Save a Lion, Ride a Cowboy

by Bang Bang Beef Keef (kelamorrison)

Summary

Lance is sexually frustrated. Luckily Keith is here to help... Excerpt:

“You’re suggesting…” Lance gulped at that lump again. “… I try being slutty right now?”

“If you want to feel satisfied,” said Keith, running that hand from his hair down to his neck. His jacket was slipping off both shoulders now. It’s not like Keith was showing any skin, but something about that jacket refusing to stay put, the mere suggestion that Keith’s clothes were removable… Lance was fairly certain his blood flow was no longer heading up towards his brain. He wasn’t going to think his way out of this one. Did he even want out of this one? He hadn’t agreed to be in this one.
Lance could piece together how it first happened. How Keith ended up kneeling in front of him, sucking Lance’s dick.

It had been a couple years of infrequent visits on the farm. However far apart, it was still good to have Keith as company. He was low maintenance, helped out with chores, chatted politely with his family then at the end of the day they’d sit out on the porch, having a few beers and reminiscing about the old days.

That one faithful night they’d maybe had one or two too many. They weren’t wasted, but they’d definitely drank enough so that inhibitions had packed it in early and gone to bed without them. They were speaking a lot more candidly than usual and Lance happened to mention that he was horny. Jerking off wasn’t doing it for him lately. He couldn’t focus his thoughts enough to relax into it and found himself frequently unsatisfied.

By this point Lance had pieced together through context clues and dropped hints that Keith was likely gay. Now Lance had not made the assumption that because Keith was gay he would take this new information about Lance not being able to get off and offer to blow him. He certainly hadn’t brought it up in hopes of such. But then…

“Get someone to do it for you,” said Keith, right after the jerking off confession.

“I don’t exactly have people lining up,” said Lance, annoyed that Keith was dismissing this very private thing he’d disclosed.

“Okay,” said Keith, setting his beer down on the porch. “I’ll do it.”


“I’m serious,” Keith.

“No, you’re joking. You wouldn’t just randomly offer to jerk me off –”

“I’m offering to suck you off,” said Keith, interrupting.

Lance’s brain stopped working for a beat. “You wouldn’t,” said Lance, pausing to swallow back a lump that had suddenly appeared in his throat, “randomly offer to suck me off. That’s weird and kinda slutty of you.”

“For the record,” said Keith, sliding off his seat and dropping gracefully to his knees, “being slutty is fun. You should try it sometime.”

Wait… what? Keith slutty? What? He’d meant that as a joke. He had no idea what kind of sex life Keith actually had.

While Lance was struggling to process the idea of Keith even having a sex life, the boy in question had crawled to place himself at Lance’s feet. He sat up on his knees, spread open, one hand on the ground and his jacket slipping down off that shoulder revealing the bulge of his bicep. His other hand travelled up his face to push back his hair from his forehead so Lance could see clearly those sparkling eyes.

Shit fuck shit. How did Keith just turn it on like that? How was he suddenly so sexy? How was he
making Lance think of him as sexy. Was this a Galra thing? Was he being enthralled?

“You’re suggesting…” Lance gulped at that lump again. “… I try being slutty right now?”

“If you want to feel satisfied,” said Keith, running that hand from his hair down to his neck. His jacket was slipping off both shoulders now. It’s not like Keith was showing any skin, but something about that jacket refusing to stay put, the mere suggestion that Keith’s clothes were removable… Lance was fairly certain his blood flow was no longer heading up towards his brain. He wasn’t going to think his way out of this one. Did he even want out of this one? He hadn’t agreed to be in this one.

“Wh – why?”

“Because I’m good at it,” said Keith. “And I like showing off in front of you.” That was, afterall, the basis of their relationship. Maybe Keith would actually be bad at it and Lance would get to mock him. Okay, that wasn’t a good reason to do this, but Lance had a list of three-thousand reasons why accepting a blow job from Keith was a bad idea. His reasons for saying yes was a pretty short list and mostly consisted of how good Keith’s mouth looked right now. Especially when he bit the side of his bottom lip just so.

Keith was so hot. So fucking hot. Keith’s mouth was so hot. Lance wanted to fuck Keith’s hot mouth.

“Okay,” said Lance with a weak nod that quickly gained power.

“How about you actually say it?” said Keith, his tone taking on a hint of playful annoyance.

“Say?” Lance was aware of how his body language had changed. How he’d unconsciously slid his hips down on the seat to tip tilt himself at the best angle to receive. His shoulders had stiffened up and risen up to his ears. A lot of things had stiffened and risen…

“Say you want me to suck you off. So I know you really want it.”

“I want you to suck me off,” said Lance. It came out strangled, but he’d said it. Then for good measure he added, “Please… Keith?”

Keith’s eyes slowly shut as he pressed his lips together like he was holding back a grin. There came a soft little satisfied scoff from his throat and Lance wondered exactly what that reaction was. Maybe Keith had just won a bet with himself on whether or not he could get Lance to beg for it.

“So polite,” teased Keith, looking at Lance through heavy-lidded eyes. “C’mere, Loverboy.” Lance was more or less frozen in place, his breathing quick and shallow in anticipation. But it was Keith that moved, rising up high onto his knees and placing his hands on Lance’s thighs. Here we go… As Keith slid his hands up it felt like every nerve ending was on fire. This was already so erotic and it was just his legs being touched. Then Keith was undoing the button on his jeans and unzipping him, all the while moistening his lips.

Lance’s hands were shaky and impatient as he helped Keith with the next part. Helped Keith unleash his hard dick. Gosh that was strange. Keith wrapped his hand around Lance’s cock in the most possessive way as he muttered, “You’re bigger than I thought.” Thought? Keith had thought about his dick size? Had premeditated thoughts on how it would look hard and at close range? Lance almost followed the wrong train of thought and became offended that Keith would dare to think of Lance as anything less than size large, but then that tongue, that fucking tongue dragged its way up Lance’s length and Lance’s head was rolling back and all his thoughts turned to,
“Yes…”

A couple more licks like that and Lance was completely on board with whatever thoughts Keith had had about him because Keith clearly knew exactly what he was doing. More so, Keith’s tongue knew what it was doing. In Keith’s tongue we trust.

The next long, lazy lick crested at the head of Lance’s cock. Keith paused there for a moment before allowing his lips to sink down, enveloping the head completely. Forget about Keith’s tongue for a minute and let me tell you about Keith’s lips. Keith’s lips were soft and wet and sealing around the head just perfectly so he could give it a suck, but then they gave way to slack, loosening and pulling back. Keith’s bottom lip bumped over the ridge of the head of Lance’s cock and retreated until no contact was being made. Keith’s lips were the biggest tease in the universe.

Lance gave a little whimper of neediness, his hips pushing up just a little to knock the tip of his cock against Keith’s lips only to have Keith raise up his head to look at him, now out of reach. Keith tilted his head while studying Lance’s face. Lance became aware he was massaging his own lips together as if demonstrating exactly what he wanted Keith to do on his cock. Keith had that look in his eye. That look he got when he was outnumbered yet so self-assured. That look that said he was about to plunge into battle without questioning whether he’d make it out alive. Now it was Lance who wasn’t sure if he’d survive this.

Keith gave this little satisfied hum. Whatever bet he’d made with himself, he was continuing to win. That’s when he dove in completely, head first, literally. Those lips came crashing down around his cock, sliding down his length and not stopping until Lance felt his head bump against the back of Keith’s throat and Lance let out a sputtered moan because not expecting Keith to blow him was one kind of surprise, but not knowing he would pull a move like that was throwing him into a state of shock. Shock and pleasure as those lips rose back upwards, moving past the head with a playful flick of the tongue before dropping down again to take in every inch. Over and over.

Lance’s hands were gripping the edge of the bench. Logically he wasn’t going to go anywhere if he let go. Maybe he wasn’t holding himself in place, maybe he was holding back. The next time his cock bumped against the back of Keith’s throat, Keith choked a bit. Lance felt a swirl of concern as he saw Keith’s eyes water, but also that choke had let in little puffs of air between Keith’s cheeks, mixing in a new sensation that made Lance grip his thighs in, locking himself around Keith’s torso.

Keith dragged his tongue back up Lance’s length, letting his hand take over pumping. He looked up at Lance with those watery eyes. “Well? Like it so far?”

Lance’s cheeks flushed even deeper than they already were. How was being asked a question the most embarrassing part of this? “Fuck yes.”

“Hard to tell,” said Keith, pushing back his hair from his face again. “Used to you running your mouth.” The whole time his other hand was jerking Lance off, using all that spit from his mouth mixed with the pre-cum to make it all slick.

“I prefer you running your mouth… over my cock,” said Lance, super proud of his pun. Having Keith there between his legs felt so satisfying. Keith was so good at everything and yes, that included sucking dick, but here he was on his knees for Lance’s pleasure.

Keith let out a little huff of a laugh. “Ever think you’d spread ’em like this for me?” said Keith, running his free hand up Lance’s thigh. Wait… wait… By Keith’s tone it he seemed to think he was the one with the power, not Lance. Who was winning? With Keith and Lance there always needed to be a winner. Lance must’ve looked confused because Keith shook his head and gave the kind of smirk that made Lance want back inside that mouth. “Sometimes I want to fuck the clueless
right out of you.”

Lance let out a choke. Some…times? There was this returning concept of premeditation. Lance didn’t know how to respond until the words were already tumbling out of his mouth without a filter. “Do whatever the fuck you want. You clearly have good ideas.”

Keith looked so fucking satisfied. The best part of that is he went back to blowing Lance. Diving in with even more gusto, which Lance hadn’t thought possible until it happened. There was a symphony of sucks and pops as Keith went to town doing the good work that he’d promised and was delivering. Fuck, as good as this felt, it looked even better. Keith Kogane, on his knees, bobbing his head with Lance’s cock in that pretty mouth of his.

“You’re so fucking hot, Keith,” mumbled Lance and he saw that flash in Keith’s eyes that let him know, yes, verbal praise was appreciated. “You look so pretty with my cock in your mouth. Damn.” Lance became aware that he was arching his back, pushing his hips up. Not even necessary. Keith wasn’t going anywhere, but he was being drawn in, wanting more of something that was already too much for him to handle.

“I want to cum so badly,” moaned Lance and he knew he would. Knew he was getting so close. His hands wouldn’t stay put on the bench anymore. They wanted to touch Keith, even though he was aware this was a line he was crossing. There was the carnal act of sex, of cock in mouth and then there was the intimacy of touching. Oh, but his hands wanted to push that hair back so he could see Keith’s eyes, so they did. His fingers wanted to tangle in that soft black hair, so they did. His hips wanted Lance to take purchase by grabbing holding of the back of Keith’s head so he could thrust into his mouth, so he did. He fucking did. He wrapped his hand around the back of Keith’s neck and thrust his hips forward into that hot little mouth.

The head of his cock hit the back of Keith’s throat and Keith shuttered into a little choke. Lance immediately felt bad and tried to withdraw, taking back his hand only to have Keith grab hold and push it firmly back in place. Their eyes met with Keith giving him that battle ready look. Keith had never met a foe he couldn’t stare down. That boy was a legend. That boy wanted Lance to throat fuck him.

Lance’s hand found his grip, holding Keith’s head in place as his hips thrust forward. He was just a little more careful this time, just a tad. Didn’t want Keith gagging. Instead felt the satisfaction of Keith sucking in his cheeks so his mouth felt so warm and tight around Lance’s cock. Lance couldn’t last when it was so fucking good like this. He came suddenly, surprising even himself as the repeating thought of ‘Keith’s mouth…’ rang through his head like a siren. It was an evacuation alarm. All cum needing to get out fast. The orgasm was so intense and the fact that he was coming into Keith’s mouth seemed to give it power.

Lance couldn’t tell if he was moaning or cursing Keith’s name. He just knew it was loud and needed to be said like some god he was worshiping or a demon he was summoning. Either way it was Lance who was coming. Lance who had arrived. Lance who had fucked Keith’s mouth until there was spittle on his chin and tears in his eyes and a red blush on his cheeks that made him look like a moon faced model from an impressionist painting. It was Lance’s fuck that left Keith’s lips pump and swollen as he pulled back from Lance. Keith studied Lance’s melted posture, sweaty palms slipping out of Keith’s hair. He wiped a bit of stray cum from his lip and said in the most condescending tone, “Fuck, Lance. Next time warn me before you come.”

Next time?
Chapter One

Chapter Summary

Keith participates more the next time and takes it as good as he gives.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Next time was a hard nut to crack because ‘next time’ was such a vague concept. Lance had known even before he was finished that he wanted a next time (and a time after that and so on.) But how did Lance know when it was time for next time?

Once Lance had tucked himself away after the first time, Keith had switched back to being casual. He’d sat down, finished his beer, made some bland observations about Earth weather, and then excused himself to go to bed. This left Lance to sit out there for another hour attempting to process what had happened. There was a whole ‘yay!’ element to it because wow, that was good. But also, it was Keith and he was a boy. No, these were hard thoughts, er, tricky thoughts. The winning conclusion was Lance needed to get to this ‘next time’ so he could do it again.

The next morning Keith left after breakfast. Nothing weird or new or different there. Lance had to wait several weeks for another visit. He’d decided the best way to get a next time was to orchestrate the exact same circumstances as before. This meant Lance spent the whole day with Keith being jittery and anxious, just waiting until his family would go to bed so he could invite Keith out onto the porch for drinks. Then he spent the next hour out there being jittery and anxious and distracted because he didn’t know where to go from there beyond mentioning he was having trouble jerking off again? Which wasn’t even true since now he was getting off just fine to thoughts of Keith. So he didn’t bring that up or anything up. Just made sad attempts at responding to Keith anytime he was asked a question and feeling more and more disappointed as he felt his chance of ‘next time’ slipping away.

“For fuck’s sakes,” said Keith, slamming his beer bottle down on the porch. “You can just fucking ask me!”

“I uh -,” stammered Lance, unsure if Keith had just read his mind or if he was talking about something else entirely.

“Just ask me to suck your cock!” Yep, he’d definitely read Lance’s mind. “You’ve been so weird all day and now you’re not even listening to me. If you want to ask, it’s fine. I had fun last time.”

“You had fun?” gasped Lance, grabbing onto that line for dear life.

“Yeah, I like turning you into a quivering mess,” said Keith and Lance was instantly hard.

“Okay, but you don’t… you don’t have to put it that way.”

Keith rolled his eyes. “Whatever. Good night.” Keith began to stand up, but Lance grabbed his arm.

“No, no nononono, please stay up and suck my cock!”
 Keith looked down at Lance with that satisfied smirk of his.

That was how the next time came about. The next, next time and so on forth were easier. It was a matter of waiting until they were alone and simply asking. Keith liked it best if Lance posed the question with praise. “Please? No one does it like you do.” Lance didn’t mind the phrasing. He wasn’t lying.

This time… This time though he’d maybe asked at an odd time. They’d been alone in the juniberry field. Keith was being a bit of a dick as usual, asking why a flower called ‘juniberry’ doesn’t produce any berries. Lance had told him to look closer, maybe there were berries. Keith had scoffed and bent over. This had been meant to be a set up so Lance could boot Keith in the ass. Instead Lance had took one look at the booty and gotten a semi. When Keith stood back up and looked at him Keith’s reaction was clear he knew Lance was turned on.

“You’re so fucking horny,” said Keith with a cocky laugh. “Keep it in your pants, Sharpshooter.”

“Maybe I’d rather unload my weapon into that dirty mouth of yours,” said Lance, stretching out his arms over his head. He’d meant to show off how relaxed and cool he was, but Keith’s eyes drifted down to the bit of exposed stomach his lifted shirt had revealed. This made Lance blush for whatever reason.

No, he knew now - now that Keith was on his knees in the field, his cock in his mouth, his other hand pawing at this erection through his own jeans - it was because Keith had gotten turned on by Lance. He’d started doing this after the second time. Reaching down into his pants to jerk himself off while sucking off Lance. Lance had thought this was a bit odd the first time. He’d just assumed Keith was blowing him to have fun and show off. Keith getting off with Lance was a whole new ball game.

Lance had been so stupid. So fucking stupid. Keith was into this. Keith wanted him. He was just too stubborn to let Lance know this was the case. But it couldn’t be denied anymore. Not when they’d both gotten hard just at the suggestion of Keith blowing him. Not when Keith was willing to risk getting caught in the middle of the field with a cock in his mouth because he couldn’t resist Lance when he asked for it.

“You love that cock so much,” Lance purred. Keith’s eyebrows rose up in a question his mouth was too occupied to ask. Lance didn’t usually dirty talk like this. Usually he stuck to praising Keith. “I know your dirty little secret, Keith. You want me.” Keith actually rolled his eyes. He was so good at playing pretend. Lance stepped back, withdrawing from Keith’s mouth. This wasn’t enough anymore.

Lance tucked himself away and strutted over to the tree. Well, not strutted. His legs were shaking so he simply attempted to look casual without falling over. Success. He leaned his back against the tree and crossed his arms all cool like. “C’mere.”

Keith stood up, wiping the dirty from his knees. Those black jeans were so tight, Lance could tell he was still hard. “So what? You want me to suck your dick against a tree now?”

