either side of Lance’s body. Leaning down, he pressed a soft kiss to Lance’s neck.
“Come on,” he said, “We’re meeting the others for breakfast.”
Lance groaned, “I don’t remember agreeing to that.”
“Well you did,” Keith said, rolling over Lance to land on the floor, “So, come on.”
Lance grumbled, rolling over and burrowing himself in the covers.

Keith smirked, grasping the covers before quickly ripping them off before Lance could tighten his grip. Lance made a pathetic noise, curling in on himself. Rolling his eyes, Keith reached out and tried to wrestle the pillow out of the other man’s grasp. But Lance was just about as stubborn as Keith, curling both his arms and legs around the pillow. The two wrestled for the bit, until Keith found himself trapped in Lance’s arm, pinned to the bed.
“Come on,” Keith sighed, patting Lance’s cheek lightly.
Lance sighed, nuzzling Keith’s neck gently, before blowing a raspberry on the sensitive skin. Keith squealed, kicking out to shove Lance right off the bed.
Lance hit the ground with a thump and yelp, Keith winced slightly. He hadn’t intended to do that, but oh well, it got him out of bed. Without injury, hopefully.
“Lance?” Keith asked, leaning over, “You alright?”
A groan. Keith crawled over to the edge of the bed, looking down at Lance, laying naked on his back. He was just staring down at the ceiling, breathing deeply.
“Lance?” Keith said, clambering down, he was starting to get a bit worried, “Lance? Are you ok?”
Lance groaned, sitting up. Keith shuffled back to straddle Lance’s knees.
“Fine, just, ow,” he said, rubbing the back of his head.
Keith darted forwards, grabbing Lance’s head and tilting it forwards, checking his head.
“It’s ok,” Lance laughed slightly, “I didn’t hit my head on the way down.”
Keith grunted, curling his arms around Lance’s shoulders.
“Don’t do that to me!”
“Then don’t push me off the bed!”

****

They made their way down to the docks, towards Voltron. Making their way up the gangplank. Keith smiled as he spotted the rest of the crew, and Shiro, all sat on the deck.
“’You’re late,” Pidge said, smirking.
“Yeah, someone decided to push me out of bed,” Lance shrugged.
Keith shoved him in the arm, “Because you wouldn’t get up.”
“Still no excuse,” Lance huffed, crossing his arms and turning his face away.
Keith stuck his tongue out, before moving to settle at Shiro’s side. Shiro was giving him the sappiest
look ever, making Keith roll his eyes.

Keith tried to wriggle out of Shiro’s grip, laughing as his hair was ruffled. He’d missed this, he’d
missed this so much. Sure, there’d been moments while Shiro was missing, moments of relaxation
and rest, where he could laugh with his crew. But nothing like this, nothing where he knew everyone
was safe and with him.
“So what’s the next adventure!” Matt said brightly, “We’ve explored the seemingly impossible to
traverse waters, where do we go from here?”
Lance pointed to the horizon.
“That way!” he declared.
“Ooo!” Hunk said brightly, “Is this some water magic stuff? Something telling you to go that way!”
“Nope!” Lance said brightly, “I just want to go that way!”
Keith smiled, “That way it is then!”

****

They sat on the deck for a little longer, discussing what they needed to restock, what repairs needed
doing to the ship. Cosmo was chasing a ball Keith was throwing for him, skittering across the deck.
The cats were mooching around the edge, probably hoping for scraps. Pidge had spread a map out
between them, she was pointing to different areas. Lance was determinedly shaking his head, he
wanted them to go in a random direction and just sail. Keith was keeping out of it, mostly because he
agreed with them both.

There was the slight sound of fizzing, Keith frowned slightly, trying to look for the source of the
noise. Cosmo went nuts, barking and running around and around the deck. Everyone had fallen
silent, all listening to the mysterious popping nose and watching Cosmo run around madly. Finally,
he seemed to settle in a place, looking up and wiggling.

Sparks appeared in front of him, tiny flashes of light. Everyone stood up, reaching for their weapons.
With another flash, Allura and Coran appeared, staggering slightly as they hit the deck. Lance and
Hunk sprinted forwards, catching the two of them before they collapsed face-down on the desk.
Allura was muttering something softly, sobbing slightly. It wasn’t until he got closer Keith realised
what she was muttering.
“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.”

They settled Allura and Coran on the deck, Allura quickly recovering and wiping her eyes.
“Allura?” Lance asked, “What happened?”
She took a deep shaking breath, “It’s Lotor, he’s, he was trying to get the rest of the crystal back
from Haggar. He thought he could break through the barrier by absorbing the raw life magic of the
ocean, the same one that corrupted his father. He stole my part of the crystal and it’s all my fault.”
“Lotor’s been corrupted?” Lance asked.
Allura nodded, “I’m sorry, now he’s got the crystal, I can’t do anything about it. He swallowed the
whole thing!”

A loud threatening roar, a deep bellow, the nose that would forever haunt Keith’s dreams.
“Oh no,” Allura gasped, stumbling to her feet, “He followed us here, no, no that wasn’t supposed to
happen.”
“Followed you,” Keith echoed, “He’s here? Now?”
Not that that was really in question as a second rumbling roar sounded from the water. Allura
nodded, straightening to her full height.
“Ok,” she said, “Ok, I’ll tempt him away from here, somewhere out in the ocean.”
“And then what?” Keith asked, “Keep teleporting away until what?”
Allura sighed, dropping her head.
“What do you suggest?” she asked, “You can’t take down the sea dragon.”
“Not alone,” Keith said, “But we’re in a dock, full of ships.”
Allura bit her lip, “Maybe.”
“It’s probably our best chance,” Lance said.

The roars had attracted the attention of the townsfolk, which gave them a brilliant view of the new sea dragon as he exploded out of the water. He looked just like he did before, but his eyes were glowing a vivid purple. He opened his mouth, giving another furious roar. Several screams sounded from the land, only escalating as Lotor slammed into the closest building, causing it to tumble to the ground.
“I hope this works,” Lance muttered, “I don’t think this place will still be standing if it doesn’t.”
“It’s going to work,” Shiro said, patting Lance on the shoulder, “After all, a lot of ships.”

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Lotor seemed determined to smash as much of the dock as was physically possible, swinging his head around as they scrambled to get Voltron ready. Allura stood on the bow of the boat, holding up her arm to form a current to push the boat away from the shore.
“Ready the cannons!” Keith shouted.
“Are you sure this is a good idea?” Lance said softly.
“No,” he said, pulling Lance down to press their lips together, “But we have to try.”
Lance took a deep breath, lowering his arms before looking out into the water. He bit his lip, before suddenly whipping around and wrapping Keith in a tight hug.
“I love you.”
Keith frowned, “I love you too…”
But Lance had moved away before Keith could ask what was bothering him.

“FIRE!”
Cannonballs soared from Voltron towards Lotor, hitting his back. A roar of what Keith hoped was pain, not just irritation. He whipped around, flaring his fins. Keith swallowed as he approached, just a little closer before.
“FIRE!”
This time, they hit him right in the face, forming a couple of glowing cracks on his face. With an angry roar, he dropped back into the water, causing the entire boat to rock. Keith stumbled slightly, taking a deep breath. Allura stabilised the boat quickly, Lance clinging onto the wheel with his eyes closed.
“Port!” he shouted, seconds before Lotor emerged from the water on the other side of the boat.

He went to lunge at them again, but the sound of more cannons going off and Lotor whipped around. Another ship was there, on Lotor’s other side. As they watched, more and more began pulling away from the only part of the docks not destroyed. Keith couldn’t help the slight smile on his face.
“Alright,” he said, “Ready again!”

Lotor’s scales were too tough to penetrate with their cannonballs, even his face scales were pretty tough but breakable. He quickly learned quickly not to put his head too close to the boats and stopped himself from getting distracted. Lotor lunged at one of the boats, Allura tried to use the currents to push the boat away, but it didn’t work. Lotor slammed into the side, taking a huge chunk out of the side boat.
“No,” Allura hissed.
Lotor attacked another boat, smashing right into it.

The tables turned far too rapidly on them, Lotor steadily starting to smash more and more boats. He was starting to turn back towards the docks again, ignoring the cannonballs striking his scales. They were running low on cannonballs, but had gained a few more crew members. Most of the people from the other ships had survived, fished out of the water. Keith stared out over the docks, screwing his hands into fists at his side. What the hell were they supposed to do?

Allura made her way along the deck, up to where Keith and Lance were stood by the wheel. “This isn’t working,” she said, “I’m going to have to teleport away, lead him away from this place before anyone else gets hurt.”

Keith dug his teeth into his lip, nails biting into his palms.

“You know that won’t work,” Lance said, “Not for very long anyway.”

Allura sighed, holding up her hand to make a wave to push Lotor back from the dock. It didn’t preoccupy him for very long, but it did make him turn towards their ship. “Unless you can come up with a better way, at least that will give you some time to move away from the shoreline,” Allura said.

“How much magic do you have left?” Lance asked.

Allura opened her mouth, hesitating slightly.

“Depends on what you want it for,” she said, eying him suspiciously.

Keith was lost, Allura and Lance seemed to be having a stare-down. Before she let out a long breath. “If I combine what magic I have, along with yours and Haggar’s magic from your curse, it should just about be enough,” she said, “But, are you sure? With the crystal in its current state, I can’t change you back.”

Lance let out a long breath, turning back to face Keith. He smiled at the confused look on his face, before taking his hands and giving them a squeeze.

“I’m going to transform into the sea dragon,” he said, “I’m going to take down Lotor.”

Keith’s stomach dropped about to the level of his knees.

“You, you can’t,” he said.

Lance leaned forwards, pressing a kiss to Keith’s cheek.

“I don’t think I have a choice,” he said, pulling Keith into a tight hug, “I love you.”

Keith made a slightly wounded noise, clutching Lance closer.

“I don’t want to loose you,” he said.

“You won’t,” Lance replied, “I’ll still be around, just, different.”

A roar reached their ears, along with the sound of splintering wood. They turned. Lotor had completely crushed one of the docks and was slowly making his way towards Voltron. His body was kicking up massive waves, flooding the streets of the town. Lance rested a soft hand on Keith’s cheek, before pressing their lips together.

“I love you,” Lance said gently.

“I love you too,” Keith said, feeling his eyes starting to fill with tears.

“Lance,” Allura said.

“Ok,” Lance said, “OK, let’s do this.”

Chapter End Notes

When you're cold...and sick...and haven't had a chance to watch season 8 yet....but you keep soldiering on!

But yeah...don't mess with primal magic...just don't...it's a bad idea.
Lotor was approaching, he was almost on top of them, but Keith just didn’t want to let Lance go. He didn’t have much of a choice. Lance was backing away from him, sliding his hands along Keith’s arms until he squeezed his hands. The back of his knees hit the edge of the ship and he smiled. “See you soon,” he said, before falling backwards off the boat.

Keith rushed to the edge, looking over the side to the ripples where Lance had vanished. The ocean was starting to glow, small sparks shooting up.

A roar from the other side of the boat, Keith glanced up. Lotor was right at the side of the boat, eyes and cracks on his face glowing. Corruption, it was just as terrifying as when the old sea dragon had it, possibly even more so.

“Brace yourself!” Keith shouted as Lotor lunged.

The strike to the boat never came, instead, just a strangled cry. Something was wrapped around Lotor’s throat. Well, something was a large, blue, scaly tail. Lotor was dragged back into the water, causing a powerful wave to rock the boat. Allura stumbled, almost collapsing onto the deck. Hunk caught her easily, lowering her carefully down. More waves were formed, everyone clinging to the side of Voltron to keep from falling into the water. A deep rumble from the water, a vivid glow of purple.

Lotor’s head rose from the water again, a large chunk of scales mossing from his neck. He roared, flaring his fins with a hiss. A second roar, but not from Lotor. This roar was different, powerful, familiar and oddly comforting. A second head exploded from the water, shooting forwards to sink its fangs into Lotor’s neck. Glowing blood oozed from the wound, Lotor arching to sink his teeth into the other dragon’s neck.

The two of them reared back, blood dripping down both their necks. Lotor and, brilliant blue scales, fiery red fins spread wide, purple whiskers spread around his mouth.

“Lance,” Keith said softly.

Both of them roared again, launching at each other. Lance went for Lotor’s throat again, easily splintering his scales, forming deep glowing gouges. Lotor wasn’t letting up either, slamming into Lance again and again. Keith blinked, shaking his head. There was no way he was letting Lance do all the work.

“Aim for the glow!” Keith shouted, pushing away from the side, “Let’s bring him down!”

“Eye captain!”

Lance had the obvious advantage, the water moved and rippled with him, slamming into Lotor and freezing around his body.

“Cannons ready!” came the shout.

“Alright, on my mark,” Keith said, watching, waiting.

Lance and Lotor was twisting around each other, slowly coming closer and closer to the boat. He didn’t want to hit Lance, but it wasn’t going to be easy.

“Hang on,” Allura said, “Wait for it.”

Suddenly, Lance released Lotor, dropping into the water and giving them a clear shot.

“FIRE!” Keith shouted.

The cannonballs flew over, striking the weakened and broken scales of Lotor’s side and neck. The scales dropped away, Lotor howling in pain as they sunk and splattered his flesh. Lance exploded
out of the water again, clamping his jaws around the back of Lotor’s neck.
“Again!” Keith shouted, “Ready again.”

They kept going, blasting at Lotor’s wounds while Lance attacked and made more. The dock was filling with glowing purple blood. Lance was looking a bit rough too, blood dripping from the numerous wounds on his body.

“Don’t kill him!” Allura shouted, “There’s something I need to know from him!”

Lance roared, a huge surge of water exploded from the ocean, wrapping around Lotor’s muzzle. More and more water wrapped around him, dragging Lotor under water. Allura breathed out a sigh of relief.

“That should hold him for a while,” she said.

Lance turned towards them and for a heart-stopping second Keith thought he was going to attack them, but he only moved slightly closer, letting out a deep rumble that sounded suspiciously like a purr.

“Lance,” Keith said softly.

Lance suddenly roared in pain, head whipping around to the few remaining intact ships. Another round of cannon balls hit him, bouncing off his undamaged scales.

“No! Stop!” Keith shouted, “Don’t hurt him.”

Lance growled, before plunging back under the water.

“Lance! Wait,” Keith called desperately, but he was gone.

“It’s ok,” Allura said, “If we sail out into open waters you can seem him.”

Voltron was not in the best condition, buffeted by huge waves everything was a little bit broken. But, the hull was still intact, she could still sail. They dropped the not normal crew off at the docks, before setting right out again. It was probably not the best idea, but no one was going to argue with him.

It took a while for them to get far enough out for meeting with Lance to be safe, Allura manipulating the currents to push them out faster probably helped. Eventually they dropped the anchor, Keith standing nervously at the side.

“He’s still him,” Allura said softly, “He just looks a bit different.”

Keith nodded, swallowing around the lump in his throat. It was ok, it will be ok, it was just Lance.

He emerged out of the water, dropping his head slightly before opening his mouth. Razor-sharp fangs, tough enough to pierce seemingly impenetrable scales. Something glowing dropped out of his mouth onto the deck, the chunk of crystal Lotor had swallowed. He reared back again, showing off his pale underbelly.

Just Lance was still intimidating as he looked down at them all, neck arched elegantly, bright-red fins spread out.

“Lance,” Keith said softly, reaching out hesitantly.

Lance lowered his head, right in front of Keith. Resting his hand on the cool scales, Keith fought back the tears that were pooling in his eyes. Whiskers reached up and curled around him, tangling him up in what was a strange hug. Keith sobbed, pressing as much as he could against Lance’s scales.


It wasn’t quite like being hugged by Lance when he was human, his whiskers were slightly cold and damp, but they squeezed him tightly enough that it was a comfort.

“I’m sorry,” Allura said softly from behind them, “I’m so sorry, this is all my fault.”

Keith pulled away from Lance, or at least tried too. He was still thoroughly tangled up in Lance’s
whiskers, the sea dragon attempting to still keep him close. He did manage to see one of Lance’s long whiskers reach out to wrap around her, pulling her close in another pseudo-embrace.

“Oh buddy,” Hunk sobbed, rushing forwards.
The rest of the crew rushed forwards, all to be engulfed in a whiskery-embrace. Lance made a soft noise, before releasing them and lifting his head up. The boat rocked slightly as Lance bumped the boat slightly.

Keith stepped up to the edge of the boat again, resting his hand on the smooth scales of Lance’s underbelly.

“You know,” he said, “I love you so much.”
Lance made another soft noise and Keith didn’t need to understand him to know what he was thinking. They couldn’t possibly make this work, a human and a gigantic sea monster, yeah, no way. But, Keith just couldn’t give him up that easily, not Lance, how could he ever give up Lance?

“We’ll get Voltron repaired,” he said, “We were going adventuring anyway, it’s not like we’ll never see each other. I…”
Lance rumbled lightly, lowering his head slightly, looking right at Keith with one of his eyes. Suddenly he turned, blowing on Keith lightly. With the size of him, it was like being hit with a solid wall of wind. There was another jolt, and Keith realised Lance had pushed the boat away. With one last flair of his fins, Lance dove back into the water.

“I’m sorry,” Allura said, “I’m so sorry, I wish I could do something.”
“It’s ok,” Hunk said, “It’s not your fault.”
Keith turned from the patch of water where Lance had vanished into, looking back at Allura, and the crystal. Its glow had completely dimmed, a huge crack running through it.