“How come you always say that?” Keith asked, rolling his eyes. He had no idea what was going on. Lance just gave him that devilish smile and purred, “Always the optimist, aren’t we?”

Keith stood up, wiping the dirty from his knees. Those black jeans were so tight, Lance could tell he was still hard. “So what? You want me to suck your dick against a tree now?”

“Just come over here,” said Lance. At least the tree provided a bit of cover from the house. They really were being risky today.

Keith made a big show of rolling his eyes and stomping over. He really was a toddler. Lance had known Keith for a long time, knew when they were younger Keith wouldn’t always say or do what he meant. Well, neither would Lance, but that was beside the point. Old habits die hard. Keith was putting up a front.
“What is it?” asked Keith now that he was standing a foot away from Lance. Keith clearly didn’t like this. Keith wanted control back.

“Do you want me to suck you off?” asked Lance, letting his eyes drift down to the bulge in Keith’s pants, but snapping them back up in time to catch Keith’s reaction. There it was, just a hint of a blush before Keith corrected his face to look disinterested.

“Whatever. You’d be bad at it.”

“Pretty sure it’s instinctual,” countered Lance.

“Yeah, but I’ve seen you as a beginner at plenty of things. Your instincts suck.”

“Sucking is the point.”

Keith made a dismissive sound then reached out his hand towards Lance’s crotch, maybe out of habit, maybe hoping to get control back. Lance grabbed hold of his hand before he touched. He didn’t want to follow the same script anymore.

“Suck your own cock then,” said Keith with an unimpressed shrug, but Lance wasn’t letting go of his hand. Keith’s eyes drifted down, confused, maybe a bit nervous, inspecting their clasped hands. When Keith looked back at Lance’s face that’s when Lance did something simple but bold. He leaned in just a bit, dipping his head so their foreheads touched, so their faces were close enough to feel each other’s exhales. Then he waited. Closed his eyes and waited. Waited because he needed to be certain they both wanted this. He’d already decided he wanted it.

Then Lance felt it. Felt that hot little mouth press against his. The same mouth that did Olympic worthy gymnastics all over his cock was kissing him. He didn’t know it would feel as good, feel even better because now he knew without a doubt Keith wanted him.

“You’re being so fucking weird,” said Keith, between kisses. His arms snaked around Lance’s neck.

“And you’re a fucking tease,” said Lance, slipping his hands under those arms and resting his hands on Keith’s hips. Here he could pull Keith right up against him and feel his desire for him pressed through the thick fabric of their jeans. Fuck clothes suck. Still, even clothed, he got to touch Keith, got to run his hands over his perfect ass and squeeze. Ugh. When did he get so obsessed with Keith’s ass?

Keith’s kisses travelled down Lance’s neck and he found little moans were escaping his own mouth. This was good. This was so damn good. They should’ve been doing this the whole time.

Keith’s hands were traveling too, exploring Lance’s body as he explored his back. Lance had this running list in his head of places on Keith he wanted to touch and places he wanted Keith to touch. He couldn’t stand it. Felt possessed as his hands ran under Keith’s shirt and compelled him to spin him around so Keith’s back was pressed against his front. Keith obliged, allowing Lance to have his way.

Lance buried his mouth in Keith’s neck, listening to soft mews escape the boy’s mouth. He’d never made Keith make noise before. He’d been missing out. No time for regrets as he undid Keith’s belt, his button, his zipper. Not once had Lance touched Keith anywhere below the shoulders. Mistake. He’d touch it all now.

Lance slipped his hand under the waistband of Keith’s underwear and let his hand slide down the smooth length of Keith’s cock. Keith let out an actual moan as he did this and the feedback made
Lance’s head swim. Stroking Keith’s cock felt amazing. Even more so was having his ass pressed into him so he could dry hump him from behind while he did it. “Fuck… Keith…”

“What?” mumbled Keith so breathy and sexy.

“I don’t think I’m straight.”

Keith sputtered with laughter and it was so spontaneous and genuine that Lance felt his heart melt with affection. That too was a surprise, but he’d put that thought on the backburner. He wanted to get Keith off. He wanted Keith to squirm under him. It was payback time.

“You’re fucking dirty is what you are,” murmured Keith. “Bet you wanna fuck me in the dirt.”

Lance let out his own moan at the suggestion. The imagery alone made his head thick and his dick leak. Was that an option? Actually fucking Keith? “You want my cock in your ass,” said Lance. It wasn’t a question.

“Do you even have it in you?” challenged Keith. He was moving his body up against Lance’s as he was being stroked, making Lance feel itchy with want.

“No, Keith,” whispered Lance into his ear. “You’d have it in you.”

“I thought you’d never ask,” said Keith, flipping around on Lance. Forcing him to let go of his cock. Keith grabbed his wrists and pushed them up against the trunk of the tree. Keith gave him a nip of a kiss then said, “I’ve got lube in my jacket. Been carrying it around forever.”

Well, that was hot. “So you’ve been pinning for me.”

“No, Lance,” said Keith, pausing to kiss him lightly before spinning back around. He pressed himself back so Lance tipped against the tree, getting pinned there by Keith’s writhing body. “I’ve been waiting for you to ask to fuck me.”

“Sounds like the same fucking thing,” muttered Lance, but he was distracted as Keith took his hand and squeezed a dollop of lube into his palm from the bottle he’d produced from his pocket. Lance blinked at it because he seriously thought this meant he was supposed to lube up and go for it right there and then, but then Keith took his hand and placed it back on his dick letting out an, ‘mmm,’ the moment Lance made contact. Okay, so Keith knew exactly what he wanted.

Jerking Keith off from this position felt natural as it was so much like doing it to himself. Except it was better because it was Keith’s dick in his hand and Keith was grinding his ass against Lance and with their flies undone both their pants were sliding down their hips meaning more skin on skin contact. The way Keith moved, holy shit, like he was dirty dancing in the darkest corner of club. If he moved this way now, how would he move when Lance was inside him? The thought made Lance’s breath hitch. Keith let out a moan and snaked an arm up and around the back of Lance’s neck, pulling him into a quick kiss.

“We never settled,” mumbled Lance into Keith’s neck. “Whether I’m fucking you in the dirt… or here against the tree.”

“Anywhere you want you can have it,” said Keith. Such promises. “In the dirt… against the tree…” The way Keith’s ass rubbed Lance as he spoke was phenomenal. “On the porch… In your bed… In your shower…” So many ideas making Lance’s head spin. “On the Castleship…” What? “On the Atlas… In the Lions…” Keith was verbally rewinding their history together. Offering possibilities that Lance wished had been true. Had they been true?
“Sounds like pinning, Keith,” moaned Lance, he was getting so close.

“Hope you’re worth the wait,” said Keith, but it came out as a sputter. He was losing it. His body was moving like a wave against Lance’s. He could feel the change in the way his body arched, in how hard his dick felt before Keith started moaning Lance’s name. Hearing his name like a stretched out purr from Keith’s lip sent Lance tipping over the edge. It was so intense. He came onto Keith’s back as Keith came inside his hand, the cum shooting out to sprinkle on the juniberry flowers.

Keith’s body relaxed against Lance’s who was slumped back against the tree. They were both panting. Lance was holding out his one messy hand, wondering what to do. (There wasn’t anything to do about the cum that was now on Keith’s back and his front.) “Think you can go again?” asked Keith, peaking over his shoulder. They hadn’t actually done what they’d been talking about after all.

Lance felt himself blush, all boldness gone now that he’d come. “Yes, definitely.” Keith glanced at Lance’s awkward held out hand. He grabbed it by the wrist and lifted it to his mouth to lick it while making eye contact with Lance. Holy shit. Keith was a freak. A kinky sexy freak that wanted to have anal with Lance. Lance was kissing him again so fast.

For a moment there, ‘against the tree’ seemed like it would indeed be the chosen spot, but then the voice of children laughing came traveling across the field. Lance’s niece and nephew were nowhere close by, but the sound from the distance was a reminder that out in the open was not an option. Not caring if Lance’s adult relatives saw them was one thing (and really that should’ve been enough to stop them before,) but the risk of children seeing them. Uh-uh no. They had to move.

Keith seemed to be on it already, He’d crouched down like he was back on a Paladin mission and was peaking around the tree to make sure the coast was clear. “On my mark,” said Keith.

“No, we can’t go inside the house,” protested Lance.

“Why not?”

“Because there are at least six people inside.”

“We’ll sneak in and we’ll be quiet,” said Keith.

“Do you want to be quiet?” asked Lance, sincerely.

“No,” said Keith, standing up. “Lance, this fucking sucks! You’re an adult! Why do you live with four generations of your family?”

“I know where we can go,” said Lance, setting his sights across the field.

“Where?” asked Keith, following his gaze. “Oh, you fucking hilly billy. You are so lucky I want you.”

Chapter End Notes

Make sure to subscribe. The next chapter is gonna be gooooooood. Any guesses on where they're gonna do it?
Chapter Two

Chapter Summary

Keith's got those apple bottom jeans
Boots with the spurs (spurs)
The whole farm was lookin' over herr
He closed the do'
Next think you kno'
Keith got low low low low low low low low

Chapter Notes

Who guessed barn? You were right!

Lance pulled open the old barn doors. “After you,” he said, stepping aside.

Keith snorted and walked inside. Yeah, it was worse than he thought. It was dusty, musty, and littered with cow plops.

“Kaltenecker, no!” snapped Lance. Keith turned to see Lance waving at the cow to stop following them. “You are not invited!”

“It’s her home. She has more of a right to be here than we do.”

“Help me,” said Lance, as he attempted to push the cow through the door.

“Oh no,” said Keith, “This is getting way too yeehaw already. I’m not helping you tip a cow so we can roll around in the hay.”

“Will you stop acting like you’re Empress of Daibazaal and need a four poster bed to fuck on?” snapped Lance, spinning back on Keith. “I know where you grew up, Keith. You’re not a city kid. You’re just as big a hick as I am. Five minutes ago you were begging me to fuck you in the dirt and now you’re sticking your nose up in the air like you don’t regularly blow me outdoors.”

Fair point, but he wasn’t going to admit that to Lance. Instead he peeled himself away from the tractor he’d been leaning against.

“Why am I not surprised you’re drawn to the tractor?” muttered Lance.

Keith gave Lance a sour look and stepped to Kaltenecker. He gave her a swift smack on the rump and said, “Git!” Kaltenecker turned and sauntered back out of the barn. Keith slid the door closed. He didn’t want to turn around and see the shit-eating grin on Lance’s face.

“We should get your some boots with the spurs and a lasso,” said Lance.

“Fuck off,” said Keith.
“You didn’t let me finish. We should get you those things and nothing else.”

“Tying you up isn’t going to shut you up,” said Keith moving deeper into the barn, but making a wide circling path around Lance. He wasn’t about to throw himself at Lance, that’s not how this would happen. If he’d given in to that impulse, he would’ve done it years ago, long before she ever got to him…

“I never said the lasso was for tying me up, but if you insist,” said Lance. He was tilting his head all cocky. It was flirty, but Keith had a hard time trusting Lance meant to flirt with him.

Keith’s promenade away from Lance brought him to an old ladder heading upwards to some kind of alcove above. Keith grabbed hold of a high rung and used that grip to pivot on his feet before coming to rest his ass up against the ladder, keeping that hand up there for the sake of the silhouette. Keith could be flirty too if he wanted.

Keith relished the reaction Lance gave to seeing him pose like that. The way Lance’s mouth opened up in surprise and his eyes widened with arousal. Keith took a mental picture of that face. Wished he could print out and frame that face. It was so nice to have Lance’s mask fall away, to see him looking at Keith like something to be desired. Keith needed to keep it together, needed to not show too many cards at once.

Lance stepped to him, was drawn in by him. No more dumb quips traded back and forth. Lance was moving in for the kill, pressing himself up against Keith and kissing him deeply. Fuck, that kiss… Keith had to suck Lance’s dick - what? Twenty times before he got a kiss on the mouth. Not that Keith was complaining. He liked sucking dick and he looooved sucking Lance’s dick. This was grift, wasn’t it? This was how he played the long con. Act disinterested, pretend like he didn’t want it. Let Lance come to him. Be absolutely fucking sure this is what Lance wanted. The hard part was keeping his feelings in check when he was getting so fucking hot rolling his tongue into Lance’s mouth.

Aw fuck it! Keith used his purchase on the rung above his head to pull up his body and wrap his legs around Lance’s waist. He’d make up for it by being distant later. Right now he was going to get his.

“Kei –” began Lance, but Keith cut him off with another insistent kiss. Lance was about to make some smart comment about how needy Keith was and he couldn’t take the teasing anymore. He just needed this to happen now. He’d been so good. So good and patient, such a good boy. Now Keith deserved this.

Keith rolled his hips against Lance. This ladder was unconventional, but if offered lots of spots to grip. Yes, Keith could get creative with this ladder.

Lance made a satisfied hum into Keith’s mouth before pulling back from the kiss. “I was trying to say this isn’t the spot.”

“Wha?” asked Keith. He was so hard it was painful and he was wrapped around Lance and he was being told there needed to be another location change. Better not be the fucking tractor. Well… yeah, Keith would do it on a tractor.

Lance stepped back, forcing Keith to slip off of him. So disappointing. He’d been so close, pressed against that warm, firm body. “Up,” said Lance. He nodded back and over Keith’s head. Keith looked dumbly back up the ladder. “Git,” said Lance, smacking Keith on the ass. The smack he liked. Being treated like a cow, only kinda liked. B – at best.
“You’re just doing this to get a better view of my ass,” said Keith as he climbed up ahead of Lance. “It’s a perk. I won’t lie.”

When Keith got to the top, the proper word for this place finally popped into his head: hayloft. Lance wanted to fuck in a hayloft and Keith was trying not to laugh.

“What?” said Lance, defensively, crawling into the hay after Keith.

“I dunno, man,” said Keith, standing himself up. “I can’t keep making hill billy jokes, not when you’re being such an easy target.”

“This is a bed fit for an edgelord who’s a secret hick,” said Lance. “Besides, you don’t get real cowboy points until you’re rolled around in the hay.”

“Have you rolled around in the hay before?” asked Keith.

“Uh… no,” said Lance, seeming kinda embarrassed. Keith wondered, not for the first time if Lance actually had any experience. Maybe he never actually did the dirty with… never mind. “I seem to remember a certain someone bragging that they’d fuck me anywhere,” said Lance, turning a shade pinker. “So if you don’t -”

“I’m fucking with you,” groaned Keith. “I’m literally always fucking with you and I’m getting concerned that you think I’m serious all the time.”

“Wait… fucking with me about wanting to fuck me or…?”

“Fucking with you about being unimpressed,” said Keith, before Lance went into a panic. “I’m definitely going to fuck you in the hay.”

This whole conversation was happening with them ducking down because there wasn’t enough room to stand up straight. “Okay, awesome,” said Lance, all too quickly.

“You’re clean, right?” asked Keith, sliding off his jacket and dropping it by his side.

Lance’s gaze seemed fixated on Keith’s bicep as he spoke. “I showered earlier, but then I came all over myself and -”

“Talking about STIs, Lance,” said Keith, moving in on Lance and grabbing hold of the front of his shirt.

“Oh, yeah, there’s no chance of that,” said Lance, looking down and away. Well there was his fucking answer to more than one question. Keith didn’t know if he was more thrilled over that or over not having to use a condom. He’d always used a condom with everyone else, but he would not, could not with Lance. He wanted to experience Lance, fully, completely. Lance was who he’d pictured every time before, who he’d pretended he was with. Lance was his one. The others were just practice.

Couldn’t let Lance know that though. Keith’s obsessive attachment would definitely freak him out, have him running for the hills as it were. I mean, this is the boy who only just questioned today that he might not be straight. Honestly, how did bisexuality work? Because the concept of not knowing what you were seemed foreign to Keith. He liked boys. Had since childhood. There was nothing else to it.

“Good,” said Keith. “I didn’t bring a condom so that works out since I’m clean too.”
“Cool,” said Lance, nervously and Keith could tell he’d thrown him a bit. He was new to this. Keith needed to be good to him and show him the ropes without teasing too much. That would be tricky.

Kissing Lance was a good start. He couldn’t be sarcastic if his mouth was occupied. Well, he could, with his eyes. He’d have to shut his eyes. Kissing while ducking would suck so Keith lowered to his knees and let his grip on Lance’s shirt lead him down with him. Like that they could make out easily and he could feel Lance relaxing again in his arms. What a wonderful thing to have, to have Lance find comfort in his embrace. Only then did he start stroking him outside his jeans.

Only of the most fun parts of these sexy visits they’d been having was discovering how horny Lance was. Like he wanted it so badly he’d spend all day bumping into things and answering ‘yeah’ to every question he’d failed to listen to because he was wrapped up in anticipating when he could get Keith alone. They were up to two to three blowjobs a day. Lance was a thirsty little hick. Did he even know this about himself or was he just discovering it too? Was Keith drawing it out of him?

Lance’s hand that had been slidding around under Keith’s shirt, grabbed hold of the hem and pulled it upwards. Keith liked that. Liked to see Lance taking the initiative. The only thing was the moment Keith had seen that hay his first reaction was, ‘that looks itchy as fuck.’ They didn’t need to get naked to screw, but then Lance was pulling off his own shirt, having succeeded in removing Keith’s, and Keith was suddenly stuck on the idea of seeing Lance naked for the first time. Yeah, no, they were definitely need to get completely naked because Keith had tried picturing it so many times and he needed to know how well his mental picture stacked up.

Lance’s shirt was tossed to the side. Dayum! Keith really wanted to make a comment about how lifting hay bales had toned Lance so nicely, but he was scared Lance would assume it was sarcasm. Why did he have to brag about always fucking with Lance? How was he supposed to compliment him while sounding sincere?

“You’re really fucking hot, Kogane,” said Lance, looking at Keith’s bare chest. Oh. That’s how. Time to one up. “Lance,” said Keith, placing hands on either side of Lance’s torso and leaning forward so Lance was forced to lean back. “You are so. Fucking. Hot.”

Lance’s face when he said it, like he’d told him he’d won the lottery. Oh shit, how starved for praise was Lance? Who had been failing to value you him for his looks and treat him like a piece of meat? Oh right… Well, maybe they’d both dropped the ball. “Should’ve told you years ago,” added Keith. Card, dropped. Card on the table. Shouldn’t have given that one up, but Lance looked like he needed it and he couldn’t deny Lance. Not even to save face. Not anymore.

“Starting when?” asked Lance, his voice suddenly hoarse. Keith had just dug in and found a very old, very attention starved, piece of Lance.

Answering would mean dropping another card, but Lance looked so wanting. “First time I saw you in your Paladin suit.” Keith meant it to sound like dirty talk, like this was foreplay, but it came out too honest. It dragged the sincerity of the statement out with the words. Fuck. That was two cards at once.

Lance’s face was so close to his that he had a front row view of Lance’s attempt to process this. His eyebrows were upturned, eyes flicking back and forth, searching Keith’s face. “I didn’t know,” said Lance, his words gripped with equal sincerity.
Danger. This was too risky. This conversation was not supposed to happen. Not yet. If it went any further Keith would have to bail. He couldn’t do this. He’d dedicated over half a decade to not doing exactly this and it would not just suddenly spill out of him because he knew deep down Lance was hurt and he wanted to tend to those wounds – No! Healing Lance was not on the agenda. He was gonna fuck Lance and satisfy his own fucking needs. Fuck the one that got away and deal with the consequences later.

“Didn’t know you were a hot piece of ass?” purred Keith, soaking his words in sinister instead of sincerity. Keith tsk-tsked Lance. “I really need to fuck the clueless out of you.”

“Do it,” said Lance, the side of his lip upturning in a lopsided grin. Then it was on again and they were kissing each other while undoing their own pants.

Getting boots and jeans off took far longer than he wanted, but the reward was worth the effort. He got to see Lance’s bare thighs. He got to see Lance’s bare ass. Better than that he got to touch them. Better still Lance was touching him back.

“Shit Keith,” muttered Lance as he ran his hands down his back and over his ass. Like he couldn’t even word what he was thinking, but he had to make some verbal comment.

“I wanna get myself ready for you, okay?” said Keith, leaving the bliss of Lance’s touch to lower himself back on his elbows.

“Okay,” said Lance, looking just a little uncertain, but keeping his eyes locked on Keith’s activity.

“You can help,” said Keith, reaching out to take the lube out of his discarded jacket’s pocket. “Or you can just watch and learn what to do for next time.” Next time. Fuck. He kept saying next time around Lance. Lance nodded, regardless.

Keith rolled over so he could push back on his knees. “Wait, I’ll help,” said Lance, suddenly. Keith was about to ask if he knew what was he was doing. “I’ve watched porn.” The fact that Lance had selected ‘anal’ from the category menu on a porn site was a good sign. Didn’t mean he’d learned anything good though. Still, Keith hunkered down his front and reached the lube back for Lance. He wondered why his arm was still reaching out, holding that damn bottle when he felt something wet between his cheeks. Keith practically bolted to sitting.

“Sorry,” gasped Lance, slapping a hand over his mouth, over that filthy fucking mouth with the tongue that had just licked Keith’s asshole.

“You need to check with me first,” said Keith.

“I’m sorry,” said Lance, covering his mouth. “That’s how all the pornos start.”

“Oh honey,” said Keith. “I’m not mad. I would honestly love for you to eat my ass. I was just expecting you to finger me and you shocked me.”

“Well, you shock me all the time,” said Lance. “Payback.”

“Shock you?”

“Offering to blow me, deep throating me right off the bat,” said Lance, he was listing on his fingers, but somehow he’d put out his index and his pinky to start. Always counting those fingers out of sequence. That was admittedly adorable. “Then you start talking about anal and being so fucking hot and perfect and…” Lance trailed off, likely because Keith’s eyes had widened at the word ‘perfect.’ “… That stuff’s all shocking,” added Lance then cleared his throat awkwardly. All
five fingers had been counted now.

Keith’s eyes slid shut. Not looking at Lance while he talked like this might help keep him from freaking out. “Please eat my ass,” said Keith because 1. It would feel amazing and 2. He could bury his face in the hay and compose himself before Lance figured out how much that one dumbass word had meant to Keith. Perfect… Pffft. He probably meant at fucking. What other context could he mean?

“Your wish…,” said Lance, leaving it at that. Keith bent back down on his forearms and stuck his ass in the air. It was best Lance didn’t see the excitement on his face as he felt those hands, those rough, calloused farmer hands, run over his ass cheeks and spread him wide. Keith was prepared this time for the tongue. He was not prepared for how good it would feel. How his breath would hitch in his chest and he’d have to hold off on moaning too soon.

Another long lazy lick and the goal of not moaning was not going well. When Lance increased his pace, going back and forth on a diagonal, his attempt to strangle back a moan just turned it into a mewing sound instead.

“That was the cutest fucking noise,” said Lance.

Fuck. Keith didn’t want to be considered cute. “You can’t eat ass if you’re talking,” said Keith into the hay-covered floor boards. He was grateful Lance couldn’t see how red his face was. Unless… Ass cheeks didn’t blush, did they?

Keith forgot his concerns over how he was being perceived in this moment as the tip of Lance’s tongue teased at his entrance. This time Keith just let the moan out. It was better than mewing like a kitten. Encouraged, Lance dove in with new fervor. Keith had never been spoiled like this. Every other time he’d gotten his asshole tasted it was just a few compulsory licks while the guy was in the area anyway. Nothing fancy. Now Lance was eating Keith’s ass as if it were a juicy peach, just like the damn country boy he was.

“Feels so fucking good,” said Keith because Lance deserved the praise. Boy was a goddamn natural. Finally something Lance was good at right from the start. Keith realized something. Lance was actually a giver. That worked out because Keith was goin’ get it.

Lance just made an “mmhmm,” noise as he was too busy doing god’s work to respond. Keith was starting to feel overwhelmed. Lance’s tongue was lapping at his asshole as his spit was dribbling down his taint and his balls. Keith never thought he’d be so lucky. The sensation was making his arms tremble, like he couldn’t keep propping himself up which was ridiculous. The Galra part of him had given him slightly better than human strength. He could easily hold up a third of his body weight for five minutes.

“Lance,” murmured Keith, dropping lower onto chest, his head turning to the side, resting on a pillow of hay.

Lance must’ve thought he had something to say, rather than just moaning his name – wonder why it came out like that – because he stopped what he was doing to sit up on his knees and looked down at Keith with curiosity. That attention made Keith realize what he must look like in this moment, could nearly see his on reflection in Lance’s eyes. He was red faced and sweaty, breathing hard and absolutely helpless. Lance had done this to him.

Keith had never given a shit about how he looked during sex, but suddenly… “Sorry,” mumbled Keith, turning his head into the hay so he didn’t have to hold eye contact with Lance.
“For what?” asked Lance.

“For…,” Keith trailed off as he sat back up on his arches, looking down at the hay covered wooden slates. For being vulnerable…

Without warning Lance’s arms slinked around his front and he accidentally let out a tiny gasp of surprise just as Lance pulled him back against his chest. “For being beautiful?”

Keith felt his heart rate quicken. His chest ached. No one had ever called him beautiful before. It wasn’t the typical word used to compliment boys, but coming out of Lance’s mouth it was the word he wanted for himself. “If that’s what you want to call it,” said Keith doing everything he could to switch his tone to ‘brush off mode.’ “I just meant things were getting a bit too hot there and I’m trying to hold off for your dick.”

“Oh, right,” said Lance into Keith’s shoulder. He sounded kinda disappointed which was a surprise since Keith was trying to usher them along towards anal.

“Wish we had a blanket I could lie down on,” said Keith, brushing away a bit of hay that had managed to make it’s home in Keith’s hair. “That hay is itchy as fuck.”

“Oh shit, look,” said Lance, releasing Keith and crawling off towards the wall. He dug into a clump of hay then pulled an old flannel blanket out that had been buried there. “What are you the odds?” Keith thought about explaining to Lance that the odds were one of his siblings had stashed that there for what was likely multiple adolescent rolls in the hay, but he didn’t want to weird him out so much he didn’t want to use the blanket. Keith would choose crusty old flannel over getting a rash from the hay any day.

Keith helped Lance spread out the blanket then lay down on his back, propping open his knees. He was actually pretty cozy on the blanket with the soft hay underneath. Okay, so fucking like a hilly billy wasn’t all bad. Keith worried again about having his face exposed for Lance to read into, but Lance seemed too focused on looking at what he was doing to glance up at Keith. It felt so good having Lance’s lubed up fingers in his asshole. He relaxed into the sensation.

“Making a spreading motion with your fingers,” Keith directed. “You’re bigger than I’m used to.”

That was maybe a half-truth, but Lance looked so thrilled when Keith said it. Lance’s size was going to feel really nice. He knew that much for sure. A few more dips of those long fingers and Keith decided it was go time. “I don’t wanna wait anymore,” said Keith, sitting up and wrapping his arms around Lance’s neck. He needed this. Now. “I’ve waited so long.”

Keith kissed Lance, but Keith drew back just a little to ask, “Would you really have fucked me on the Castleship?”

Keith cocked an eyebrow. Oh no, he was keeping that card close to his chest. He’d given Lance too much information already. “Would you have wanted me to?”

“If I’d known…,” began Lance, placing a hand down behind Keith and tipping them onto an angle. “… It would be like this.” Lance lay Keith down. With Keith’s legs wrapped around him, Lance took his cock and rubbed it against Keith’s entrance.

That cock needed to be on the inside. Keith didn’t care about looking vulnerable anymore. His breathing was so quick and shallow and he felt like need incarnate. Lance was still teasing him and he realized he wanted something. A response to what he’d said. “It would’ve been like this,” said Keith, his voice barely a whisper. “It would’ve felt exactly like this.” And with those words, Lance pushed himself into Keith and Keith exhaled a sigh of relief. He must’ve been holding in that
tension for years, that single puff of air felt ancient. The exact same sigh came out of Lance.

Their eyes locked, their faces inches away, and there was this pause, like they’d just come to an understanding. Like they’d been walking two paths, close but separate, watching each other and then suddenly, those paths met. Here they were. Together. There was a revelation here. Something that needed to be addressed, but it would have to wait because Lance moved. Lance fucking moved. He pulled himself back then thrust back into Keith and deeper thoughts dissipated, chased away by pleasure.

Keith’s arms were gripped so tightly around Lance’s back as he continued to move, continued to roll his hips, sending wave after wave of pleasing sensation through Keith. He never should’ve mocked Lance, claiming he’d be bad at this. Lance was so good at this. He was already perfect just be being Lance. Keith had it so bad for him and this would not make things easier. This was likely the best moment of Keith’s life and it had the potential to ruin everything.

Lance’s head slumped forward, coming to rest on Keith’s neck. “Fuck. I needed this,” mumbled Lance. Then he gave Keith’s neck a suck and Keith moaned because getting fucked with that extra sensation felt so amazing it could only be expressed vocally. Lance trailed not so gentle kisses up Keith’s jaw then capture his lips in his. This was a lot to experience at once. Lance’s cock moving inside him, hitting just the right spot. His own dick getting rubbed between them. Lance’s deep, intense kiss. A change needed to be made or Keith wouldn’t last and he really wanted this to last.

Keith turned his head away from the kiss, but that only meant Lance started making out with his ear. Which… also felt good? Was he into that? “I want you to switch to your back.”

“But this feels so fucking good, Keith,” mumbled Lance. His voice was so breathy and sexy. Keith took a moment appreciate that he’d done that to him. That was his creation.

“On your back. That’s an order,” said Keith more firmly. Lance actually stopped moving and lifted his head to look at him. Lance seemed confused as to whether or not he actually had to take orders from Keith anymore. “I wanna ride my cowboy,” added Keith.

Lance could move so quickly when he’d been promised a treat. He pulled out of Keith, which sucked. Keith felt a longing that gripped him intensely and he had to calm himself with the thought that he’d get it back within the next minute. Lance was flipped onto his back so fast and Keith had to really control himself to not look that eager. Keith took his sweet time, picking up the lube and slowly squeezing out more into his palm while Lance watched with big eyes.

Keith leaned down and kissed Lance as he smoothed all that extra lube over his cock for good measure. He really didn’t need to do more than one stroke, but Keith kept going, slowly pumping away.

“You fucking tease,” muttered Lance, just inches away from his face.

“How is this a tease?” asked Keith, patiently. “If I’m still touching you?”

“Because I don’t wanna come unless it’s inside you.”

That one went straight to Keith’s cock as it gave an excited twitch. That one also went straight to Keith’s soul as he felt that bit of a tremble in his limbs again. No more teasing (yes, he’d been teasing.) Keith needed to ride that boy until he came.

Keith turned himself around and went to kneel facing away from Lance with his hips between his spread open knees, reverse cowgirl style. Reverse cowboy style? Keith was lining himself up when
Lance said, “Isn’t this kind of advanced?”

“Not for you,” said Keith, giving a coy look over his shoulder. “You just have to lay there while I bounce on your cock.” Lance just looked really super fucking happy and Keith felt very pleased with himself for creating that feeling in him.

Keith knew his best angles and this one would simultaneously give Lance the best view while also letting Keith control Lance’s dick so it hit him just the right way. Keith reached around to line up Lance’s cock with his entrance. He pushed the head into himself then let gravity do the rest as he sunk down on his knees. Yes, this was the best feeling. This was Lance’s cock in his ass and now he got to control it.

Lance let out some beautiful noises as he sank down and Keith knew it would only get better as he began to move, nice and slow, not to overwhelm the boy. “Fuck Keith,” murmured Lance. “I don’t know what’s better. How you look or how you feel.”

Keith smirked with satisfaction. He knew how good a view he was giving Lance. From his position he could watch his own dick moved in an out of Keith as he bounced his ass on it. Keith opened up his knees more, pushing his toes into Lance’s side. He placed his palms down between Lance’s open legs and arched his back then let that booty bounce on the cock.

Fuck Lance’s cock felt so good inside of Keith. He’d never barebacked before and he was glad he’d held off to make it special with Lance because he felt so smooth and warm and he fit so perfect to make him feel so full without too much stretch. Just the perfect size and Keith had no trouble finding the exact right angle to work at to start his orgasm building. His whole lower half tingled, concentrated mostly in his thighs. The feeling wasn’t even the best part. Keith loved the sounds of sex. Loved the slick and the slap. Loved the board creaking below them as their fuck rocked the whole loft. Loved all those pretty little moans coming out of Lance’s mouth and how he could control them by speeding up or slowing down. Keith slowed to an agonizing pace. It made Lance squirm and try to thrust into him quicker, but Keith just dropped his body weight onto Lance’s cock and held him hostage with his hips planted on the ground. Lance made the cutest little whining noise.

Keith gave a little hair toss as he looked back over his shoulder at Lance’s desperate face. “I told you to just lie there.”

“But I want it so bad,” whimpered Lance.

“You’re gonna get it,” promised Keith. “Let me take care of you.” Just like he had with all those blowjobs. Keith really loved sexy, squirming Lance under his power.

“You’re definitely a power bottom,” shot Lance.

“Power bottom?” repeated Keith. He knew was a bottom was, but didn’t know what the words together meant.

“You’re a bottom, but you like to control the movement.”

“I’ll give you that,” said Keith with a smirk before turning back forward. Keith rose up again, dragging himself over Lance’s length. He paused at the top to make sure Lance wasn’t going to stage a cue and try to take over the motion. When he was sure he was being a good boy Keith started moving again. Started bouncing again. Starting fucking again.

“You ride my cock so good, Keith,” moaned Lance. Keith loved how often Lance said his name
when he was giving it to him. Loved how soft and breathy he said it. Made Keith know he had his full attention, that he wasn’t off imagining someone else. Lance knew exactly who did him so good and since he was such a captive audience Keith wanted to put on a show. Sex could be carnal, it could gruff, two bodies moving in whatever way their instincts told them, chasing that O as fast as they could. And Keith liked that sometimes, but other times sex could have a performance element. Keith liked to put on a show, find the right silhouette, move in that provocative way. Leave ‘em feeling starstruck.

Keith ran his hand up thigh, pretending it was something he couldn’t help doing, he just had to feel himself. Had to run his hand up his torso, had to frame his face then slip it behind his head to give his hair another little toss.