“If,” she sighed, “If I hadn’t transformed Lotor, if I’d just waited.”
“You couldn’t have known,” Coran said, “No one could have known.”
Allura stared at her hands, letting out a long breath.

“Come on,” Keith said, “Let’s go back.”

****

Keith tucked one leg up to his chest, staring out of the window of the inn. He could see the ocean from here, it was one of the reasons he’d picked this place. Not that it would make much difference, Lance couldn’t get this close to human settlements. It would take a week before they could set off, Voltron was technically sea worthy, but it was better to get her completely fixed now then have to take longer later on. He understood, but it didn’t mean he had to enjoy it.

There was a knock on the door, Keith sighed, looking down at himself. He wasn’t dressed and probably looked like a complete mess, anyone knocking on his door though probably wouldn’t care.

“Yeah?” he called, wincing at how rough his voice sounded.

“Keith?” Shiro called from the other side, “Can I come in?”
Keith sighed, swinging his feet out of bed. He was probably going to regret this, stupid Shiro would probably try and make him talk about his feelings. Keith opened the door, grumbling slightly under his breath.

“What?” he said, unlocking and cracking open the door.

“Can I come in?” Shiro said, smiling lightly.
Squinting suspiciously, Keith sighed. Damn it, he had food, Keith was weak, and hadn’t eaten all day. A wine, Keith glanced down. He had Cosmo too, really, cute animal too.

“Fine,” Keith sighed.

Keith marched back over to his bed, bundling himself back up in his moping cocoon. Cosmo sprinted full-pelt across the room, springing onto the bed and snuggling up to him.

“Hey buddy,” Keith sighed, scratching behind his ears, “I’m sorry I’ve not been around.”
Shiro walked across the room, dropping to sit at the other end of the bed and holding out the plate. “You haven’t eaten,” he said with a soft smile, “No one’s seen you all day, we were getting worried.”

Keith grunted, taking the plate. He didn’t feel like eating, but his stomach protested at this thought.

They sat in silence for a bit, Keith slowly eating. Shiro looking out of the window. “It’s been quite a month hasn’t it?” Shiro said carefully, “So much has happened.” “You could say that,” Keith said, glaring at his plate, “You could also say it’s been complete hell.” Shiro let out a long breath, tilting his head back. “You could put it that way,” he said.

Another pause, another long breath. A warm hand rested on his shoulder, a light squeeze. “Keith,” Shiro started, but Keith cut him off. “Don’t you dare ask how I am,” Keith snarled, “I lost you, then I lost Lance trying to bring you back, then I got a week. One singular week where I could have both of you, then, Lance gets taken away from me again. How do you think I am?”

Shiro pulled him into a one-armed hug, Keith hadn’t realised he’d started crying again. “And I just can’t stop crying!” Keith hissed.

Cosmo wriggled onto Keith’s knee, licking the only part of his face he could reach, Keith’s chin. “It’ll be ok Keith,” Shiro said softly, “We’ll find a way to fix this.” “How?” Keith said, “How do we fix this?” “You brought me back,” Shiro said softly, “I’m sure we can find a way to fix this mess.” Keith hated the fact he could do very little, but doubt bringing Lance back would be possible.

****

Keith actually left the room the next day, then again he did just go to stand out on the docks, looking out into the ocean. For how long would he be doing this? How long before he stopped staring out into the ocean? Keith had always been drawn to the ocean, ever since he could walk, the ocean led him to Shiro, to Lance, to his mother. Now, he didn’t know what to do.

A set of footsteps was making his way towards him, Keith ignored them. Until they came to stop beside him. Keith turned, Allura. She let out a long breath. “I still can’t get any information out of Lotor, or get rid of the corruption,” she said, “I don’t know if I ever will be.” Keith remained silent, letting her gather her thoughts. He couldn’t possibly dislike Allura, it wasn’t her fault and she was trying her hardest to find a solution. “The crystal is completely drained, there is hardly any magic left in it,” she said, “I, I feel so useless now.” Keith looked at her, eyes flicking up and down. Dark bags lay heavy under her eyes, posture slightly slumped, she was twisting her fingers together, nibbling her lip. “It’s not you fault,” Keith said, “You couldn’t have known this was going to happen, it’s all the old sea dragon’s fault, you just got caught up in it.” Allura smiled weakly, squeezing her eyes closed. “I should know what to do,” she said, “The old sea dragon was able to transform between his dragon and mer forms and I don’t know how.” Keith blinked, “Wait, what?” Allura nodded, “The thing is, I don’t know how to do that, I don’t want to get your hopes up on something we might not be able to do. Maybe if we could harness the primal magic? But it’s corrupted two sea dragons and a moon spirit, not a good idea.” “Is there anywhere you could find out how?” Keith asked, no matter what she said, he couldn’t help but get slightly hopeful. Allura shook her head, crossing her arms. “The remains of the city have sunk to the very bottom of the ocean, if it’s not completely crumbled to
nothing. Even so, I studied everything we had there and, there was very little on the actual sea
dragon itself. I think, maybe the koi might have something but getting information out of them is
incredibly difficult,” she said, tilting her head back.

Keith looked back out to the ocean, back to the beach where he’d first met Lance. It had been a
crazy day, topped off by meeting Lance who could barely walk, barely talk. They’d assumed he’d
washed up from a very traumatic shipwreck, neither he nor Shiro would have ever guessed the truth.
Finally, his eyes shifted over to where the cave was, where they found the box that went with the
map. The cave with all the carvings, the carvings of the sea dragon, with writing, writing he couldn’t
understand. Keith whipped his head to look at Allura, making her jump.
“I have an idea.”

Chapter End Notes

+1 extra chapter that came out of no where...yay! Anyway, for all of the...what...four?
people still reading this...thank you, I appreciate it and I will be doing a bonus update on
Christmas! So, look out for that. I actually can't believe people are still reading this...and
I've actually almost finished it...it's been a long journey...I mean, it's not over yet but I'm
already getting sentimental...

Comments and Kudos are always appreciated...thank you so much for reading I hope
you enjoy!
The two of them picked their way over the beach, through the rockpools marking the low tide. “We’ll have until the tide comes back in,” Keith said, hopping over a small pool. “I’m a fast reader,” Allura said brightly.

Keith nodded, gesturing towards the cliff that made up the cave. “Just over there,” he said.

Allura hummed, “I can feel something, something…” She trailed off, before shaking her head. “How do we get in?”

The two of them made their way through the caves, as they reached the carvings, Allura made a shocked noise. “I haven’t seen anything like this in years,” she said. “This way,” Keith said, “Not much further.”

Allura nodded, smoothing her hand over the carvings as they continued on.

Allura gasped as they stepped into the big cave with the dragon door, walking slowly up to it. She reached out and pressed her hand to it, a slight glow before it opened. “What is this place?” she asked.

Keith shrugged, “Don’t you know? It’s where we found part of the map to find you.”

Allura shook her head, “I didn’t have anything to do with that, that map, everything was made before I was born.”

Keith nodded as they stepped through the entrance. “Don’t forget,” he said, “We don’t have long.”

Allura nodded, making her way over to the biggest carving on the wall, eyes scanning the writing. Keith shifted over to the big table in the middle, carefully scouring through all the items on it. He didn’t expect to find anything, then again he wouldn’t know if he did find something useful.

Keith picked up the small statue of the sea dragon, flipping it over and over in his hands. This really must’ve been a temple to worship the sea dragon, the old sea dragon, before he became corrupted. “There’s so much here,” Allura said, “I don’t know how I couldn’t have known about this place, I mean it’s all in koi, but still.”

“You can still read it though, right?” Keith asked, placing the statue back down.

Allura nodded, “I’m a bit rusty, but it shouldn’t be a problem.”

Keith turned his had back to the table, dropping down to study the carvings on the legs and underside. They meant very little to him and didn’t look like any of the writing on the wall, it was frustrating.

The two of them continued to work in silence for a bit, Keith looking everywhere and anywhere for something he could understand. The carvings were probably telling a story, but not one Keith could understand. Eventually, he made his way back over to where Allura was stood. She nodded at him, before returning to the wall. She didn’t seem all that bothered about telling him what she was reading, although if it didn’t concern helping Lance, he wasn’t all that interested.

Allura made a distressed noise. Keith glanced over at her, just in time to see her drop her hands. “Allura?”

“Well,” she said, “There is a way to get Lance back, uncorrupt Lotor, but it will be difficult and might not even work. I’ve been trying to do this for years now, maybe with your help, not that I know how you will help. But, it’s worth trying, or at the very least, thinking about it.”