The reaction from Lance was immediate. A little gasp followed by, “You’re so sexy, it’s unreal.”

Keith felt so satisfied. Lance was just putty in his hands. “Your big dick feels so good inside me.” Just that bit of dirty talk got his orgasm building. “I’ve wanted this for so long.” His voice already had a tendency to get hoarse and when he fucked so good it got downright raspy.

“It’s so good, Keith, ah –” Lance sounded like he was getting close too. His hands ran over Keith’s ass cheeks before gripping the bit of fat on his hips. Keith could allow it as long as Lance didn’t use that purchase to take control. This was Keith’s show. He would direct the finale.

Keith was letting out little huffs as he was getting so close. Part of him didn’t want it to end, but mostly he wanted to beat Lance to the finish line because he wanted that dick nice and hard when he gripped around it. He was already imagining how the sensation would tip Lance over the edge and he’d filled him up with his cum when –

A lot of things happened at once. The barn door slid open with a clatter causing Keith to freeze out of panic and strangle off his near orgasm, replacing all that build with terror. Just as Keith heard the first voice drift up from below, Lance shifted up to sitting and slapped a hand over Keith’s mouth and rocked him hard enough to the side for Keith to get the message that they needed to get horizontal to keep from being visible.

Stealth was something they’d had drilled into them as Paladins. Instincts taught them how to move out of sight in a heartbeat. Head clouded with hormones Keith had nearly blown it (in two ways,) but Lance’s direction got them laying on their sides, out of view of those below. Keith only recognized the voices as ‘Lance’s family.’ He didn’t know them well enough to tell them apart. They seemed to be having some kind of disagreement over the location of a plow. Keith had never prayed so hard that a plow would be discovered in a second location far, far from here.

Lance was still holding him around his waist, the other hand cupped over his mouth. The fear that Keith would say something was dumb. I mean, one of them was a talker and it wasn’t Keith. The crazy thing was Lance was still inside Keith as he hadn’t slipped out when they’d rolled. Keith was marveling at this, at the whole situation of having Lance’s family just feet below their heads while Lance’s dick was inside him and still so wonderfully hard.

Then Lance moved, pulling out and Keith thought yes that was probably best if he wasn’t inside him if they got discovered. That would be slightly less awkward. The shocking part was when Lance rolled his hips forward again then back then forward. Was this seriously happening? Was Lance continuing to fuck him even though his family was in earshot?

It was such a slow and careful movement. So well plotted out as Lance would withdraw just enough to keep from slipping out then slowly inch back in. Keith didn’t even think to stop him because he had to see where Lance was going with this.
Where Lance was going with this was deeper then shallow, pulling out then diving back in lazy waves lapping against the shore. The leisurely pace of it was heavenly. Keith could feel the ridge of the head as it inched down, touching all the right spots. Keith had had lazy fucks before, but he’d never been hyper aware like this. The tension of the situation had given him crazy focus.

A board creaked. Lance stopped moving much to Keith’s disappointment. The voices down below stopped. They were listening now, curious as to where the sound came from. Keith was trying not to tremble. Lance had paused outside of him and he wanted so badly to lean into Lance and push him back inside. He could feel Lance’s hot breath on the back of his neck. He was so close, yet so far.

Several tense moments passed and the voices resumed talking, louder this time, one person letting go of a sharp laugh. With the tension broken, the slow fucking resumed and Keith was so relieved to have Lance’s cock back in his life, to have that slow build creeping up on him with every dragging thrust. Lance’s family was below them and yet he wasn’t stopping. The boards could creak again, exposing their position, but Lance wasn’t stopping. Didn’t want to stop fucking Keith because he wanted him so badly. It was true, Lance wanted him so, so badly.

When Keith realized he was coming, he almost tried to stop himself. There was a little voice in his head shouting, ‘Wait wait wait wait! Make it last longer!’ but his whole body was screaming back, ‘yes!’ His body felt so warm like he was catching a fever, every thrust was building up his orgasm and he wouldn’t last, didn’t want to last. Not when it was Lance inside him. Keith was so grateful for that hand across his mouth because he couldn’t help moaning through this one. It was so intense and with Lance holding him in place there wasn’t much room to move through it. He could arch against Lance.

When he finished he was sensitive and felt he needed to draw in on himself. Without much room to move or risking being heard moving, he moved his knees up to his chest, gripping his thighs together, and hugging himself until felt human enough to relax a bit. Lance stayed with him, offering bits of affection by tracing soft kisses along his shoulder.

Lance took his hand off Keith’s mouth so he could spoon him properly. There was no longer a risk Keith would make a peep. He was docile now, basking in in the afterglow of the climax created by the man still hard inside him.

There was another laugh from below then footsteps padded towards the exit. The door slid shut and they let silence hang in the air for several seconds before it felt safe to move. It was Lance that sat up quickly, consequently slipping out of Keith, and said, “Holy shit, did you just come while my brothers were below us.”

Keith didn’t know if he was more embarrassed or irritated. “You’re the one that kept fucking me when your brothers were below us!”

“I didn’t want to stop moving, I didn’t expect you to come!”

“I didn’t expect you to keep moving!”

“Whatever we both did something weird!” snapped Lance.

And suddenly it was weird. They were Lance and Keith again, arguing over something dumb, but they were naked and kneeling on a, now very dirty, blanket in the hayloft of Lance’s family’s barn. It was close to being so ridiculous it was funny, but then Keith didn’t want to laugh to break the tension. He wanted to break the tension with more sex.
“Whatever,” said Keith. “Weird or not, it was fucking hot.”

“Really?” asked Lance, perking up with the praise.

“Of course it was. That’s why I came so hard.”

“Oh right. I wish I had, but I couldn’t really when I could hear my brothers talking about a plow while plowing you.”

“Let’s fix that then,” said Keith, inching his way over to Lance.

“Can you still…? Even though you already…?”

“Yeah,” said Keith, a bit thrown by the question. “It’s not like my asshole needs rebound time. I am all good for you.”

“You’re so good for me,” whispered Lance, slipping a hand behind Keith’s neck and pulling him into a kiss. “That was really hot when you came.”

Keith took a moment to feel satisfied in how he’d turned the situation back around with sex before moving his lips to Lance’s ear and whispering, “Who knows. If you’re really good for me, maybe I will again.”

“I’m going to be so good for you,” said Lance, completely revved up. His kiss was deep this time, his hands traveling all over Keith’s body. Then those rough farmer hands were lowering Keith down, onto his side. Keith let him guide him this time, let him pick the position because Lance had been so wonderful to him and he wanted Lance to have his turn getting off. Lance lifted up Keith’s leg and held it up in the air as he lined himself up to enter Keith while up on his knees.

“Bit of an advanced position,” teased Keith.

“For you,” countered Lance, defensively. “I trust you can take it.”

“As long as it’s from you, I’m not going to say no.” Was that a card dropped or did it only sound like foreplay? Keith was losing track of how many times he’d been vulnerable and how many times he was just salty.

Lance pushed into Keith again, letting out his own moan. Keith welcomed the feeling of fullness. No longer desperately chasing that O, he could admire how Lance looked from this angle. He had a bit of a farmer’s tan from working in the sun all day. Sweat was dripping down his pecks. Admittedly, Keith felt uncomfortable with the idea of Lance being a farmer for the rest of his life, but damn, did he wear it well!

Those boards were creaking freely as Lance picked up his pace and went hard. The greed behind it gave Keith a thrill. Lance was so needy. “Oh baby, you’re starving,” said Keith, tracing light fingers up Lance’s stomach and chest. “Who’s been forgetting to feed you?”

Lance seemed very much into what he was doing and Keith wasn’t sure if he’d get a reply. “Doesn’t matter,” said Lance, between thrusts. “You’re feeding me now.”

“But I’m special,” said Keith.

“You’re so special. You’re a feast.” Lance let go of Keith’s leg and flipped him to his back. Keith found himself lying back on that flannel looking up into Lance’s handsome face, watching him smooth back his sweaty hair. Damn, he was the beautiful one. Lance always had that smile that
could light up a room, that presence that could draw everyone’s attention. He really did shine. Maybe he was a bit dim lately but Keith could always pick up small moments of sparkle. In this exact moment, Lance was lit up like a disco ball.

“What am I supposed to do,” began Lance, shaking Keith out of his head, “when you look at me like that?”

Keith felt the flush in his cheeks. He wasn’t sure what kind of look he’d just given Lance. He’d forgotten to control his expression. Likely it was a ‘please love me’ face. That wasn’t good. “Can just fuck me already?” snapped Keith, trying his best to sound annoyed at Lance.

Keith tried to look away, but Lance’s eye contact was so intense, it kept drawing him back in just as Lance was drawn back inside Keith. He began rolling his hips, increasing the speed and intensity as he went. “This okay?”

“Feels good. Go as hard as you like. I can take it.”

Keith probably should’ve known Lance would take that as a challenge. Lance lifted up Keith’s legs so he had a better angle as thrusting turned to pounding. It felt so good and Keith was letting out little moans to let him know how good it felt.

“You like it hard like that?” asked Lance between pants.

“Fuck yeah,” answered Keith. He stretched out an arm over his head and found the edge of the loft was right there. He grabbed the edge and gripped it hard to hold himself in place. He used his other hand to grab his own dick and rub it. Lance lowered one of Keith’s legs and wrapped that hand around Keith’s cock, knocking his hand off so he could take over stroking him.

Keith understood what ecstasy was now. It was Lance’s dick in his ass and his big hand jerking him off while he held that lustful gaze. He knew he was looking at Lance with unbridled desire, but Lance was echoing back that same desire in the way he looked at Keith. They were building this heat between them, spreading through them, threatening to consume them.

Despite Keith gripping that edge, he was aware he was being knocked back half an inch at a time. Being pounded hard will do that to you. Eventually his head slipped over the edge of the loft and he was looking back at the opposite wall that looked upside down to him. Since Lance had Keith’s hips hiked up, his whole body was at an angle and there was a real risk he’d slide right off the edge yet the arm that was wrapped around his leg was so strong. Keith felt equally steady and precarious at the same time. Lance was just as likely to hold him in place as he was to fuck him over the side, fuck him to an early grave. Those ancient boards were certainly creaking like this was more than they’d bargained for. Maybe nothing was unyielding, maybe all of it could fall apart in an instant, this loft, this connection between the two of them…

Why did that make Keith want it all the more? He wanted to chase it down because he was getting so fucking close. It was Lance fucking him, Lance touching him, Lance loving him so good. It was Lance finally. Finally it was Lance.

Keith wasn’t sure if it was the intensity of the orgasm or the blood rush to the head, but his vision blurred. His mouth was muttering a mixture of curses and Lance’s name. He may as well have been speaking in tongues for all the sense it made. He gripped Lance’s cock so hard that he surged the boy into orgasming himself. Lance moaned a string of words that sounded like “fuck, cum, ass, Keith,” but likely meant, ‘fuck, I’m coming in your ass, Keith.”

Lance dropped down on his forearm, leaning his face down close to his. Keith knew this was dumb
because it increased the chance of them both tumbling over the edge, but at the same time he wanted Lance’s face hovering above his as he pumped his ass full of cum. This was his gift to Lance and he wanted to be appreciated for it. So he loved looking at the red face while Lance rolled his hips through his own orgasm, smooth graceful thrusts turning into sputtering after shocks.

Lance leaned his weight on him when he was done. Keith was breathing heavy from playing his own part, but then Lance’s breath was outright ragged, huffing out hot puffs onto Keith’s sweaty and rapidly cooling skin. Lance was still in him and some of him would remain inside when he pulled out. It wouldn’t last, would dribble away, but the memory would last.

Keith had imagined this so many times over the years. To have a fantasy to turn into a memory, to go from missing someone you never had, to having someone you knew how to miss, was world changing. He wasn’t sure where to go from here. He only had a few cards left, clutched closely to his chest. The ones that read:

I need you.
I love you.
I want to be with you.
I want, need, and would love for you to come away with me.

This wasn’t the moment to play them, if he ever played them, not when Lance’s blissful and tired body was his to hold. He didn’t know where to go when he’d already arrived where he always wanted to be… with Lance.

Finally Lance.
Chapter Three

Chapter Summary

Sexy yeehaw boys come in from the cold.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

What…?

Had they just…?

Lance was coming down from some kind of high. Not that he’d ever been high before, but he imagined this is what coming down off it felt like.

He’d come inside Keith’s ass. He’d shot his load inside Keith’s ass… He was still inside Keith’s ass.

It was weird. Actually no. It was weird how not weird it was, how laying naked on top of Keith, listening to his heartbeat begin to slow while his dick twitched inside of him felt right and the fact that it felt right, well, that was weird.

What was supposed to happen next? Lance knew what he wanted to do next. He’d always loved the idea of cuddling after sex, just basking in the afterglow. It had been so long since Lance had even cuddled with anyone. Keith’s touches lately, even just to suck him off had been satisfying Lance on some base level, but he wanted so much more. He really just wanted to hold Keith and possibly never let go. Which is why it was a mistake for him to raise his head off his chest to try to kiss him…

Keith’s head was hanging in mid air. Keith’s body was firmly under Lance, but Keith’s head was off the ledge of the hayloft.

“Fuck! Keith, are you okay?” gasped Lance. He was scurrying off (and out) of Keith and sitting back on his heels so he could pull Keith to sitting, safely away from the ledge.

“Yeah,” said Keith, in the most detached tone ever.

“But you almost… I almost…,” stuttered Lance.

Keith looked over the edge then back at Lance, somehow looking completely disinterested.

“What? Fucked me off a ledge?”

“I am so sorry!”

“It’s fine,” said Keith. “I would’ve stopped you if I was worried, but you were super into it.”

“That doesn’t matter! How often do you nearly die during sex?”

Then Keith thought about it. He actually thought about it. Not only was this nothing new, this
having of the dangerous sex, but Keith couldn’t even recall if he’d ever been in danger during sex before.

Suddenly Lance felt like the most virginiest virgin who ever virgined. I mean… he wasn’t anymore, but this had been a big deal for Lance and to Keith it was just… what? A Tuesday.

The last thing Lance wanted when he started this whole process was for it to not mean anything. He couldn’t just have sex with Keith and have it mean nothing. It had been fun. That much was for sure. But he craved connection and he’d felt like Keith and him were really in that moment together and it had electric and beautiful and now it was just… over.

Wait, no. Go back!

“We should clean up and get out of here,” said Keith.

No!

“Oh, okay,” said Lance, dumbly.

They didn’t have anything to wipe up with so the blanket was sacrificed for said purpose. They got dressed. Keith quickly. Lance slowly because his hands were shaky and he couldn’t figure out how buttons worked. When he finally got enough buttons on his shirt done up to be satisfied that he didn’t look completely disheveled from sex, he turned to see Keith trying, and failing, to shake all the hay out of his hair.

Okay, Keith was cute, shaking his head around like a dog. When did Keith get cute? Yes, Lance had figured out at the same time the blow jobs started happened that Keith was sexy - really, really fucking sexy – but the cute thing was new.

“Ugh,” groaned Keith. “Nothing says fucked-in-a-barn better than hay in the hair. I’ve officially been hick-a-fied. You wanna help or something?”

“Uh, yeah,” said Lance, just grateful Keith had said anything at all. But now he had to approach the cuteness that was hay-in-the-hair Keith.

Lance stood behind Keith and carefully picked out each piece. He tried to ignore the warmth radiating off Keith’s back. Was able to resist the urge to just slip his arms around his front and spoon him from behind. Maybe push that hair aside and kiss the back of his neck.

“What about the front?” asked Keith, when Lance had stopped moving for a good half minute because he was internally debating whether it was okay to touch Keith like that. “Any in my bangs?”

Lance cleared his throat, which was inexplicably tight, before saying, “Lemme check.” Lance moved to face Keith. There were tiny bits of hay there and Lance had to be gentle to get everything out. His concentration was worse because he could feel Keith’s eyes on his face. Having Keith’s attention was a difficult feeling to process. It made him feel warm in his stomach and dry in his mouth, and it made his fingers the tiniest bit shaky, which slowed the task down.

When he finished his eyes drifted back to Keith’s face, pulled in by Keith’s attention. He caught ‘that look’ again, the one Lance had seen when he’d rolled Keith onto his back, the one that made everything inside Lance tingle. No one had ever looked at Lance like that. Even the person who claimed to have loved him never did…

It was just a glimpse of that look and then it retreated, Keith’s expression neutralizing. Keith was
“I think we’re past you having to ask to kiss me,” said Keith, his breath warm on Lance’s face. Unconsciously he’d let his arms drop around Keith’s shoulders, holding him like a tether while his mind drifted off into darker spaces. Somehow Keith had interpreted Lance’s face as wanting to kiss Keith when really he’d been allowing himself to slip out of the moment, to disassociate, but now that Keith had offered…

‘Don’t mind if I do,’ thought Lance as he tipped his forehead to touch Keith’s. He didn’t move quickly, enjoying a bit of anticipation especially as Keith’s arms slipped around his waist and he pushed his hips against his. They rocked just a little side to side, moving to their own rhythm, breath hot of each other’s faces. Taking his time with Keith felt good. Gently brushing his lips to his before adding that bit of pressure felt damn good.