Keith stared at her, before he felt a slight smile break over his face.
“I went after you to bring Shiro back on less than that,” he said.
Allura nodded, “We need to find a way to repair the crystal, but not just the piece we’ve got, we
need the whole crystal. That, is easier said than done.”
“We’ll find a way,” Keith said, “We always find a way.”

****

“So, we just need to find a way through this barrier?” Pidge said, leaning back on her hands.
They were back in town, sat together in the tavern. Allura had explained that they had to get the rest
of the crystal, then hopefully use that to repair the whole thing and restore Lance and Lotor.
Hopefully.
“When you say it like that, it sounds easy.” Allura sighed, “I believed…Lotor…could do it, because
he is half koi. But no, the person must either have much more magic than the piece of the crystal she
has, which is impossible, or so little magic, they will be completely overlooked.”
There was a long pause, everyone glancing around at each other.

“And they’d have to beat Haggar,” Allura sighed, “With that weak magic? They’d be lucky to
get close enough to hit her at all, let alone kill her.”
“Or,” Coran said, “Find a way to bring the barrier down.”
Allura paused, before nodding slowly.
“I guess that could work,” she said, “But, it’s very risky and, we’d still have to find someone who
would be able to do it.”

There was another long pause as everyone thought, Shiro had his arm crossed over his chest, a frown
on his face. Keith buried his face in his hands, scrubbing at it in frustration. A warm hand rested on
his back suddenly, he looked up to see Shiro smiling at him lightly.
“What about us,” he said, “Humans have very little magic, do you think we’d be able to slip
through?”
Coran smiled brightly, stroking his moustache lightly.
“Yes,” he said, “Yes, that will work, your magic is so weak she will probably think you are nothing
but a disturbance in the ocean. You could sneak right in, get rid of whatever is producing the barrier,
then get out probably without her even knowing.”
“Isn’t she making the barrier?” Pidge asked.
“She made it, but will no longer be maintaining it herself,” Coran said, “It takes a lot of concentration
and she has been doing other things. She has something keeping it maintained, probably nearby the
crystal.”
“Well,” Shiro smiled, “Looks like we’ve got a plan.”
“The water is too deep,” Allura said suddenly, gesturing to the crystal, “You’d never make it down
there, I’m afraid I can’t help with that very much.”

Keith lent back on his chair, tapping his fingers lightly on the table. His insides seemed to have
settled heavily in his feet. There had to be something, anything he could think of. They hadn’t come
this far for him to give up, they’d got Shiro back, got Lance back, they had a sea dragon that would
probably not kill anyone. Surely, surely, there had to be a way to get Lance back, heal the crystal.

“It’s a pity you don’t have a tail, ey Keith?” Pidge snorted.
“What?” Shiro and Allura asked.
“Oh,” Keith said, trailing off lightly, “I found out I was half mer, not that it really helps now.”
Allura was staring at him, it was a little unnerving, but still, Keith stared back. She seemed to be
looking for something.
“What kind?” she said, drumming her fingers on her leg.
Keith blinked, frowning lightly.
“A koi,” Keith said, “Why?”

Allura let out a long breath, “Koi have a lot of magic, it’s one of the reasons they can become the sea dragon. I might, there may be a possibility, I can turn you into a mer.”

Keith stared, before making a strange noise he’d never heard himself make before.

“Wait, wait, wait,” Hunk said, holding up his hands, “Are you suggesting we turn Keith into a mer?”

“No,” Allura said, “I’m saying I might be able too, your human half means you have very little magic. Your mer half means you have more magic than them, but not much. I don’t know if your body would be able to take the strain of the transformation, I probably won’t be able to change you back to a human.”

“You mean,” Keith said, “You might be able to change me into a mer, where I might be able to help you get the crystal back and you probably won’t be able to change me back to human?”

Allura nodded, “We can think of another way, there will probably be another way, possibly.”

“You don’t think there is, do you?” Keith said.

She studied his face for a moment, before shaking her head.

“If I do this,” Keith said, “You might be able to turn Lance back, uncorrupt Lotor, protect the ocean yourself?”

“If I can fix the crystal,” Allura said.

“That’s a lot of maybes and ifs,” Shiro said.

“Which is why it’s probably not the best idea,” Allura said.

Everyone else was nodding, glancing between each other as if someone was going to come up with another idea.

Keith took a deep breath, picking at his fingers lightly. It was not the best plan, in fact it was a terrible plan. But, but, it was for Lance.

“Yet, we went through so many maybes and ifs to get Shiro back. We traversed through completely uncharted waters, risked death for the possibility for bringing him back,” Keith said, “I don’t see how this is any different.”

Shiro opened his mouth to argue, Hunk and Pidge seemed to be ready to back him up. Keith didn’t let them get anything out.

“I would travel to the ends of the earth for Shiro, I did travel to the end of the earth, don’t doubt, don’t ever doubt I wouldn’t do the same for Lance,” Keith said, looking up at them, “Lance would do the same for me, the same for any of us.”

Allura let out a long breath, before closing her eyes and ducking her head.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” she said, “There is no going back.”

Keith nodded his head, looking down at his hands. Was he really going to do this? Was he really going to give up his life on land? Well, it wasn’t like he couldn’t visit his friends as a mer. He had always loved the ocean.

“Yes,” Keith said, “I’ll do it.”

****

They stood on the beach, a bit of a distance away from the town. They didn’t need anyone seeing this. Allura and Coran were chatting lightly, Cosmo was sat at Keith’s heels, wagging his tail. Keith dropped down to his knees, wrapping his arms around the dog’s neck.

“Sorry,” Keith said softly, “I’m afraid you won’t be able to come with me.”

Cosmo thumped his tail lightly on the sand, licking Keith’s face.

“Shiro,” Keith said, standing up, “You’ll look after him right?”

“Of course,” Shiro smiled, “But you will be coming back.”

Keith nodded slowly, “Yeah, but I won’t have legs, it’s a bit difficult to care for a dog if you can’t walk on land.”

Shiro opened his mouth as if to argue, but Allura cut him off before he could.

“Are you ready Keith?” she asked, stretching her fingers.
A slight glow danced between her fingers, a light spark flashing between her thump and pinkie. Keith stood up, pushing Cosmo away a little with his foot.
“Go to Shiro,” he said, “Yeah, ok, I’m ready.”

Allura reached out and took Keith’s hands, resting them palm-up on her own.
“I’m sorry,” she said, “But this might hurt a bit.”
Keith nodded, taking a deep breath. Allura smiled gently, before her eyes locked on their hands. The slight glow that had started earlier, began to spread, encasing both their hands. Up Keith’s arms, shoulders and down. Alright, now Keith was starting to get nervous. The magic began to flash and glow brighter, blue sparks starting to dance across his skin. That, was when the pain started.

Pain, pure white-hot agony blazed across his skin before seeping deep down into his bones. Keith’s legs gave out, Allura following him down as he collapsed on the beach. Keith bit back a scream, beginning to shake as his body began to redesign itself.
Keith took a deep shaking breath, it wheezing through his chest. Agony, pure agony searing through his entire body. Allura had been forced to grasp his hands, instead of just resting them on her. Keith was writhing, arching and twisting around on the sand. The sound of ripping fabric, red-hot agony stabbing, mostly in his legs. It was getting hard to breathe, his entire chest seemed to have seized up.
“A little more,” Allura hissed, “Just hang on a little longer.”

Keith didn’t think he was going to move ever again, he was completely paralysed with the pain. The magic around him and Allura had become too bright, Keith was forced to close his eyes against it. It was probably a good thing, he didn’t need to see his body tearing and reassembling itself. Suddenly, Allura released his hands and the pain stopped.
Into the Depths

Keith took several shuddering breaths, laying on the beach and just letting himself settle into his new form.

“Woah,” a soft voice said.
Keith finally forced his eyes open, they felt like they weighed a million pounds. He was exhausted and everything ached, along with the slightly odd feeling, Keith just wanted to sleep.

“God, Keith, are you ok?”

“Yeah,” Keith said, pushing himself up and moving to rub his face, “Yeah, I’m ok I just…” Keith’s eyes finally landed on himself and his breath left his body all at once.

Fine red-purple webbing ran between his fingers, delicate black, purple and dark red scales scattered over his skin. The scales became steadily denser as they reached his waist were a long tail had formed from his legs, Keith twitched what would be his legs, the tail twitched too. It was ink-black with dark purple splotches and the fins becoming dark red at the ends. Keith reached up, touching the small, smooth scales on his face before following back to the fins in front of his ears.

“Wow,” he said.

Allura smiled, “That, went much better than I thought.”

The others all wandered over, all of them studying him carefully. Cosmo trotted over happily, before beginning to thoroughly lick his face. Keith couldn’t help but smile, pushing him away gently before scratching behind his ears.

“This is just, amazing,” Pidge said, grabbing his hand and lifting it up to study it.

“I just,” Hunk said, poking Keith’s tail lightly.

“How do you feel?” Shiro asked.

Keith looked down at himself, trying to ignore the others poking and prodding.

“Different,” Keith said honestly, flexing his fingers, “But not a bad different, just, different.”

Shiro nodded, “Well, that’s good?”

Keith hummed, jumping slightly as claws extended out from his nails.

“This, might get some getting used to,” he said.

Allura nodded, smiling lightly.

“We should probably get you into the water,” she said, “Get you used to it.”

Keith nodded, “I’ll just.”

He gestured to his crew.

“Bring Lance back,” Pidge said, “Normal human Lance, or normal mer Lance, just no sea dragon Lance.”

“Stay safe,” Hunk said, practically picking him up in a hug.

“You have to tell me how cute all the mermaids are,” Matt said, “I’m so jealous.”

Keith rolled his eyes, “I don’t think we’ll be seeing any mermaids where we’re going.”

Shiro stepped forwards, kneeling beside him, pulling Keith into a tight hug.

“Please don’t do anything stupid,” Shiro sighed, “We do want you and Lance back in one piece.”

Keith smiled softly, “Don’t worry, I’ll be back, we’ll be back.”

“I know,” Shiro sighed, pulling away and patting Keith on the shoulder.

He patted Cosmo on the head as he backed up, the dog looking hesitantly between the two of them.

“Go to Shiro,” Keith said, lifting his hand from Cosmo’s head.

He winced slightly, before dutifully obeying.

“I’ll see you soon boy,” Keith said.

“Stay with them Coran,” Allura said softly, “I will see you soon.”

Coran nodded, resting his hand on her shoulder.

“Stay safe.”
Keith frowned slightly, looking between himself and the ocean. How was he supposed to get there with no legs.

“Seal it!” Matt said, “Flop out to the water!”

Keith gave him a deadpan look before rolling onto his front, flicking his fins slightly as he began to pull himself towards the ocean. Pidge started... trying? To muffle her laugh behind him, to be honest if he’d been watching him drag himself to the water, he would’ve laughed. Matt and Shiro weren’t even trying and Keith made a mental note to get them back later. Allura was strolling beside him, probably making Keith look even stupider.

“You know you could help me,” he grumbled.

“I got you buddy,” Hunk said, strolling over.

Keith tried not to freak out when Hunk picked him up, he really did need the help, didn’t mean he was going to enjoy it. It didn’t help that his tail was longer than his legs had been, the fins looking particularly delicate as they brushed Hunk’s feet. It was better than him flopping all the way across the beach though, anything was probably better than that.

“You have a lot of tail,” Hunk said, “I’m not stepping on you am I?”

“Believe me,” Keith said, “I think you’d know if you did.”

Hunk snorted, shifting his grip slightly. Finally, they reached the ocean, Hunk being polite and not just dropping him right in.

“Thanks Hunk,” Keith said with a smile, “Don’t worry, we’ll be back.”

Hunk smiled lightly, “I know, if anyone can do it, you and Lance can.”

The water seemed to cradle and wrap around his body, it just felt so right cradling his body. A wave splashed right into his face, Keith pushed his head up slightly to keep it out.

“You can breathe underwater now you know,” Allura said, “You’re going to have to get used to it.”

Keith frowned at her, before pushing off from the soft sand. Taking a couple of deep breaths, Keith ducked his head under the water.

Keith got lucky, his body seemed to adapt pretty well. It probably helped that somehow, it seemed to feel so right. His lungs were starting to burn though, aching from his lack of breathing. With a split-second thought of, please god let this work, Keith took a deep breath of water. He didn’t choke he didn’t die, it didn’t feel like breathing either, he didn’t have the desperate choking need to breathe anymore though. Gills on his side, just below his pectorals had opened up, fluttering lightly. Alright, that was one thing out of the way.

Allura swam ahead of him, gesturing to follow. With a flick of his tail, Keith did. A flick of his tail sent him shooting through the water, much faster than Keith was expecting. Allura easily floated alongside him, hair and dress floating around her in the water. She really looked like she belonged there.

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Keith and Allura streaked through the water easily, well, after a while. It had taken some time for Keith to get used to his new body, although he was doing reasonably well, his body almost seemed to know instinctively what to do. Didn’t stop him from accidentally rolling over and his turning from being thoroughly terrible. Allura was laughing, or well, he thought she was, she couldn’t really laugh under the water. Eventually though, Keith was pretty sure he was getting this.

They’d moved out of the shallow water of the docks, the ground underneath dropping away into deep, pure blue ocean. It was beautiful, light piercing through the blue in shining beams, weeds rippling beneath them, small fish flitting around. Allura flicked a head of him slightly, tugging Keith across slightly, pulling him into a current and deep water.
Something big moved past them, Keith snapped his head to one side, trying to find whatever it was. He paused in the water, spreading his fins to stop in the water. Allura let out several clicks and whistles, Keith frowned, shaking his head. He had no idea what she was saying. Allura smiled and rolled her eyes, pointing into the water. Keith turned to see a shimmer of blue scales, before a huge face appeared in front of them. Lance.

He was huge, body easily rippling in the water. He looked fantastic, huge and powerful, fins flaring and closing. He didn’t look all that happy, probably with Keith for being a mer right now. Allura touched his arm lightly to get his attention, pulling him around Lance’s head to settle behind it. She reached out to grasp onto the fins positioned there, nodding to Keith to do the same. Reaching out, Keith grasped them. Lance didn’t move, not for a little while anyway. Allura was glowering at the back of Lance’s head, who’s fins were flicking and body rippling behind them. Keith reached out, rubbing the soft scales behind Lance’s crest. He didn’t know if Lance could really feel it, but it made Keith feel a little better.

Eventually, a rumble deep from Lance’s chest, before he roared. Fins flattened down, as suddenly he darted off. Keith clung to the fin in front of him, pressing his head down so he wasn’t wrenched off Lance’s back by the force of the water. Lance was much, much faster than they were, speeding off before he began to dive.

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A huge, deep chasm in the ocean floor, cutting through the land like a scar. Keith, didn’t like the look of it and from the way he was hesitating, Lance didn’t either. It was probably not only that though, Lance could probably sense something was wrong with it. Keith was getting the slight inkling, deep in his gut, something was amiss. Without proper sensitivity to magic though, that’s all he could get, a feeling. Lance made a soft noise, Keith squeezed the fin he was holding gently. A warm hand rested on his shoulder, Keith turned to see Allura, slightly glowing with a light smile on her face. Although she couldn’t speak to him, Keith had a feeling he knew what she was asking. Was he sure? There was probably no going back from this. Keith nodded and they dove.

The walls of the chasm quickly rose up to greet them, huge and imposing. It was wide enough for Lance to pass through easily, but it still felt claustrophobically tight. There didn’t seem to be anything alive here, or if there was Keith couldn’t see it. There was the occasional deep rumble from the darkness, but Lance gave his own soft growl and it was immediately silenced. He was with the sea dragon, he was with Lance, very little would probably try and take him on.

It was dark, incredibly so. Keith couldn’t shake the feeling of, something, watching him from the darkness. The sides of the trench had vanished into the darkness, even Allura’s weak glow not even lighting them up anymore. There was a slight purple glow emanating from somewhere below them. Something big shifted, before vanishing into the shadows. The glow grew steadily brighter and brighter, before it seemed to cover the entire area below them. Lance stopped, arching over something in the water. Keith glanced down over his side, to the huge purple dome below them. So, that was it, that was what he had to break through.

Keith pushed away from Lance’s back, floating down slightly to the barrier. Lance made a soft noise. Keith turned back to him, floating up slightly to hover above his face. Keith rested his forehead between Lance’s eyes, he wished he could say something, some comforting words, for the both of them. But Keith couldn’t talk underwater, he could make noises but he didn’t know what they all meant. He tried to reassure Lance with his actions and expressions but he didn’t know if it came through.

Very slowly, Keith tilted up his head, pressing a kiss to the smooth scales. Pushing away from him,
Keith backflipped and swam towards the barrier again. Keith rested his hands on the barrier, it was oddly smooth but strangely squishy at the same time. It was just, not a pleasant feeling. Keith began to push against it, the barrier slowly bending with the force of his hands. It slowly closed over the top of his hands, before it began to suck him in.

Keith closed his eyes as he was sucked in, a strange burning sensation moving up his arms as he was pulled in. It was like travelling through jelly, not a pleasant sensation. As his head was sucked in, Keith felt his hands come out on the other side. It was slow going, and trying to push himself in faster only seemed to slow him down. He just had to let it happen.