Keith’s mouth was so warm and his lips so soft, Lance felt like he was luxuriating in Keith’s kiss. Their first kiss could’ve been like this… That was the thought he had, but of course they had been all horned up when they did actually have their first kiss less than an hour earlier.

They could’ve kissed like this on the castleship… Okay, that thought wasn’t helpful. Anyway, Keith had said he would’ve fucked him on the castleship. That wasn’t the same as kissing.

Still, Lance was really happy that he had this now.

It was inevitable that it got a little more heated and Lance got tempted to a tug a bit at that long hair of Keith’s at which point Keith removed his arms from Lance’s waist and shoved him back. Just gently, not in a ‘get off’ me way, but in a ‘don’t start this again’ way.

“What? You sore or something?” joked Lance.

“I just got all the hay out of my hair,” said Keith, actually smoothing down his hair. “Besides, we’ve been MIA for awhile.”

“True,” said Lance. “And I already made you cum three times…”

“Fuck off,” snorted Keith. “You want to keep a running tally. I’m about twenty O’s ahead of you so don’t get a big head.”

“I guess I have a lot of catching up to do,” said Lance with a wicked smile.

Keith rolled his eyes and turned so he could climb down the ladder. Lance could actually tell from looking at the back of Keith’s head that he was smiling and hiding it.

Keith lowered himself a few steps then paused. “What are you doing with that?” asked Keith. He pointed at the blanket bunched up in Lance’s arms.

“What? I was going to take it inside to wash it.” Then with a slight blush Lance said, “We did get it really dirty.”

“You can’t bring the sex blanket inside,” scolded Keith. “Everyone will know we fucked.”

“They don’t know it’s a sex blanket,” countered Lance.

Keith sighed and drooped his head. Lance recognized it as how Keith acted when Lance was being dumb. How was he being dumb? “Look, I didn’t want to break this to you before, kinda hoped to...
spare you altogether, but there’s a reason that blanket was up in the loft.”

Lance’s eyes widened. “Someone knew we were going to have sex and left it for us? That’s creepy.”

“No, Lance,” said Keith, the patience draining from his voice. “It’s here because we’re not the first people to have sex on it. Probably far from it. I’m guessing that blanket’s seen a lot of action.”

The gears were turning inside Lance’s skull. “But then who…? Oh! Oh god no! So like my brothers or sisters?” gasped Lance.

“Maybe even your parents,” said Keith, his frown turning to a grin. “Your house is crowded. Parents gotta do it somewhere.”

“Oh!” shrieked Lance tossing the blanket back into the hayloft and holding out his hands in horror. “I touched it! I touched the sex blanket!”

“You did a lot more than touch it, sweetie,” said Keith, leaning his crossed arms on the top rung of the ladder, looking awfully smug.

Lance grimaced and mimed bringing his boot down on Keith’s head. Keith just laughed and started climbing down. “I need to shower,” moaned Lance, climbing after him.

“Uh, not before me,” said Keith. Then they were down and racing back to the house. Yeah, so much for not acting suspicious…

****

The rest of the day was hard to get through. How could Lance’s brain pay attention to anything other than the fact that he’d had sex with Keith? Dinner was particularly difficult since he had to sit there surrounded by his family with Keith sitting next to him. He wanted to touch Keith, but he didn’t dare try in front of his family.

Keith was radiating this energy, creating his own gravitational pull. All he wanted to do was focus solely on Keith. Then again it wasn’t like Keith seemed focused on Lance. Keith was so normal and casual. It was confusing Lance and distracting him more. What was worse was Lance’s family noticing how lost he was in his own thoughts and mocking him relentlessly for being airheaded. Those were his siblings anyway. His parents seemed concerned. His mom asked if he was getting sick.

‘NO MOM! I JUST FKED FOR THE FIRST TIME AND NOW THIS SEXY EMO IS SITTING BESIDE ME AND HE WON’T MAKE EYE CONTACT!”

But he didn’t say that. Instead he lied and said it was allergies which confused everyone because, “What allergies?”

All of this was worth it though because as the hours crept by it brought him closer to the time when everyone else would go to bed and Lance and Keith would do their usual thing and head out on the porch to drink and talk. Then Lance would finally be able to touch Keith to his heart’s content. Well… To Keith’s heart’s content. He wanted to touch Keith the way Keith wanted to be touched.

Imagine his disappointment when Keith announced he was going to bed early. Apparently the way Keith wanted to be touched was ‘not at all.’

All Lance could do was go to bed himself, but he couldn’t sleep. How could he possibly sleep? He had fucked Keith in the ass and he was probably going to be thrown by that forever. The shock of it
would consume his life. He’d still be reeling over it on his deathbed. The epitaph on his gravestone would read: Here lies Lance. He fucked Keith in the ass.

Lance rolled over for the hundredth time. He couldn’t sort out what he felt. Part of him was really happy. Sex with Keith had felt so incredibly good and yeah, he’d repeat that in a heartbeat… But what did it mean that he wanted to? It was so hard to decide what he felt when he didn’t know how Keith felt about it. If they hadn’t shared that kiss after, based on how Keith was behaving, Lance would’ve sworn Keith hated him now.

That kiss…

Lance buried his face in his pillow. Evidently he hadn’t so much wanted Keith to stay up with him so they could go another round, but so they could talk. And he knew talking to Keith about emotion was like pulling teeth, but he wasn’t convinced that meant Keith had no emotions. Just he didn’t share them. Kept them locked up in a secret Keith box labeled “Stay out, Lance!”

This was unsolvable by himself, Lance knew what, but he couldn’t just turn his brain off. Plus he kept thinking about the sex blanket and how dirty it was and how badly he wanted to clean it.

Maybe he could sneak out now, bring it back to the house, wash it, dry it, and bring it back to the hayloft without anyone being the wiser.

Lance decided to do just that as he sat up and threw off his covers. His phone dropped to the ground. He picked it up, opening it out of habit. The last text appeared on screen. It was from Keith notifying him that he was coming. Heh… coming… But if was from early that morning before Keith had arrived at the farm.

Lance wondered if Keith was in the guest room, sleeping like a baby rather than worrying about the implications of them having sex. I mean, Keith was experienced and by his own phrasing “slutty” so maybe he did this all the time and this wasn’t a big deal to him.

Lance frowned at his phone, ready to turn it off and toss it aside.

But maybe…

Maybe it was different with Lance and maybe that could keep Keith up at night. Lance typed out ‘U up?’ and sent it without another thought. He lay back down again, thinking that if Keith answered it was a very positive sign. It meant he was struggling with this too.

Wait… was that good if Keith was struggling?

Lance rolled and groaned into his pillow again. He didn’t know what he wanted!

His phone was still clenched in his fist. He checked it. Nothing from Keith. No ‘read’ message because of course Keith didn’t turn on his ‘read’ messages because he’d never actually want anyone knowing if he’d read something and failed to reply, which he did often. Keith was not forthcoming in any sense of the word… well… he was forthcoming with making Lance come, but otherwise, man of mystery and not in a shagadelic sense.

Lance’s brain was so overtired he was getting weird. He locked his phone and closed his eyes, willing himself to give in to sleep already. He concentrated on slowing his breath, remembering how he used to get himself to calm down and sleep back in his war days. He was just feeling that first tingle of sleep when a light knock on the door snapped him fully awake.

“Yeah?” said Lance, rolling to face the door.
The door opened just enough to let Keith creep in before he shut the door, gently. Lance’s eyes were still readjusting to the dark after looking at his phone and it took a moment for him to fully take in the sight of Keith standing there in his bedroom wearing a t-shirt and boxer briefs, both black. He looked cute. That didn’t help anything.

“Hey,” said Keith.

“Hey,” echoed Lance. “What are you…?”

“You summoned me,” said Keith, walking on light footing up to the bed. He really did move like ninja.

“I…?” asked Lance, but he was very much distracted as Keith climbed onto the bed and settled himself by straddling Lance.

“Your text,” said Keith.

“This is a very in person way to answer the question ‘you up?’” said Lance, looking down at where Keith was sitting on his thighs. To answer the question nobody asked, Lance was very much ‘up’ right now.

“You summoned me for sex,” said Keith.

“That is…,” began Lance, but he choked on his words because Keith had just shifted himself forward, dragging himself over Lance’s erection. “A lot to read into three letters.”

Keith sat himself back - Noooo! Keep touching! - and smacked his own thighs in frustration. “‘U up’ is the universal call sign of the booty call! Like literally universal. Go to the Caldon Four System and text any Caldrake ‘u up’ and I guarantee they will understand you’re propositioning them for sex.”

“So I… summoned the booty?”

“I told you,” said Keith, using his hands on either side of Lance to crawl forward, dragging his hips across Lance’s hard cock all over again, “You just need to ask me for it.”

Now Keith was hovering his face of Lance’s and he was radiating that energy that made Lance was to touch him, but this time he actually could. His hand snaked behind Keith’s head and pulled down so he could kiss him. The heat was so sudden, so quick, overtaking Lance’s entire body as he felt all of Keith’s body weight drop onto him. Then they were making out, wild and hungry. Tongues dipping into mouths as hands explored each other. Keith was pushing up Lance’s shirt as Lance was finding his hands down under Keith’s waistband, feeling his smooth ass, the memory of licking between those cheeks making his dick twitch.

Then he was pushing down the waistband, freeing Keith’s ass to the cold room as Keith sucked on Lance’s neck. Lance kneaded Keith’s bare flesh, spreading him open then using one hand to glide his fingers between the cheeks and brush over Keith’s entrance.

A little gasp distracted Keith from kissing Lance’s neck. “Tell me you have lube in here.” It was almost a growl.

“Under the bed,” said Lance, “You should be able to reach it.”

Keith crawled off of him so he could swing an arm down over the side of the bed to search for Lance’s lube. The one he’d been using nightly while jerking off to thoughts of Keith sucking his
dick.

Fuck. Now he had way better jerk off material. Never fucking mind, he had the actual thing here. He was gonna get to fuck Keith again.

He really thought he’d wanted to talk to Keith tonight, but no. Words were simple and clumsy and failed to get his meaning across. He wanted to show Keith with his body everything he was feeling, all of what Keith was doing to him.

Keith found the lube and tossed it to Lance. It was dark, but he caught it. Maybe some of his Paladin instincts still knew how to fire.

“Sit there,” directed Keith, pointing to the wall. He pulled his shirt over his head and Lance froze because he’d only ever seen Keith undressing once, but he really wanted to see more. “There,” repeated Keith when he noticed Lance hadn’t moved.

Lance scurried over and sat his back against the wall as directed, pulling his own shirt off before Keith made his way over and oh so casually draped himself across Lance’s lap so he was laying on his stomach with his ass right there, in the money spot. Keith lay his head casually on his crossed arms and looked up Lance expectantly.

He…

Lance wasn’t sure how to proceed. He was so turned on, it had flipped on him to the point where he was frozen.

“Go on,” said Keith, giving his butt a wiggle. “Get me ready for you.”

Lance swallowed, but it wasn’t enough to clear the blockage in his throat.

“You were eating me out like an ice cream cone earlier,” said Keith. “Don’t tell me you’re scared of a little fingering.”


“Please,” said Keith, surprising Lance. “I want it.” And with those naughty words he dragged his hips over Lance’s just a little. He could feel Keith’s hard cock against his lap and the jolt of excitement got Lance moving.

He pushed the boxer briefs, further down and Keith lifted his ass to help him. It just looked even more like he was presenting himself to Lance and he gulped again. He ran his hands over Keith’s ass. He knew he had a task to accomplish, (and once he was done he would get to have sex again! Yay!) but he had to take a moment to admire the booty.

“You can smack it if you like,” said Keith. Hearing Keith’s voice say those words created this weird cognitive dissonance in Lance’s head. Had his voice always been this naturally sexy? Keith could run a phone sex line if this humanitarian thing didn’t work out for him. But then Keith’s body, face, and, mostly importantly, his ass would be wasted over the phone.

“Might be loud,” said Lance, finally realizing he hadn’t reacted to Keith’s offer. “Might wake people.”

“Might not care,” said Keith.
Ugh. Lance wanted to, but he did care and waking people now meant risking not sexing later. So instead he gave it a tap that wasn’t hard enough to make a real sound.

“Tease,” mumbled Keith.

Lance picked up the lube and poured a generous amount on his fingers. He used his other hand to spread him open before dipping a finger inside then two because Keith already felt so open.

“Fuck yes,” moaned Keith, pushing against Lance’s fingers. This meant he rubbed against Lance’s lap and fuck that felt good too. “I’ve been wanting this all day,” confessed Keith.

“Really?” gasped Lance, letting his shock push his fingers in just a bit deep. “You hide it well.”

“Just cause I don’t eye-fuck you in front of your parents?” snarled Keith. “You’re an amateur at decept –ah!”

Lance was done with being insulted. He was going to jackhammer Keith with his fingers if it meant he shut up. “I’d be nice to me if I were you.”

“Fuck,” moaned Keith, “Sorry.”

Did… Did Keith just say sorry? “Since when do you apologize for anything?” asked Lance. He was at the same time figuring out what Keith’s spot was. What made the naked boy across his lap quiver and his thrust his fingers right there. Keith didn’t seem capable of talking right now. He was just making muffled moan noises.

“Why don’t you apologize for whatever spell you put on me?” suggested Lance with a dark smirk, his fingers relentless. “Whatever you did to make me think about you all day, every single fucking day.” Lance bent over Keith’s back and licked his shoulder.

He was close enough to Keith’s head to hear the little moan followed by the request, “Just fuck me before I come in your lap.”

Suddenly it was extremely important to Lance that he fuck Keith before that happened. But he wanted him in the same position he was in now. So though Lance had to get out from under Keith, he directed him back onto him stomach so he could be under Lance. Laying on the bed, Keith popped up his booty for each access.

Lance kneeled over him, his legs spread to place his knees around Keith’s thighs. He took the lube and got himself ready. Fuck, he was so sensitive. He used his hand to tease the head of his cock against Keith’s entrance.

Keith was squirmy. “Just stick it in,” he mumbled. “Lance, I can’t take it.”

Honestly, Lance couldn’t wait either. He sank himself into Keith, feeling that grip of pleasure between his thighs. He lowered himself down to his elbows, hovering over Keith so he could have the right angle make his way all the way in. Oh fuck. Keith felt amazing. He was losing his mind, dropping his forehead down between Keith’s shoulders.

“Fuck, that’s good,” mumbled Keith, having much the same reaction. They were good together. There was no denying.

Keith tried to move, tried to get the fuck going, but in this position he was powerless and Lance could almost feel the rage coming off of Keith. He was a power bottom with no power.
Lance almost chuckled, but he decided to pull back and snap his hips forward at the same time and the rich shock of pleasure overtook any amusement he had at Keith’s frustration.

Keith’s voice was breathy as he said, “If you’re going hold me down and fuck me, better make it worth it.”

Oof. Keith liked to mean, but Lance was okay with it. He loved being challenged, especially when he really wanted to fucking give it to him. His hands crept up and found their purchase by grasping Keith’s wrists. He pulled back and snapped his hips forward again, this time with more force, listening to the little croaky gasp from Keith.

Mmm Keith’s voice drove him wild. He could use that as he kept going, kept thrusting, letting it build up from a medium intensity until he was rocking himself into Keith’s body.

“Fuck, you’re so tight like this,” murmured Lance. This position was so good and Keith’s neck was right there for him to lick and suck.

“Lah-ance,” gasped Keith. “You fuck me so good.”

Lance felt amazing hearing that. He wanted to fuck Keith good. Wanted to be the best Keith ever had. Wished he could stretch thisfuck out for forever. Wished he could stretch it back in time. Fuck Keith on the castleship. Do this the whole fucking time and have him back then like he was having him now.

“Don’t you fucking slow down,” growled Keith.

Lance became aware he’d been disassociating again. Stupid. If there was ever a moment to be in, it was this one.

There was no light so seeing was tricky, but that just meant his other senses were heightened. Meant he could feel the way Keith’s inner walls gripped him tighter the harder he went. Could smell the sweat on Keith’s skin. Could taste it on his tongue. Could hear every little tiny sound from the creak of the bed frame to the pretty little huffs coming out of Keith’s mouth.

He grazed his teeth across Keith’s shoulder blade and ran his hands down Keith’s wrists until they found his fingers, all tied up in the bedding and gave him his hands to grip instead. All the while he fucked Keith harder. Forgetting his worry about being quiet.

Keith would leave again. Head to the stars once more and Lance would feel that gaping hole that was the absence of Keith in his world. He wanted to be with Keith now while he could. Have him fully without concern for anything else because this was his time with Keith. The castleship never happened. They lost that. Lance missed out on that. But this, here, now. This was his time with Keith…

His… Keith…

This thought surged the intensity in his buildup. Fuck. He would come soon whether he was ready or not. He wanted to make it last, but fuck. Keith felt incredible, pressed underneath his body.