Finally, most of his body was out, only the end of his tail still in the barrier. Keith looked around, only darkness, seemingly endless darkness stretching out all around him. He turned back, just being able to see Lance and Allura on the other side, pressed right up against it. Pulling his tail free, Keith took one last longing look. He was doing this for Lance, for Allura, for the world. This was dumb, stupid, crazy, hadn’t stopped Keith before though.
The Sea Witch

It was dark, almost pitch black. Only the eerie purple light of the dome was lighting up the immediate area, not that there was anything to see there. Keith could barely see anything in front of him, how he was supposed to find the sea witches layer was beyond him. He glanced around for anything, any clues for where he should go. Nothing, nothing but open water as far as the eyes can see. It had to be somewhere in the centre of the dome, surely, maybe at the bottom? Keith followed the arch of the dome, until he reached the highest point. He was in the centre, it had to be somewhere around here, well, down. Keith dove, straight down into the darkness.

He still couldn't shake the feeling that there was something watching him, but Keith could spend hours looking around for whatever it was but if it didn't want to be seen, it wouldn't. The slight glow from the barrier was fading fast, soon Keith was swimming through nothing but oppressive darkness, with no way of knowing which direction he was going. All he could do, was just keep going forwards. What Keith wouldn’t give for sonar, actually he didn’t know if mers had sonar. Well, if he did it was too late to learn now.

There were a few glowing fish flicking around, they were an odd sort of comfort for him. If they could survive down here, he would be fine. They also offered some break from nothing but empty water, making him feeling not so alone. Nothing had come out of the darkness to eat him yet, he was beginning to gain a little bit of confidence. Allura had said the witch wouldn't even notice he was there, if there was anything big down here, it either wouldn't see him, or think he was just a small fish. That's what Keith kept telling himself anyway.

There was something glowing a deep purple, offering a point in the darkness for him to swim towards. Hopefully it wasn't a trap, or the barrier again and he'd just got himself turned around. He didn’t think he had, although he really had no way of knowing. It wasn't big enough to be the barrier and as Keith got closer, he realised it was probably exactly what he was looking for.

A huge skull, resting on the very bottom of the ocean, a purple glow coming from deep inside the thick bone. It was probably one of the biggest thing he'd ever seen, more than big enough to fit several houses within. Keith had heard legends about leviathan's, massive creatures, bigger than the sea dragon that used to rule the waters many years ago. Keith had thought they were just legends, this skull spoke of a different story. It was just about the most perfect and atmospheric place for a sea witch to call her home.

It's jaw was long, filled with teeth taller than Keith was. A huge crest on top of its head, solid, thick, bone. Several divots running along the side, ending in the huge eye sockets. There were a few massive ribs sticking up from the sand, a few lumps marking out its spine. The rest had been buried completely. At least it was dead, that was about all the comfort Keith could take from it.
Swimming around the whole thing, Keith tried to get an idea of how he was supposed to get in. The skull seemed to be almost completely intact, although Keith had no idea what the thing had looked like in life, so, it could be really worn down. He steadily circled the entire thing several times, trying to find all the places where the light was spilling out the most. There was a gap right at the front through the skull's jaw, but the large amounts of different types of weed grown in all different patterns, Keith was pretty sure this was the front door. The eye socket was still completely bone, but, there was a hole. Pushing himself right up against the bone, Keith peered through.

Bingo. In the big hollow was a huge crystal, maybe four times the size of the one Allura has. Instead of blue though, it was glowing a deep, steady purple. Weeds and rocks were surrounding it, almost caging it in. The was a wriggling movement and Keith's eyes were drawn to something small and, alive? Perched on the side of the crystal, pulsating and glowing. It wriggled slightly, moving over slightly on the crystal before re-suckering itself. As he watched, it's back opened up, a bright light surging up and out. Back closed up again, the glow from the creature was gone. He couldn't be sure, but that was probably Keith's best bet on what was creating the barrier. He just needed to get in, and get rid of it.

The hole was too small for Keith to squeeze through, the bone too thick for him to break. Maybe he could go in through the front? The weeds looked thick enough to hide in. There might be somewhere slightly thinner he could break through. Keith scanned the area around, maybe up its nose? He could see a part of the bone that looked thinner than the rest, with several holes in it. It looked just about where the nose was. That was probably his best bet, all he had to do was avoid... A shadow passed in front of the crystal and there she was, the sea witch.

A great cloak covered her whole body, all Keith could see was a wizened old hand slowly reach out. She pet the disgusting 'creature' perched on the crystal's side, letting out an eerie hum. A shiver ran down Keith's spine as tendrils of magic danced around her hands, before swirling around her body. There was something innately wrong about it, something forced and jagged. Keith pushed away from the hole, making his way back around the front.

Keith swam up the skull’s nose, it was more than big enough for him to swim through. He was right, the bone at the back was much thinner with more holes in. Very carefully, he pushed the bone. It made a dangerous creaking sound, Keith froze, peaking back through the holes. The sea witch seemed to have not noticed, all her attention on the crystal. Keith hooked his fingers through the holes, remembering his claws and using them to tear it. Pain ran through his fingertips, they clearly weren’t meant to be used for this, but for now, Keith didn’t care.

Eventually, he managed to break through, or at the very least work it open enough for him to fit through. The area inside was huge lit up by the glow of the crystal. The sea witch was still beside it, not having noticed the slight noise behind her. Her head was tilted back, hands pressed firmly against the crystal. Actually now he looked, her hands were inside the crystal. She was swaying lightly, cloak floating around her. This should be ok, she was completely preoccupied, all he had to do was stick to the shadows.
Keith cautiously pushed himself out of the nostril, right into the thick weeds. There was one advantage to his new colouration, he could hide in the shadows really easily. She didn't seem to respond to the movement behind her, maybe this would be a little bit easier than he thought. He wasn’t going to get complacent though, he’d seen what Allura could do with only a small chunk of the crystal. Carefully, Keith flitted right around the edge, sticking to the high weeds and the shadows cast by them.

He hovered as close to the crystal as he could get, looking at the thing pulsing away. He hoped he was right, he only had one shot. He braced himself against the ground, bunching up his muscles, ready to spring. Maybe if he just removed the thing, the barrier would drop. If not, he had claws. There was a crackling sound and then a voice, right in his ear, right inside his head making his entire spine stiffen.

"So she thinks I won't notice you little fish, poor Allura, always so sorely mistaken."

Chills danced along his skin, muscles bunching and entire body screaming danger. The witch whipped around, looking eyes with Keith before spreading her fingers and blasting him with magic.

Keith reacted, darting away as fast as he could. He hissed at the pain at the very tips of his fins, burning from where she’d skimmed him. The reeds had completely burnt away, smouldering lightly...underwater. His eyes darted back to hers. She looked reasonably human, with the same sort of markings as Allura, just extended to her lips.

"Run little fish," she said, holding up her hand, "You cannot win."

Keith darted away as best he could, bumping against the bone as she shot magic at him again. This one simply dissolved the weeds completely. It hit his side, making him howl as agony seared through him. He was sure he had dodged that one.

Keith flexed his fins, everything screaming at him to run, get away from the danger. He couldn’t though, he had to get rid of that thing. Destroy the barrier. Clamping a hand to his side he ducked behind the crystal, trying to think. A fine trail of blood was oozing from his wound, seeping into the water. It didn’t look too bad. A blast hit the bone in front of him, the entire skull seemed to shake. Sparkes danced across and down towards him, they dissipated as they got closer to the crystal. Keith dug his claws into his side, trying to focus. That thing, magic. Ok, idea, a terrible, insane idea. It was the only one forthcoming though. One shot, one attempted, almost certain death. He'd faced worse odds. Pressing his hand slightly harder on the wound, Keith pushed himself up and off the bottom, revealing himself from behind the crystal.

Keith circled one around the very top of the skull, before diving. She could clearly somewhat manipulate where her magic went, but seemed to be having a little trouble hitting him while he was circling. Well, at the very least hitting anything vital. Pity his plan didn’t allow for that. She managed to hit him a couple more times, not always causing an injury. His skin felt like it was on fire, like hundreds of needles were prickling in his muscles. It was getting difficult to breathe, to move, to stay
conscious. But he had to keep going, just, get this done, for Lance, for Allura, for the ocean.

His eyes finally landed on the target, this was still a stupid idea, but, here he went. Keith darted directly in front of the crystal, hovering there, waiting, watching. A bolt of magic, crackling in the water between them. He waited, the crackling power coming closer and closer. Close, too close, he could feel the heat from the spell, any longer and it would hit him. Keith pushed up from the bottom, swinging his tail powerfully to get as far away as fast as possible. Pain laced through his fin as it was struck, but he'd achieved what he wanted. Her magic hit the 'creature' causing it to drop from the crystal, curling in on itself.

The witch howled, screeching before launching herself at Keith. “What did you do!” She didn't even bother with magic, clawing viciously at any piece of skin she could reach. Keith tried to get away, but she had sunk her claws right into the flesh of his tail. The magic he’d been hit with had also worn him down, her claws only adding to the wounds covering his body. Pain, pain as she began to tear into the flesh, crumbling up his fins and breaking them. She moved higher, striking at his chest. Before going for his neck Keith curled into himself as best he could, shielding his eyes and neck with his arms. Blood was thick in the water, Keith could smell, almost taste it. Pain was burning through him, Keith couldn’t hold out much longer. She was going to tear him apart. A huge roar echoed through the water, shaking everything around them. Lance.
Restoration of Power

The top of the skull was ripped away, the bone snapping loudly with the force. The witch screeched again, releasing Keith enough for him to struggle away from her. She was wrenched away from him, tossed away by Lance. Whiskers reached out, gently wrapping around Keith’s body and pulling him close to Lance’s scaly body. A deep worried rumble as Keith was pulled close, tangled tight and comforting, pressing firmly against his wounds. Lance’s head whipped around, baring his teeth at the sea witch. She flexed her hands, swinging it back and forming a crackling ball of energy. Lance snarled, flicking his tail from side to side. A bolt of energy shot from her hands, it struck Lance’s side but he barely reacted. Swinging his tail out, he struck her, sending her flying to hit the remnants of the skull.

“Enough!” Allura’s voice echoed around the area. She floated off Lance’s back, landing right in the centre of what was left of the room. She was glowing even brighter now, stood tall and dignified, looking at her coldly. Keith hoped he never got to be on the receiving end of that look. Her hand reached out, laying on the crystal gently. Its colour shifted from purple to blue, thrumming slightly.

“You cannot win,” Allura said, “Give up, let go, stop this.” The sea witch bared her teeth, before attempting to blast Allura with her magic.

Allura swung her hand out, nullifying the magic she had been blasted with. “Please Honerva, I don’t want to do this,” Allura said.

Another blast of magic erased with a single hand wave. Keith was moved to press right up against Lance’s face, making him grumble in pain as he was jolted. The witch growled, almost animalistic, head snapping up. Her eyes were glowing purple, hands moving up, energy crackling between the two. Allura’s eyes widened, whipping around and gesturing furiously to Lance. He moved quite suddenly, backing the two of them out and away from the two moon spirits.

Allura was steadily glowing a brighter and brighter blue, the sea witch matching her with her own purple glow. An arching blaze of purple magic, making the hairs on Keith’s arms stand up in spite of the distance. It hit a solid blue dome, an echoing crash shaking the area. The sound of rock cracking and falling away to one side, followed by a wave of pure heat. Lance growled lightly, shifting slightly further away. Keith curled slightly closer to him, letting Lance shield him from the sudden explosions of magic.

Brilliant flashes of light, echoing bangs and clangs, sizzling, popping with waves of heat. All the rocks around them began to shake and grumble, shooting up into the water, swirling around and around. Sparks flashed around them, rocks exploding and causing a swirling mess of dirt. The weeds around them rippled and transformed, combining into a huge shark. It slipped into the rock whirlpool, the whole thing exploding in a mess of shredded plants and splintered rocks. A deep rumble and the skull began to rise out of the sand, followed by the rest of the leviathan skeleton. Its eye sockets began to glow purple, as it turned on Lance and Keith. It lunged, Lance dodged, whipping it with his tail.

Keith was rested on the rocks at the side of the trench, Lance nudging him gently before turning back. The flashes of purple and blue magic were lighting up the entire area, the only thing Keith could see of the furious magic battle going on below. Most of his focus was on Lance and the huge leviathan skeleton he was being forced to fight. Luckily, Lance was much, much faster than the skeleton, one bite would probably slice him in half. Lance dove under the thinks jaw, slamming into it with his body, no reaction, obviously. The sound of creaking, Keith looked down to see the rocks having formed a massive creature, stamping along the trench floor. Keith wanted to help, but moving
right now was almost impossible, any slight twitch causing pain to burn through every nerve.

Darkness was starting to close in, fuzzing the edge of his vision. Keith couldn’t sleep, he had to make sure Lance was alright, also, probably stop himself from dying. One of the leviathan’s bone fins struck the ledge Keith was on, he just managed to roll out of the way, dropping off the ledge as it crumbled. He floated through the water, watching as Lance dove after him, the leviathan making good use of this distraction to slam right into him. Lance was sent flying into the opposite side, roaring in pain as he two began to drop with the falling rocks. Keith hit the bottom, rocks falling all around him.

Now he was down at the bottom, Keith could actually see Allura and the sea witch. Both of them looked roughed up, slightly hunched over and panting. Their clothes were both slightly ripped, cuts of glowing blue and purple marred their skin. Keith pushed himself up slightly, watching as the two moon spirits had a stare down.

“Stop,” Allura said again, “You cannot win, I don’t want to do this.”

Again, what she was saying didn’t seem to get through to the sea witch. She yelled, spreading both her hands. A huge, powerful blast of magic tearing through the water directly at Allura. Her own wave of blue magic rose up too meet it, the two striking each other with a resounding boom that shook the whole area, sparks and heat blazing from where the two magics connected. Everything was still shaking, the sound of crumbling and falling rock filling the water. The wall behind Keith was falling apart, threatening to crush him. He couldn’t really move though, everything hurt and he just felt so weak. As the rocks fell over him and the las of his vision was cut off, Keith was just able to see the blue overpower the purple.

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“Keith? Keith!”
In his defence, it was an automatic reaction to being surprised and Shiro should know this. Luckily his fist only skimmed Shiro’s face.
“Think he’s alright.” Pidge laughed.
Keith sat up slowly, recognising the slight rocking of a boat, and the feeling of wood beneath him. The entire crew of Voltron was gathered around, peering down at him. Keith glanced down at his still scaly torso and arms. His…tail was stretched out in front of him, missing fin and gashes healed.

“There!” Allura shouted from the side, “He’s fine, now will you let me heal you?”

He turned and, there was Lance. He looked rough, deep gashes and missing fins and scales. Allura marched over, resting a hand on his belly. A glow spread across Lance’s skin, brightening where all his injuries were. It thrummed for a few seconds, before fading away to reveal a completely healed Lance.

“Alright,” Allura said, “Alright.”

Shiro helped Keith over to the two pieces of crystal, everyone trailing behind them. Both crystal pieces were rested against the deck, pulsing lightly. Both of them looked a little bit worse for wear, the smaller chunk still with a huge crack still running up it, glow dim. The other was still slightly purple, with tiny teeth marks marring the surface. Coran and Allura moved to stand beside it.

“It’s such a shame,” Coran said, “To see it like this.”

Allura nodded, stepping forwards to rest her hands, one on each piece. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, her palms starting to glow again. Lance made a deep rumbling noise, Hunk nodding like he could understand what Lance was saying.

“Yeah, we believe in you Allura,” Hunk said.

“Come on, you can do it,” Shiro added.

It began to glow brighter and brighter, shifting from blue and slightly purple to a bright white. Keith closed his eyes against the light, picking up his arm to shield them as it grew too bright even behind closed eyelids. Keith curled his tail around himself in defence as a strange warmth travelled through
his body, it wasn’t burning though, just a strange comforting warmth.

The glow dimmed, fading to just a gentle light behind his eyelids. Cautiously, Keith cracked his eye open. There, right there on the deck, a huge glowing crystal. It looked so much different from before, it seemed so much bigger, so much grander than what he was expecting. The whole thing was glowing with a steady blue light, no signs of the previous damage at all.

“Allura?” Coran called suddenly.

Keith glanced around, she was gone, just, vanished completely. There wasn’t any sign of what had happened. Lance growled, the sound of splashing and thumping as he hit the boat gently. He was staring down into the water and if Keith had well, legs, he would look to see what he was looking at. Although a second later, it became unnecessary.

Allura, standing huge and grand rose from the water. Water ran off her skin, clinging to her eyelashes before they flew open, her eyes glowing brilliant. She towered over their boat, looking truly like some deep-sea goddess. Her entire form shimmered slightly, scanning the area around them. She reached down into the water, scooping Lance up into her hands. He draped over them like a massive snake, well in Allura’s hands he looked quite small. She brought him up to her face, closing her eyes and bowing her head. Lance began to glow, flexing and twisting before he began to shrink as the glow grew even brighter. Allura closed her hands around him, resting her hands to her forehead.

She lowered her hands carefully to the deck, opening them and allowing Lance to slip out onto the deck of the ship. She lowered herself back into the water, vanishing in a bright flash of light. Keith wasn’t paying attention to that though, instead he was looking right down at the person, at the mer, laid out on the deck. Lance looked just the same as when he was transformed, apart from, one little thing. Keith felt his heart hammer as he began to inelegantly scramble towards him, Lance’s chest was rising and falling steadily, his eyes slowly blinked open. Keith rested a hand on Lance’s cheek, leaning down to press their noses together.