It was Keith that came first. Muffled moan no longer muffled. Lance felt Keith tense around him, around his cock, and it just encouraged him. Made him go harder and draw out Keith’s voice and body quivers, and feel those fingers grip so tightly around Lance’s. He extracted his fingers, listening to Keith’s gasping breath. He took Keith’s waist in his hands and pulled him up as Lance went up on his knees, hinging Keith’s body so he was bent like a lopsided table top and perfectly positioned to receive Lance.
Gripping Keith’s hips, Lance lost himself as his orgasm demanded he chase it. He forgot to be quiet because the noise added to his pleasure now. The creak of the bed, the slap of their bodies, Lance’s moans flowing freely.

Keith took his one hand off the bed and grabbed his own cock and began pumping, muttering Lance’s name. He was gripped so tight around him and Lance wondered if Keith was coming again or still coming from the first time.

Either way it was a marvel. Either way it was inspiring. Lance tipped over the edge himself, pounding harder into Keith, wanting to ride out his wave this way.

He was coming in Keith’s ass. Again. Fuck, it felt like nothing else.

“Ke-eith,” moaned Lance, his hips stuttering. Keith’s body reacted to every little movement. Keith was right there with him, letting him fill him up, his voice a tired and raspy mess of deep gasps.

Still Keith pushed himself up, surprising Lance as he rested his back against Lance’s chest and turned his cheek to kiss him over his shoulder.

Lance’s arms went from gripping Keith’s hips (pretty sure he left bruises) to wrapping his arms around Keith’s front as he continued indulging in that blissful kiss. Lance released and went to nuzzle Keith’s neck.

“That was a better end than before,” confessed Lance.

“Why? Cause you’re not freaking out this time?” asked Keith.

“I didn’t freak out,” said Lance, squeezing tighter around Keith’s waist. Fuck. He was still inside Keith and now they were arguing. But it was playful.

“You’re kinda squeamish with all this gay shit,” said Keith.

“Aren’t,” argued Lance. “I’m all about the gay… I mean, not to say I’m gay.”

“See,” pressed Keith.

“Not squeamish,” countered Lance. He was super tempted to tickle Keith right now, but man that seemed like the last thing he should do to Keith if he wanted to keep his balls attached to his body.

“Prove it,” said Keith.

“Fucking you wasn’t proof?” asked Lance, but then he noticed how Keith’s one had was held out a little bit away from his body and he figured out why and then he thought why not? Releasing Keith’s waist he grabbed Keith’s hand. He lifted the palm to his mouth and licked the cum that was pooled there. Keith’s cum.

Keith’s jaw dropped. “Dirty,” he gasped. “Look what I’m doing to you.”

“You’re turning me into you.”

“No exactly, but kinda hot.”

“You slut-me-up, I hick-a-fy you. We’ll meet somewhere in the middle.”

“Fuck. Whatever,” said Keith. He was moving now, letting Lance slip out of him and into the cold bedroom air, as he lay down on Lance’s bed. Oh! Was he staying?
“You can be me if you want to.”

“So you wanna fuck yourself,” said Lance, laying himself behind Keith, and pulling him against him so they could spoon.

“Everyone wants to fuck themselves,” said Keith. “That’s what masturbating is.”

Lance laughed then let his mouth drop against Keith’s shoulder so he could give it a kiss. “Not everyone masturbates,” said Lance with a yawn. “There’s monks, some asexuals…”

“Way to correct me on a technicality,” snorted Keith.

“Poor baby. Just wants to be right.”

“Fuck off,” said Keith. “You’re lucky I’m tired or I’d storm out of here.”

“Tired cause I fucked you so good,” snickered Lance, hugging Keith tighter. His arm was already falling asleep, but fuck it. He could always get a new one. Shiro had.

“You fuck as good as you run your mouth.”

“So really fucking good.”

“… shut up, Lance,” mumbled Keith, spinning to face him. Oh sure. He didn’t want to talk to Lance, but wanted to sleep with his forehead pressed to him.

“Night, Keith,” said Lance, kissing him.

It took them several moments to remember that they were going to sleep, not making out. It was hard to stop when kissing felt like this.

So this time Lance finally got to bask with Keith, got to cuddle him and hold him, fall asleep with him. There were so many tiny beauties to basking. There were light kisses on temples and fingers interlacing, caresses of skin that created warm fuzzies instead of hot hornies. Keith could be so soft and affectionate in the middle of the night. Lance adored this side of Keith, maybe more than sex kitten Keith. Either way they were both sublime.

This felt like the satisfying of an old craving, not a new one. The new sides of Keith he was meeting were like puzzle pieces clicking into place. The puzzle wasn’t done yet, but when Lance could see the full picture maybe he’d get some answers as to exactly what him and Keith were. What else could be missing, Lance couldn’t imagine. Until he found them, he’d relish in this piece. Cuddling with Keith was an important piece, likely a corner piece. This piece of Keith.

His Keith.

His.

Chapter End Notes

To be clear about the asexual line. Some asexuals do enjoy masturbation.

On a story note, I've decided this story is not going to fit in 5 chapters. I'm sure y'all
are upset this story will be longer ;)

BBBKxoxoxo
Chapter Four

Chapter Summary

How much wood could a cowboy chuck if a cowboy could chuck wood?

Chapter Notes

I made a smut sandwich with feels as the bread. I didn't mean to start this chapter with da feels, but da feels did flow from me.

Okay, so Keith had fucked Lance twice and slept in his bed and that was a little more than planned. So much for being distant, right? It was fine. Keith could recover from this. He just needed to make a quick exit now before his feelings took the steering wheel again and drove straight towards the exit labeled “Keith overdoes it so Lance panics and denies anything ever happened” just like the one time on the Castleship Keith had tried to get close to him. Lance had immediately shut him down and went into ‘no homo’ mode.

To be fair, Keith maybe came on too strong by following him around and dropping the words ‘bonding moment’ every five seconds. Keith wasn’t very good at peopling in those days… Still wasn’t very good, but he knew not to come on too strongly with Lance. He had to draw him out slowly like an abused animal and qualm his instincts to shower him with love and affection. Truthfully, he didn’t think Lance wanted that much, but at least the sex was great and he’d always have the memories.

Lance had gotten up at the crack of dawn to go the milk chickens or whatever the fuck farmers did at this ungodly hour. After Lance left the bed, Keith got up to shower and pack then he went to go find Lance to tell him he was off.

It was still pretty early morning, the light dim but not dark. Keith could hear birds chirping as he strode through the grass still wet with morning dew. It was still chilly enough in the morning for Keith to see his breath as he exhaled. The whole experience was so very “Earth,” and made him feel just a tiny bit sad to be leaving it behind again. It’s not like Keith had ever fully felt at home on Earth. Even as a kid he always felt a bit alien long before he discovered he was half Galra.

Most of the time Keith held a lot of contempt for Lance’s farm, something he tried to hide. It pained him to think that one of the universe’s greatest warriors had ended up on a tiny square dirt in the middle of butt fuck nowhere collecting pig eggs or whatever Lance did to pass the time. However, he did occasionally have these tiny moments of awareness when he visited where something simple like the creak of the porch swing, or the glow of a firefly, or the dance of the light filtering through the tree canopy while as the wind blew that would warm something inside Keith. In those moments he could see how someone who held a deep connection to this place could find it healing.
Second only to his disappointment in Lance’s retreat to the farm was Shiro’s retirement. Shiro wasn’t old (even if he looked it) and he was such a gifted leader. There was so much to sort out with the universe and they could’ve used Shiro’s help. But Shiro did talk openly to Keith about his PTSD and how retirement had felt like the best way for him to cope. Keith knew Lance was experiencing the symptoms of PTSD as well, but hadn’t told Keith outright.

“He’s broken, Shiro,” Keith had whispered over the phone his first night visiting Lance after the war. He’d spent a day with Lance, watching his facial expression never change from neutral. Lance had to keep asking him to repeat what he’d said or worse, would just stare off as if he hadn’t heard him speak at all. Like Lance’s body was there, but his brain was somewhere else.

“He’s not broken,” said Shiro, his voice calm on the line. “He’s growing.”

Lance planted himself at a farm and he grew. He wasn’t that tired shell Keith had seen on his first visit years ago, but he also wasn’t the same sparkling boy Keith had known in his youth. He’d grown into a third version of Lance, one that was patient and kind, who was still funny, but not over the top, one that was sexy and naïve all at once, and one that never wanted to leave this place and would change the subject the moment Keith suggested it.

“I don’t understand why we turned out so different,” said Keith, referring to his own mental state compared to Lance’s. “Why aren’t I ‘growing’?”

“You are,” replied Shiro, “But you’ve slowed down so much you don’t notice it. You got your big growth spurts out of the way long before Lance.”

“What can I do for him?”

“You’re doing everything already. You’re there. You exist.” Shiro had said goodbye right after, leaving Keith dissatisfied with the cryptic advice.

Keith spent the next several hours, no days, no weeks trying to decipher what Shiro had meant when he said Keith had already had his growth spurts. It took a long time to realize him and Lance had lived their lives in reverse. Keith had started life with just his dad in an old house in the desert and that was taken from him when he was still young. For years he had nothing at all, no family, no home, no friends, no one important to him and... no one to make him feel important. Keith never actually imagined he’d grow up and make it to adulthood. He wasn’t suicidal, he just didn’t feel like he’d make it that far, that something would end him sooner or later and life until that point was just... getting through it even if it only felt like a dream he was trapped inside. Like he had sleep paralysis and he couldn’t wake up. Worse, couldn’t interact in any meaningful way with what was around him. He felt like a ghost in his own life. Not really there. Like he forgot how to exist.

Then Shiro found him changed everything. He woke him up, taught him how exist and interact with the world. He gave him challenges and purpose. Shiro was important to him and took every opportunity to let Keith know he was important to him too. Even bigger than those things, he spoke to Keith constantly about his future, about who he would grow into. At first it felt like it was a strange hypothetical, Keith becoming a fighter pilot or an astronaut, but the more Shiro talked about it like it was a given, the more Keith could see it for himself. Even if he didn’t achieve such great things, a back up for his life started to form and before Keith could stop himself he found himself believing he had a future. He would grow up. He’d become an adult. He would keep existing.

Shiro’s reported death could’ve erased all this. Getting kicked out of the Garrison could’ve erased all this. There was a backslide for sure. Keith let go of the idea of him becoming a fighter pilot or an astronaut, but he didn’t give up on the idea of himself continuing to exist.
It was a tough year in the desert. Keith did everything he could to keep himself alive and not everything was moral. He bought a fake ID off a guy in the city. He’d use it to go to bars and flirt with men hoping they’d offer to take him home. In the morning he’d steal the cash out of their wallet. It was low, but it meant he’d get to eat. The hunger migraines needed to be avoided. They made him weak, unmotivated. Fogged up his head so he couldn’t focus on his research.

The most valuable thing Keith had learned from the Garrison was that he enjoyed a challenge. He would flunk easy classes, but earn the top marks in the hard ones because he wouldn’t bother to try unless it was difficult. If he had a problem to tackle, he had a purpose. Finding Shiro was a challenge that kept him going for that year and it paid off and nothing felt better than getting Shiro back.

Then Voltron happened. He knew this wasn’t the case for the others, but if felt like Keith’s life began the moment they left Earth’s atmosphere. Shiro and the Garrison had given Keith so much, but joining team Voltron gave him so much more. It gave him purpose with challenge after challenge. It connected him with his mother, something he never dreamed would happen. It gave him his very first family in the shape of the other Paladins. It’s where he learned to see his differences as his strengths. It’s where he learned to support others, not just feel supported. It’s where he learned how to lead. And… it’s where he learned how to fall in love.

Even if Lance never returned his feelings, the experience of wanting someone romantically was something Keith never thought he’d have. Falling in love with Lance felt like this precious gift, not meant for someone like Keith. Love had this warmth and power to it that made Keith’s skin buzz every time he thought about it. It made him feel more alive than he’d ever had. Even the pain of watching Lance with someone else was a reminder that Keith had made it this far in life. He was existing and he would keep going.

The end of the war hit everyone like a tidal wave, giant and terrifying, cruel and destructive, and then retreating into the quiet. The victory of war wasn’t grand. It was scattered, broken pieces wishing to be whole, but not remembering their shape.

Maybe Keith was able to come through the end still standing because being alive had never been a given to him. Continued existence was a miracle and better yet a broken universe was a new challenge for him. He lived for the challenge, he thrived in the challenge, but Lance… Lance was debris torn away from him by the storm.

Lance had been a tiny sapling before the wave had uprooted, youthful and full of beauty. Keith had been a sturdy oak, his roots deeply planted in the friends and family he’d made after a childhood of digging in the dirt. Keith stood tall, Lance blew away… blew all the way home where he could plant himself in gentle climate and let Earth’s sun nourish him and help him grow.

Resent it if he must, but Keith would allow Lance his fertile soil and sunny days. Lance had his storm clouds, but rainy days also served to help with new growth. Maybe this was it for Lance, maybe he’d never outgrow his pot, but at least Keith could love him from afar. Love him from across the universe. He didn’t need that love back. Loving Lance was a gift. And if Shiro said it helped, he would exist for Lance too.

A thwacking sound interrupted Keith’s thoughts, reminding him of his purpose in being out here. He was supposed to be looking for Lance to say goodbye. ‘No kiss,’ he warned himself as he followed the repeating thwacking sound, ‘be distant.’ The sound was familiar, with Keith having counted himself lucky if he’d found wood to burn for warmth out in the desert. He was expecting to find Lance chopping wood. What he wasn’t expecting was the godlike sight of him actually doing it.
Keith rounded the corner of the woodshed only to full on gay freeze at the sight of the beauty before him. It was a chilly morning, but chopping wood had made Lance sweaty motivating him to remove his flannel and tie it around his waist. Still too warm in his sweat soaked t-shirt, he’d pushed up the short sleeves and tucked them into his shirt, exposing his biceps that looked better defined than usual after being used for such rigorous work.

Keith swore Lance moved in slow motion as he swung down his axe, splitting the wood on the first blow and sending the two pieces of wood shooting apart like shrapnel. The slow motion continued as Lance paused in his work, letting his axe drop to his side in one hand as the other one lifted the hem of his shirt to wipe the sweat collected on his brow while simultaneously exposing his abs.

Great. Keith had a lumberjack kink. Could he get anymore gay?

“Oh hey, Keith,” said Lance finally noticing him. His smile was brighter than the sun rising on the horizon behind him. Keith completely failed to react, his brain activity reducing to a helpless whirring sound. Confused by Keith’s lack of reaction Lance’s eye fell on the bag flung over his shoulder. For a moment Lance’s face fell, but he corrected it and in a casual tone he said, “Are you heading out?”

Time skipped forward (probably to make up for all the slow motion Keith had just experienced) and Keith found himself in Lance’s lap, kissing him wildly, completely unaware of how he got there.

So much for acting distant…

“Are you sure you gotta go?” asked Lance, pulling back from the kiss. Keith immediately pulled him back in.

“Yes,” mumbled Keith directly into Lance mouth. He’d actually completely forgotten he was supposed to be leaving. He was way too distracted by the feng shui that was happening with the orientation of their bodies. Lance was sitting on the stump he’d been using to chop wood on (Keith vaguely remembered shoving him down there.) Keith was on his lap, legs wrapped tight around him. Perfect positioning. Keith was so fucking hard and he could feel Lance was the same as it was pressing into him through his jeans. When he rolled his hips it created a bit of friction that made both of them gasp. Lance’s hands gripped his ass, encouraging Keith to just keep doing that.

“Can’t you stay a bit longer?” asked Lance, his voice strained and breathy.

Keith became frustrated with Lance’s need to talk with his mouth instead of kiss so he moved his own kissed downward. In response to Lance’s question he shook his head no, nuzzling it against his neck. It was unsafe to use verbal responses. Keith knew his mouth couldn’t be trusted in this situation. Worse yet, Keith had broken his own rule – never initiate affection with Lance, always wait for him to ask and here he’d gone and jumped him.

“Just for the morning?” asked Lance, a tiny bit of whine in his voice.

Keith shook his head no again then put his focus on tugging down the neck of Lance’s shirt so he could kiss his collarbone.

Lance gasped again then said, “An hour. Can you give me an hour?”

“Nah uh,” murmured Keith, trailing a lick up Lance’s neck. Despite his continued denial of Lance’s request for more time (this didn’t count as staying, this was just a goodbye kiss) the grinding against Lance was really doing it for him. Keith was getting close to coming just from this
alone.

“Keith,” said Lance, his hands suddenly releasing Keith’s ass and sliding up to capture his face and lift it to look at him. “Can you give me any kind of minuscule amount of extra time with you so I can at least feel like I’ve won this one?”

Keith blinked, gay panic slowing his brain down again. He swallowed, but kept his voice cool when he said, “Depends, what would you do with the extra time?”

Lance blushed. “Well, uhuhh more of this and…”

“Gotta say it, Lance,” scolded Keith, the confidence returning to his voice.

Lance had to look at the ground to say what he did next. “Well, I’d like to fuck you… but anything is nice.”

Keith unfolded himself from Lance’s lap and stood. Now it was Lance’s turn to look panicked. “Did I offend you? I’m sorry, I –“

Keith pushed a finger to Lance’s lips. “Ten minutes. I’ll give you ten minutes more.”

“That’s uh… no, ten minutes is great.” Lance brightened. “To be clear though, in that time –“

“I want you to fuck me,” confirmed Keith.

“Great! That’s great,” said Lance, apparently unable to stop saying the word ‘great.’ He placed his hands on his knees and pushed himself to standing. “Thank you,” added Lance, so formal and awkward all of a sudden. Keith ate it up.

Lance took Keith’s arm and went to step in the direction of the house, but Keith stood his ground. “What are you doing?” asked Keith.


“You are greatly overestimating the amount that can be accomplished in ten minutes.” Keith went about untying Lance’s flannel from around his waist as he said this. When it was off he threw it to the ground to make it very clear to Lance how this was going be. Quick and dirty. Just how Keith liked it.

The urgency of the situation seemed to dawn on Lance and light a fire under him. He went to undo Keith’s fly as Keith did the same for him. Keith reached a hand into Lance’s jeans and pawed at him as Lance rested his hands on Keith’s hips and used them to back him up. His ass knocked against a jagged and hard resistance. Keith released his grip from Lance and turned his body to face the pile of wood stacked as high as his chest. These were the fruits of Lance’s daily early morning labour. This is what got his arms so damn ripped. And this was where Lance was going to fuck him.

Keith leaned his folded arms on the shrine to Lance’s biceps and bent his body forward. Lance tugged at Keith’s jeans and underwear, pulling them down past his hips and exposing his bare ass to the cool morning air. Keith shivered, maybe from the chill of the wind or the anticipation.

“I’ll warm you up, baby. Don’t worry,” murmured Lance and Keith believed him.

Keith heard the scuffle as Lance dropped down to his knees. He felt Lance’s strong, calloused hands spread open his cheeks. A wet lick between them had Keith biting his lip, trying not to
moan.

“We don’t have time for that,” scolded Keith. On one hand he’d love to have Lance eat him out, but on the other he was so ready to get fucked.

Lance reached into Keith’s pocket and retrieved the lube he knew would be there. Keith could’ve packed it in his duffle, but really it was time he faced the fact that he was going to fuck Lance at any given opportunity no matter the message it sent.

Lance’s slicked fingers and entered Keith, swirling around, pressing just a bit where Keith liked it. “You’re so loose already,” mumbled Lance.

“Cause you fucked me good just a few hours ago,” Keith reminded him.

“You ready for me now?”

“Fuck yeah, I’m ready,” confirmed Keith. Keith peaked over his shoulder so he could catch Lance’s eye. He loved seeing the grin on that boy’s face. Loved watching him pull that nice cock out and rub it up and down with lube. Lance was moaning just from his prep. Damn, he was sensitive. “Don’t waste it,” warned Keith. He wanted everything thrust of that cock for himself.

Lance smirked. What the hell was that reaction? “Do you really want it?”

“You’re wasting your time away,” warned Keith.

“Maybe I’ll just run out the clock touching myself and leave you literally blowing in the wind.”

“You’re gonna make me beg for it, aren’t you?” growled Keith.

“About time you did the asking. You came on to me to this time, didn’t you?” Lance was being so fucking cruel and Keith hated it… but also completely loved it.

“Please,” whined Keith, arching his back to pop his ass out further. “I want that big fat cock of yours inside my tiny little asshole.” Lance really didn’t want to compete for dirty talk. He wasn’t going to win against Keith.

Case in point, Lance was now blushing like crazy. “Yeah uh… I’ll…”

Keith turned his face away to let Lance properly compose himself. He was then treated to the feeling of Lance’s cock pressing between his check, rubbing against his entrance. Keith almost snapped at him that he was running low on time (but then it’s not like Keith had started a timer. Ten minutes would be however long Keith decided he wanted it to be… likely as long as it took him to come while wrapped around Lance’s cock,” but then he felt Lance push into him.

“Ah fuck,” mumbled Keith, dropping his forehead against his folded arms. Even though they’d already fucked twice, the size of Lance was still a surprise.

“Okay?” asked Lance, not moving.

“So fucking good,” purred Keith. “Your cock fills me up so nice, Lance.”

Keith wasn’t facing him, but he knew Lance had proud smile on his face. Lance was a good boy. Keith was so lucky this good boy wanted to do bad things with him.

Lance began moving inside Keith, snapping his hips forward then rolling them back teasingly slow. He folded himself over so he could kiss between Keith’s shoulder blades while he loved him
so good.

“Is it just me?” whispered Lance, breathy as all hell, “Or did things just get a little Broke Back Mountain here?”

Keith grimaced. Fuck Lance was a dork, but he was his dork. One with a cock buried so deep in his ass he swore he could feel it knocking against his teeth.

Lance hummed in Keith’s ear as he gripped his hips and fucked him nice and slow. “Keith… why can’t I -?”

Keith snapped up. He reached back his hands and locked them tightly around Lance’s wrists, causing the boy to gasp. “I fucking swear, Lance, if the next words out of your mouth are ‘quit you’ I will flip you over my shoulder while clenching my cheeks so hard that your dick snaps off. Understood?”

Lance’s gulp was audible. “Understood. Sorry. No cheese while we fuck. Note taken.”

“Now,” said Keith, relaxing his grip and resuming his position of leaning onto the woodpile. “Why won’t you be a good little hick and fuck me into the fire wood already?”

“Yes, sir,” agreed Lance then thought better of it. “I mean, yes Keith.”

“That’s a good boy,” Keith reassured him. He didn’t want to get mean with Lance. He just wanted to be loving with him, but he would not put up with that Broke Back Mountain shit.

Even if Lance was nervous, he couldn’t resist moving inside Keith. He thrust into him, every movement feeling incredible to Keith. He was so full of Lance, it was just divine.

“Oh Keith,” gasped Lance, his thrusts speeding up.

Keith moaned in response. “Yes, like that.”

“Feels so good right now,” moaned Lance. “You always feel good, but right now… ah fuck. I wanna go harder.”

“Do it,” agreed Keith, “Fuck me harder.”

“Oh,” groaned Lance as he pounded into Keith, rocking his body so it rubbed against the grain of the wood he was resting against.

Keith squeezed his eyes shut and clenched his teeth because the sensation was intense as it rolled through him in waves that overlapped. He had no idea Lance had this in him and he wanted so badly to tell him how good he was, but he couldn’t form word right now, only let out sputtered moans. Fuck, he was going to come soon. He was going to hurt later, but he would come soon.

“Kei-” Lance bit back on his name like he was going trying to blurt something out and hold it back at the same time. All the while fucking Keith into the side of the woodpile. “— so lucky — you — ah!”

The word ‘lucky’ made Keith snap open his eyes. Lance was moaning and rolling his hips slower and slower, coming inside of him, but Keith had lost his focus on that word. What had Lance tried to say/not say?

“Babe…,” mumbled Lance’s spent voice as he dropped his chin onto Keith’s shoulder. Lance’s
hand reached into the waistband of Keith’s underwear, pulling his still hard cock out completely and rubbing it. “Lemme…”

“Mmmm,” moaned Keith, the new pleasure pulling him out of his own head and back into the moment. He could feel Lance’s still hard cock twitching inside of him.

“Do you like it?” asked Lance, pausing to lick from the base of Keith’s neck up to the back of his ear. There he stopped and whispered, “When I come inside of you.” Keith shuddered against Lance’s touch. Fuck. Now that he was all high from coming, Lance was suddenly good at dirty talk. “Did you?” pressed Lance, pumping Keith’s cock just a little harder.

Ah, so verbal answers would be required. Fair enough. Keith had tortured Lance in much the same way. “Fucking loved it,” purred Keith because Lance wasn’t going to rattle him. Not even a little. “Love being all filled up with cock and cum.”

Lance’s cock gave a big twitch inside of him. If Keith wasn’t careful he’d rile Lance up all over again, which he knew his asshole wasn’t up for.

“What should we do with yours,” asked Lance, his voice a hiss in Keith’s ear. His hand cupped around the head of Keith’s leaking cock and rolled it in his palm, getting it nice and slick.

“Whatever you want,” answered Keith, his voice barely more than an exhale of breath because it all felt so damn good. “I’ll come anywhere…ah… as long as it’s you…”

Keith lost it right then and there, bowing forward, his knees giving out. Lance’s firm grip on his hip kept him standing while his semi-hard dick twitched inside him and big hand coaxed that cum out of him. It spurted on the firewood in short surges as Keith moaned Lance’s name.

Keith had to take several gulps of air while still buckled over. His whole body was humming from coming and his head felt thick and happy.

However, moment Keith’s head started to clear he felt a shock of worry that he’d over shared and made his feelings too clear. He suddenly felt so vulnerable, but that’s when Lance’s strong arms wrapped around his front and steadied him, calmed him. He pulled him up against his chest, still inside Keith, and held him like that while painting light kisses on his shoulders.

Lance was so sweet it made Keith’s heart hurt. Every time they were together Keith felt less and less prepared for how he’d feel after.

“Keith,” said Lance, low and quiet, a bit of hesitance in his voice, “I’m sorry if –“

“You’re sorry?” gasped Keith. Oh no, what was he sorry for? Not feeling the same?

“I’m sorry if I was pig there,” finished Lance, his voice shrinking.

“What?” snapped Keith. “No, you weren’t.”

“Okay,” said Lance. A pause then he added, “I just worry I’m going to over step with you. You’re being so kind to me and giving me things I didn’t think anyone would ever want to share with me.”

“No, Lance, that’s crazy. Anyone would be so lucky to –” Keith caught himself. His head and his heart were too much of a jumble now to risk speaking like this. That word ‘lucky’ was loaded.
“I just haven’t felt – “ Lance stopped himself too, probably not doing much better for coming up with words than Keith. “I’m saying this wrong. I just want you to know I’m grateful.”

Fuck. Don’t do this, Lance. Keith could feel his eyes welling up. He’d been so concerned that Lance was starved for attention and praise that he had never taken stock of himself and how he’d never had anyone love – “I need a shower,” blurted out Keith. Wow. That time he’d cut his own thoughts off. He was getting damn good at avoidance.

“Oh,” said Lance, his hug loosening a bit, like he was suddenly not so sure if he was supposed to release or not.

“Then I have to go.” Okay, Keith could hear himself and he was mad at how distant he was being. He’d shut himself down somehow and now his heart and his brain weren’t connecting anymore.

“Um, my family will be getting up around now,” said Lance, taking a step back as he unfolded himself from Keith. Keith felt cold.

“So?” asked Keith, turning around to challenge Lance.

“So you probably shouldn’t go in there looking like you do.”

“How do I -?”

“Completely fucked out,” responded Lance with a wince.

“Well, I’m not getting in my ship with your cum dripping from my asshole,” said Keith, folding his arm stubbornly.

Lance laughed at him, warm and genuine, shifting the whole mood once again. “No, we can’t have that. Follow me. I have an idea.”

“Ugh,” groaned Keith, “This has ‘hick idea’ written all over it.”

*****

“Okay, in three, two, o-”

“I don’t need a countdown,” protested Keith, “I’m not a toddler.”

“Okay, but if you hadn’t stopped me I would be done by now, but also you do need a countdown because you need to brace yourself properly.”

“I’ll be fine,” snapped Keith, “Just do it whenever.”

“Maybe I didn’t stress this enough, but the water from this hose is sourced from the very depths of the artic ocean.” Lance held the dripping garden hose up as he did a Vanna White arm sweep to display it like the novelty it was. “It might even be run off from the ice caps.”

“How is that possible?” asked Keith, very naked and very fed up. He shifted his bare feet on the grass.

“It’s completely impossible and I can’t believe you took me seriously. I was only trying to give you an idea of the kind of cold you’re in for.”

“Lance, for two years I bathed myself daily in a pond formed out of moisture collected from the vacuum of space on the back of a whale. I think can handle the drippy ass hose you keep behind
the barn.” Keith turned around and spread open his bare cheeks.

“Uhhhh, you sure you want me to directly start with that area?” asked Lance. “Shouldn’t I maybe start with a less sensitive body part so you can acclimatize yourself to the lower temp –?”

“Just spray me already!” barked Keith, looking over his shoulder.

“Fine! Three… two…”

“No countdown!”

Lance let it rip, twisting on the hose and pointing the spray right on target. As soon as the water hit Keith he screamed and bolted away from. “That’s so fucking cold!” cried Keith, dancing in place.

“Why didn’t you warn me?!?”

“I did! I warned you so much!” cried Lance, feeling so guilty. “I’m sorry, Keith…”

“Yeah, you better be sorry,” agreed Keith, but he had this wicked grin on his face that didn’t match how miserably cold he was which meant… Keith darted forward. Lance immediately guessed what he was planning, but Keith was so damn fast, he was powerless to stop him from yanking the hose out of Lance’s hands and turning it on him.

“Oh fucking hell no!” screamed Lance as the frigid water hit him in the chest. His immediately reaction was to run like hell so he did with Keith cackling with laughter and chasing after him, spraying him in the back as he ran. Finally Lance got out of the hose’s range.

“Get back here!” demanded Keith.

“No! We’re even,” protested Lance

“We’re not even until I stick this down the back of your pants,” growled Keith.

“Shouldn’ta said that.”

“Wh -?” but Keith didn’t get to finish the word, because Lance pounced on him, grabbing higher on the hose and twisting it so the frosty blast hit Keith instead. “Agh!” growled Keith, but he didn’t run away this time, just gritted his teeth until he was able to grab Lance by his arm and force him to turn the hose back on himself.

“Fuck you’re strong!” gasped Lance as the icy spray hit him in the chest. He had one move at this point. He let go of the hose and let it gush wildly between them.

“Fuck! Lance!” shrieked Keith, as the spray hit him in the face, but he was laughing. Lance was laughing so hard he couldn’t stop. At least not until Keith swept his leg and knocked Lance on his back, partially knocking the wind out of him. Lance didn’t even have time to recover before Keith was on him, pinning him properly and grinning. “Ha! Still can’t beat me.”

“Ugh, don’t make me do it,” groaned Lance.

“Do what?”

“The one move I have that’ll completely disarm you.”

“No move exists and you know –” Keith was interrupted as Lance thrust his neck up and crashed his lips into his. Keith relented almost immediately, his grip loosening on Lance’s wrists, his body melting on top of him, turning to putty in his arms. This was supposed to be a ruse so Lance could
flip Keith over and escape, it wasn’t supposed to turn Lance on, but then… Keith was naked on top of him.

Now the only reason to move was to roll them so Lance could get on top of him (and maybe take up Keith’s offer to let him fuck him in the dirt?) but then as they were flipping positions Lance hitched his knee up a little too high.

“Ah!” cried Keith collapsing in on himself and curling into the fetal position.

Oh fuck. Lance had forgotten Keith’s balls had been out, all exposed and vulnerable and he’d gone and kneed him right… Lance’s own balls ached out of sympathy. “Oh Keith, no, I’m so sorry.” But Keith was just moaning in pain. “Shit, Keith, don’t die!”

“Why the fuck was that your move? Fucking low,” growled Keith.

“That wasn’t my move!” squeaked Lance. “The kiss was my move! Kneeing you in the balls was a total accident!”

“You have to think of these things with a guy,” snarled Keith.

“I know. I’m learning. I’m sorry.” Ugh. Lance had never felt so guilty in his life.

“Good,” said Keith, rolling to his knees then suddenly giving Lance a playful shove that landed him on his back.

Keith popped up to standing, leaving Lance in the mud. He strode over to the hose that had been tossed aside and was leaking into the grass. Keith then used it to soothe his ballsack, jumping up and down while enduring the mix cold and the pain. He then went about using the hose to wash off the mud he’d collected on his skin, wincing the whole time at the sub-artic temperature of the water.

Lance sat himself up and just watched the show. He liked the way Keith’s muscles flexed as he moved and the way the water beaded on his skin. Keith was really attractive and he wondered to himself, not for the first time, why it had taken him so long to notice. But then, he had always seen Keith as good looking and that’s part of why he’d been so jealous of him. If only he’d realized Keith’s looks could be appreciated rather than resented. If only he could go back in time and smack younger Lance on the back of the head and shout, “You fool! You don’t want to be him, you want to be with him!”

Keith moved the nozzle to his head, shaking out his hair as the water rinsed through it. Lance swore Keith was moving in slow motion, especially when he bent himself forward then whipped his head back, doing the full on mermaid hair flip to shake off the excess water.

“What?” asked Keith, noticing Lance was full on gaping at him.

“You so pretty,” squeaked Lance, hugging his knees tight to his chest.

Keith gave him the most ‘I’m done’ look then turned the hose on him to spray him with a quick blast as punishment. Lance shrieked with surprise then laughed. That was the second compliment today that he’d given Keith that he’d full on rejected. Lance was probably wording them wrong. Or maybe Keith was just being Keith and throwing up his walls at a moment’s notice.

“C’mon,” said Keith, holding a hand out to Lance. “Time for a real goodbye.”

Getting clothes on wet was no easy task so Lance offered Keith his flannel because at least the
inside wasn’t muddy and Keith towed off with that, all the while shivering.

Keith decided to put on his Blade suit since it would heat him automatically when his body temperature was too low. After a shower with that hose he’d be as frozen as the inside of the fish sticks Lance made the first time he’d attempted to cook. Encino man had nothing on Keith and those fish sticks.