“Hey beautiful,” Lance said softly.

Keith felt his eyes fill with tears as a brilliant smile spread over his face.

The rest of the crew gathered around them, staring down at Lance on the deck.

“So,” Pidge said.

Hunk hummed.

“Wow,” Shiro said softly.

“You look so cool!” Matt burst out.

Lance laughed, scratching the back of his neck.

“Yeah, it’s a bit different isn’t it?” he said.

Keith stared at him, he was, beautiful. From the waist down, a smooth blue shark tail, paler underneath, darker on top with much darker stripes running down the length. His fins, like Keith’s, transitioned to a vibrant red at the end. The blue of his tail trekked a bit up his torso and down his arms to webbed fingers, up the side of his face to his pointed ears.

“You’re stunning,” Keith said, smoothing his fingers across Lance’s tail.

Lance laughed, curling their fingers together.

“You like it then?”

Keith nodded, leaning forwards to press their lips together.

Lance opened his mouth, probably to chastise Keith for the whole, transforming into a mer thing. He was cut off though by another bright flash of light. Allura was stood on the deck, shimmering slightly. Beside her, kneeling and chained to the deck was a man.

“Lotor,” Lance said softly.

His arm wrapped around Keith’s waist, pulling him slightly closer.

Lotor’s teeth were bared, eyes still glowing as he glowered up at Allura. She reached out, resting a
hand on his forehead. His back arched backwards, mouth opening. A blackish, blueish, purplish goo began to ooze out of his mouth and eyes. Everyone scrambled away from it as it oozed over the deck, slithering over to slip into the water. Eventually the flow of gunk stopped and Lotor collapsed onto the deck. Allura’s glow faded, her eyes returning to their normal, well normal for her, colour.

She turned slightly, looking over at them.
“Lance, Keith,” she said, “Thank you, for everything. I’m so sorry Keith, I cannot change you back, it will kill you.”
Keith nodded, he had been expecting that. He didn’t even need to look up to know the look on Lance’s face, the disapproving irritation.
“I don’t mind,” Keith smiled, leaning back against Lance’s chest, “I think I can get used to this.”
Allura chuckled, “If you ever need anything, anything at all. There is nothing I can possibly give or do for you that would thank you enough.”

“Allura?” a slight groan from Lotor on the deck.
Her face fell and she turned to look down on him, brow furrowing.
“Lotor,” she said, her voice cold.
Keith shivered slightly, yeah, never get on Allura’s bad side.
“Allura,” he said softly, “I am so sorry, I just wanted…”
Allura held up her hand, silencing him instantly.
“I know why you did it, I…a small part of me understands. That doesn’t mean I will forgive you, bit I will give you a chance. Help me Lotor, lead me to the others and help me set up a new city, a new place. Help me protect the ocean, help me heal what your father broke, work hard, change, understand, then one day, I may forgive you,” she said, “But I wouldn’t hold your breath.”
Lotor sat there for a moment, staring up at her, before he nodded.
“Yes, please,” he said, “Please, thank you for giving me this chance.”
Allura hummed, turning her head away slightly.
“You are to take me to the other moon spirits and we will go from there.”
Lotor nodded, Allura turned to the rest of them.
“Thank you for your help,” she said, “We will see each other again.”
And with another bright flash of magic, her, Lotor, Coran and the crystal all vanished off the ship.

There was a long pause, until Lance suddenly gripped Keith’s shoulders and whipping him around.
“Don’t you dare,” Keith interrupted before Lance could even start, “I said I would travel to the end of the earth for you, and I was not lying, I don’t regret this.”
Lance stared, opening and closing his mouth.
“It was still very stupid,” he said.
Keith smiled lightly, leaning forwards to press their lips together.
“Yeah, but,” he shrugged, “I’m stupid for you.”
Lance laughed, squishing Keith into a hug. Pidge was making very loud vomiting noises as Hunk awed, Keith was pretty sure Shiro was crying.
“I’m going to have to teach you mermish,” Lance sighed, rubbing their noses together.
Keith grinned, nodding and laying his head on Lance’s shoulder.
“How do you say I love you?” he whispered softly.
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Keith took a deep breath of morning air, smiling lightly as he looked out to the sunrise over the ocean. His fins twitched as the sky was lit up in brilliant oranges, pinks and yellows. It really was a beautiful sight, Keith did really love the ocean, even if the circumstances were not ideal, Keith wouldn’t change any part of his life.

He watched the sun slowly climb up into the sky from his place perched on a small rock in the middle of the ocean, in the middle of nowhere. Finally, the colours shifted to the normal blue, Keith slipped back into the water. He dove to the small crevice in the rocks, the place where he and Lance had spent the night. He was still curled up in there, blue tail curled around his body as he snoozed. Keith smiled lightly, drifting close to lay back down next to him before trailing his fingers lightly over the blue sharkskin on Lance’s face.

Lance stirred, nuzzling into Keith’s fingers with a hum. His eyes flickered open and he smiled, reaching out to tuck a chunk of Keith’s hair behind his ear fin. Mermish was a difficult language to learn, there weren’t any words, only chirrups, chirps, whistles and various other noises. It also didn’t have a direct translation, but Keith thought he was doing pretty well.

Lance gave a soft questioning chirrup, reaching out to pull Keith close to rest against his arm. Keith made a soft happy noise as Lance traced over the scales of his face lightly, he did his best to tell Lance he’d been on the surface, watching the sunrise. He didn’t know if Lance understood, but he was happily nuzzling and nipping lightly at Keith’s neck so, it didn’t really matter. Keith made a happy chirrup, pushing Lance’s face away before flicking his tail to swim away, holding out his hand. Lance smiled, flicking his own tail to meet him.

Keith was happy, he didn’t know he could be this happy, especially given the circumstances. He had Lance though, Lance to teach him how to be a mer, and a whole ocean to explore. Keith flicked his tail slightly, brushing against Lance before flicking away again. Lance smiled, a grin full of sharp teeth and Keith whistled a challenge. Lance snapped his teeth playfully, before launching himself after Keith who darted away as quickly as he could.

Lance was faster than Keith, didn’t mean he was going to give up so easily. He ducked and weaved through the water, trying to act as unpredictable as possible. Lance chased after him, making a high trilling sound Keith recognised as a laugh. Arms wrapped around his waist and Keith tried to wriggle free, but he knew it was hopeless, Lance had him now. Hands smoothed up his side to curl around his chest, Lance bumping their noses together. Keith smiled, looping his tail around Lance’s waist, allowing him to pull the two of them along. Yeah, this was good.

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Keith’s tail trailed lightly in the water, head tilted backwards and eyes closed. Sunlight streamed down onto him and Lance’s skin as they rested on the beach. Keith jumped slightly as Lance rested a hand on his cheek, thumb rubbing under his eye. Leaning forwards, Keith pressed their lips together. “Hey,” Lance said softly, “You doing alright?” Keith nodded, humming lightly.

“I’m happy,” he said, “I will tell you as many times as I need too, I’m happy Lance, I would happily go through this all again, so stop asking.” Keith punched him lightly in the arm, rolling his eyes. Lance stuck out his tongue, humming lightly.
“I just want to make sure,” he said, pouting lightly. Keith reached out, squeezing Lance’s cheeks.

Excited barking caught both their attention, an automatic smile spreading over Keith’s face as he spotted the overly excited dog. “Cosmo!” Keith said, sitting up and holding his arms out. Cosmo charged down the beach, tongue lolling out. He hit Keith at full pelt, slobbering all over his face. “Good boy,” Keith laughed.

The rest of the crew made their way down the beach after Cosmo, all laughing and talking. Hunk was carrying a picnic basket, Pidge had a blanket slung over her shoulder. Lance brightened, waving them over enthusiastically. Keith smiled, rubbing the top of Cosmo’s head, scratching behind his ears. Although there was often so much distance between them, they were still a crew, they were still friends, still a family no matter what.

Chapter End Notes

So...when I said I was posting something on Christmas...Bet you weren't expecting the entire rest of the fic huh? But yeah, merry Christmas! To all those who have stuck through with this right from the beginning, thank you! I really appreciate it. To those who left comments on previous chapters, you are the best! It's always nice to know people are reading and enjoying your work. For those only just reading it now it's finished, thanks for giving it a chance and sticking through to the end! I did want to get this finished, I have a few more ideas for some multi chaptered fics but I think I'm just going to be writing one-shots for a bit...this is difficult...

Was the fluffy epilogue strictly necessary? No, but I put it in there anyways because who doesn't like a bit of fluff?

In the last chapter I said that only four people were probably still reading this...I got four comments...I just..thought that was funny

Comments and Kudos are always appreciated, thank you so much for reading, I hope you enjoyed!

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