Lance whistled in appreciation as soon as Keith was dressed in his suit. Dayum that boy could pull of black. Keith gave him an annoyed look like he always did when Lance flirted at the wrong moment. Lance couldn’t help it, flirting kept him distracted from the fact that Keith was really leaving.

“So,” began Lance as they stood at the entrance to Keith’s ship, “Best visit ever?”

Keith chuckled and Lance was happy to see he’d broken the tension. So now what? Did Lance kiss Keith goodbye? Were they even ‘like that?’

“Earlier,” said Keith, shifting on his feet, “You tried to tell me you were grateful for me and I acted like an ass and changed the subject.”

“Oh well…” said Lance, blushing, “That was maybe on me.”

“No, it’s wasn’t. I’m not good with taking compliments. You know me. You probably know me better than anyone.” Lance raised his eyebrows at that. So Keith really believed Lance knew him best? “I can be really closed off and I don’t mean to be, I just…”


“I wanted to say thank you,” said Keith, “for saying that. Sorry I couldn’t appreciate it before.”

“It’s okay,” said Lance, “I know you like to take your time and… you don’t ever have to worry with me. We’re always good. Anytime that we weren’t is long in the past. So just… take your time.”

“Yeah,” said Keith, offering up his hand so Lance could grasp it like their typical goodbye. “You too. Take your time.” Lance raised his eyebrow, unsure what Keith meant.

Keith didn’t let go and neither did Lance and finally Lance said fuck it by pulling Keith into a proper hug. Handshakes just weren’t enough anymore. “Come back soon, okay?” said Lance, unable to keep the sadness out of his voice.

“Okay,” agreed Keith, his voice soft.

“Keith… can I kiss you goodbye?”

“Lance, what am I always saying?”

“I dunno, probably repeating something Shiro told you like ‘patience yields focus’ or whatever.”

“No, I’m always saying you just need to ask.” Keith tipped his chin and kissed Lance. This was one of those warm and fuzzy kisses that spread heat in his chest instead of his groin.

Keith broke it off and stepped back. Their fingertips were the last thing to part. “Be safe out there,” said Lance as he watched Keith climb into the ship. “And if you ever need anything from me…”

“Exist,” said Keith, simply which caught Lance off guard. “Just exist. That’s all.”
Keith shut the hatch and Lance retreated so he was far out of his way as the ship took off. He hugged his arms across his chest as he walked back to the house, squinting into the sun that was so low in the sky.

Knowing he was dirty, Lance came in through the mudroom so he could kick off his boots. He could smell his mom making breakfast in the adjoining kitchen, getting it ready so the whole family would come downstairs and share their first meal of the day together.

“Dios mio,” gasped his mother, spotting the mud on Lance’s clothes. “Don’t you come in here with that.”

“I’ll walk straight to my room,” promised Lance.

“Don’t you dare. Strip it off so I can take it to the laundry machine. I do not want you tracking mud all through my house.”

“Ugh,” moaned Lance, pulling off his shirt. This was embarrassing.

“Keith not staying for breakfast?” asked his mom, stirring the oatmeal.

“He just left.”

“Sounded like you two were having fun out there.” Lance died. He choked and died. “I haven’t heard you laugh like that in years.” Oh thank the ancients she’d overheard them playing with the hose and not chopping wood. Honestly, both sounded like euphemisms for sex. “Will he visit again soon?”

“Maybe,” said Lance, pulling down his jeans. “I hope so.”

“Anytime he wants just let me know. He’s always welcome. I’ll just get Rachel to give him his room and sleep with the twins.” Oof. Rachel hated that.

“Actually,” said Lance, his mouth running ahead of him. “I think Keith will just stay in my room next time.” Fuuuuuuck did he just say that?

“Okay,” said his mom, moving to start the coffee.

“You’re good with that?” asked Lance, untrusting.

“Less laundry for me if I don’t have to change the bedding.”

Wow. Okay. That was easy, but… “Mom, do you think Dad would be okay with it?”

“Of course,” said Mom. “Keith is one of Papi’s favourite… visitors.” The way she said visitors was very knowing. “In fact, I think the whole family enjoys Keith as a… visitor.”

Lance felt so warm inside, he couldn’t stop himself. He strode across the kitchen and hugged his mom in his underwear and all.

“Hey,” said his mom, swatting him with a spatula. “You’re too dirty for that. Go have a shower before breakfast.”

“Si mamá,” said Lance, turning to dart out the kitchen and up the stairs before any of his siblings questioned why he had no clothes on.

“Oh and mio,” said his mom in a voice that caused Lance to freeze in the doorway. “Next time
when Keith sleeps in your room, make sure you are quiet at night. It’s more respectful to the family.”

Lance blushed so hard he was pretty sure his mom could see the red on his back. His mom had heard him having sex? And maybe more of his family had overhead him too? They’d heard him having sex with Keith… but were also okay with it being Keith? At least that was something.

“Will do,” said Lance, twisting to give her a salute because he was an awkward dorky mess, but his family was at least used to it by now. Then he sprinted up the stairs and darted into the bathroom, cutting Rachel off.

“Hey! Lance!” she cried, pounding on the door. “I was here first!”

“Then why aren’t you inside?” countered Lance. He heard her scream and stomp off.

Lance’s heart was racing and his head was filled with so many thoughts and his body was stretched between so many feelings. He was proud and embarrassed and excited and scared and happy and lonely at once. He didn’t know if he’d ever felt this mixed up before, but he knew that it was Keith’s fault and that wasn’t a bad thing.

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Keith didn’t have an easy time processing the weekend. He’d had such an amazing time with Lance, but he’d also managed to drop so many of his cards on the table. The scariest thing about being with Lance was his defenses kept dropping and he’d start spilling all these hints about his feelings and then, for no reason, his walls would just snap back into place, usually at the moment that would be most offensive to Lance. And yet…

Lance didn’t seem offended or scared off. He was even happier than he’d seen him since he’d lost…

More so still, as Keith didn’t think he’d ever seen Lance this happy. Usually back in the Voltron days Lance would swing between being happy and having something stuck in his craw. Could Keith actually make Lance happy? Or, more likely, the boy had just discovered sex for the first time in his life and he was giddy and high off of that.

Now what? Visits weren’t going to be the same. They’d crossed a line. Of course Keith figured if he told Lance he wanted to cut off his benefits, he would accept it. The problem was there was no way Keith could cut himself off from Lance. Not when he was right in front of him.

So does Keith stay away?

Or does he go back? What would that look like? Would Lance want to keep going? Or would a cooling off period change his mind again? Would he decide a relationship was too big a thing for his small, post-war world? Or… would he decide a relationship with a boy wasn’t something he’d ever wanted and therefore would call it off…

What’s the worst that could happen? That was easy. Lance would deny it had ever happened. Yeah, Keith had walls, but Lance had his too and they were ten feet thick and made of iron and they had blocked Keith out on more than one occasion… but…

That had been the first version of Lance. This was third version Lance and he was a lot more thoughtful than the first. He wasn’t reactive. He was introspective. He took his time.

Maybe he was the kind of person that could unabashedly fall for Keith given time. Time was their
great divider really though. Keith was more than half a decade into his feelings and, if Keith had read this weekend right and wasn’t delusional, Lance was just opening up to the idea of feelings. So far behind…

Ugh and Keith had experienced two more years of time than Lance! All the while falling deeper in love despite their separation! If only Keith could stick Lance in the quantum abyss and let him out only when he was good and in love with Keith.

What a terrible fantasy. Keith was the worst. He needed to stay away from Lance… at least long enough to make it seem like Keith was all easy breezy with what had happened and wasn’t so fucking desperate to see his face again that he could barely focus on his mission. Which was bad since his it involved infiltrating a rogue Galra base and by base, Keith meant planet. Worse yet, the Warlord in charge had taken hostages the moment she’d discovered Blades were on planet.

However, lives being at stake didn’t stop Keith from obsessively thinking about Lance and longing for Lance and replaying everything they did together like his brain was a porno theatre with a seat for one…

Don’t get a boner in a blade suit. It’s crazy uncomfortable.

It was inevitable that Keith would snap. The moment he couldn’t stand it anymore he turned to Acxa and said, “Cool, so you got this from here? Cause I’m gonna take off.” Which was a fucking dumb thing to ask seeing as they were outside the Warlord’s throne room door, him and Acxa on one side, Zethrid and Ezor flanking the other, and they were just about to kick in said door and get into a fire fight while avoiding hitting the hostages.

Which is why it was a weird when Acxa responded with, “Yes! Just go!” Keith hadn’t heard that right...

“You sure?”

“Yes!” hissed Acxa. “It’s not like you’ve been present for any of the mission so far. Yesterday you almost knifed Ezor and when I told you to stop, you told me where to find the bathroom. You’re so scattered it’s like you have the space flu. You clearly left your brain back on that farm so yes, just go and don’t come back until you get your fuck together.” And yes, the expression was ‘get your shit together’ however, Keith had taught the lesbians Earth swears (which they loved,) but they always got them mixed up and Keith was far too amused by it to correct them. Plus Lance loved hearing stories of all the mixed up things they’d said when he visited him.

“You are amazing. Thank you,” said Keith, which made Acxa scowl because 1. He never talked that way and 2. She was just as good at taking a compliment as he was.

“Just shitting go,” she said as Ezor gave them the all clear to bust in.

Then Acxa was inside, screaming and firing away before Keith could say a proper goodbye. He didn’t care. He was sprinting the other way, overhearing Zethrid say in the distance, “I’m gonna bitch you up, mothercockers!”

Ohhh he was going to tell Lance that one the moment he landed!

Keith didn’t know if this was okay, showing up like this. He’d been in far too remote a region of space to have contact with Earth so he couldn’t he shoot Lance the “I’m coming over now if that’s okay” message until after he’d passed through the wormhole to see Earth in all it’s Lance-containing glory before him.
Keith landed his ship in the field he usually parked in while so many doubts ran through his brain.

What if this was too sudden?

What if dropping in unannounced made him seem rude? Or worse, desperate?

What if Lance didn’t want to see him?

He was anxious wreck as he climbed out of ship, half wondering if he should just turn and go.

“KEITH!”

Keith whipped his head towards the porch where Lance was waving at him. Keith wanted to tamper down his smile, but he couldn’t. He couldn’t hide the way the sight of Lance lit him up.

Lance put one hand on the porch bannister and used it to launch himself over the side and take off at a run towards Keith.

Then Keith was running, running to Lance and as he got closer he could see that huge grin on Lance’s face and all fears of not being welcome evaporated.

They collided in a hug, twisting around and squeezing each other, holding each other so tight.

“Keith,” said Lance, his voice directly in his ear. Keith waited for him to demand an explanation for his sudden return less than week ever after he’d left. “I told you not to stay away too long and now look –“

“I know –“

“You took forever to come back.”

“What?” gasped Keith, the accusation catching him off guard. “I was gone five days.”

“Way too long,” said Lance, holding him tighter.

“You’re right. I took forever,” said Keith, laughing. “Please don’t be mad.”

“I’m livid,” said Lance, looking at Keith and brushing a thumb across his cheekbone. “Can’t you tell?” and then he was kissing Keith and Keith’s heart was bursting because the whole thing was like a damn movie. Like he was the soldier returning home from war to find his love waiting for him.

“Sorry,” said Keith again after the kiss broke off because he was sorry. Sorry for doubting Lance. For thinking he’d shut down on him and push him away. He should’ve known that the person he loved was the best kind of people.

“Don’t be,” said Lance. “I’m just so glad you’re home.”
Chapter Five

Chapter Summary

Lance's been waiting, show your hands
Let's get dirty, that's Keith's jam
He need that, uh, to get him off
Sweat until his Blade suit come off

Chapter Notes

This time I sandwiched feels with smut. You're welcome.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“C’mon,” said Lance, tugging Keith’s hand and pulling him towards the house.

“But your family…,” began Keith, because he really wanted to have sex right now and that meant hayloft and sex blanket.

“They all went to town,” said Lance, “We have a few hours.”

All of them went to town… together? That’s convenient.

The next couple minutes were a blur as they ran to the porch then through the house to find themselves in Lance’s bedroom. Lance used Keith’s body to slam the door shut by backing him into it as he kissed him.

“Sorry,” mumbled Keith.

“Why?” asked Lance, barely taking a break from kissing Keith, making it hard for him to explain.

“Haven’t shaved since I left here. I’m all stubble.”

“I don’t mind,” said Lance, continuing to kiss him, but then he pulled back. “Well, it’s rough as sandpaper and it sucks little, but I can roll with it.”

“I can shave,” suggested Keith, reaching for the doorknob.

“Nope. I can’t wait for that.” Lance was searching Keith’s Blade suit with his hands like he was trying to figure out how it came off.

“I haven’t showered or slept in days,” warned Keith. “I’m a gross mess. You should at least let me shower first.”

“I can’t wait for that either,” insisted Lance. “I don’t care what you’re like. I still want you.” Lance’s hands were still searching and Keith had to laugh.
“Here,” he said, turning so he could show Lance the release. With his index finger on each hand he touched the glowing buttons along his spine. The suit automatically split open along that glowing line and expanded so Keith could slide it down and step out.

“Alien tech man…,” muttered Lance, watching Keith undress. “So you really don’t wear underwear in that thing?”

“You saw me put the suit on,” said Keith, getting defensive.

“Yeah, but I thought you just didn’t have any clean underwear to put on first.” Lance stepped up to Keith and gave his shoulder a sniff.

“What are you doing?” demanded Keith.

“Just expected you to smell rubbery or at least bad considering how you were talking. You smell like nothing.”

“The suit whisks away sweat and keeps my skin clean,” explained Keith, “But… it’s not the same as having a shower.”

“How about I shower you with affection?” suggested Lance, pulling the now naked Keith up against himself and kissing him.

“Cheesy,” snorted Keith, but also yes please.

Keith pulled off Lance’s shirt, inhaling the smell of fresh sweat, hay, and a hint of the tropical body soap he uses. Hands on his hips, Lance backed him up against the bed and lay him down. Lance dropped to his knees and spread open Keith’s legs then took his semi-hard cock his hand and licked it, bringing Keith to full hardness in a few licks. Lance took Keith’s cock into his mouth.

This was new… Not that Keith was complaining. He was swallowing back moans as he watched Lance bob shallow on his cock. Fuck, what a pretty sight.

Lance pulled off with a pop. “You gotta tell me if I’m doing this wrong.”

“You’re doing it perfect,” said Keith.

“Then why are you watching me like you don’t trust me?”

“I’m admiring the view,” said Keith as Lance went back to licking him. “Seeing you suck my cock is at the top of my bucket list.”

“Be honest,” said Lance, pumping Keith’s cock with his hand, “How many times do I appear on that bucket list?” Keith felt his face flush red. Lance was basically his entire bucket list. “Oh, a lot,” snickered Lance, guessing by Keith’s face.

“How ‘bout I just tell you as we knock the items off?” offered Keith.

Lance grinned then pulled Keith’s cock back into his mouth, taking a bit too much for his virgin throat and giving a little gag. Even the gags were hot. Everything was working for Keith. He felt so sensitive. He hadn’t jerked off once while he was gone despite having a head full of sexy memories of Lance.

With one hand Lance reached out and brought the lube out from under his bed. He spread a
generous amount on his index and middle fingers then pressed those two inside Keith. The twin sensations of fingers dipping in his asshole while Lance sucked his cock was driving Keith crazy. And soon those fingers would be replaced by Lance’s big cock. The anticipation of it pushed Keith over the edge and he was suddenly coming into Lance’s mouth and moaning and gripping tight on those fingers inside him.

When the orgasm subsided, Keith felt a bit concerned that he hadn’t warned Lance it was coming. It was his first blowjob after all, but there was Lance happily lapping away the excess from Keith’s cock. Fuck, he was something special.

“So I did good?” asked Lance.

“No, I always come when I hate it,” said Keith, sarcastically.

“You must really hate me,” teased Lance, rolling that ‘r’ in ‘really’ then giving Keith a big grin.

“Let’s test that theory,” said Keith, sitting up to undo Lance’s pants for him since his fingers had lube on them.

Lance’s Altean marks weren’t solely on his cheekbones. They existed on other parts of his body as thin strips of blue on his thighs, arms and hips bones. So pale they were easily mistaken for prominent looking veins rather than alien markings. Keith usually ignored them if he spotted them, the marks bringing up old feelings of hurt for him and Lance never wanted them brought up anyway. But the other night, when they’d had sex in the dark, Keith had seen those marks glowing like pathways pointing to Lance’s treasure. He’d seen beauty in it and he hoped to see it again soon.

“Missed you so much,” said Keith, pulling out Lance’s cock and giving it a light rub.

“Did you just say that directly to my dick?” asked Lance with a laugh.

“Maybe,” hummed Keith.

Lance shook his head. “I don’t know what to do with you.”

“Yeah ya do,” said Keith, laying himself back down. Having another thought, he grabbed a pillow and dropped it on the ground. “Protect your knees.”

“Okay,” said Lance, a little unsure. It was all new to him, but Keith was willing to teach him the tricks of the trade.

Lance placed the pillow under his knees then resumed fingering Keith, using the index and middle fingers to scissor him open.

“It’s hard waiting,” complained Lance. He was lightly stroking himself with his free hand. He wouldn’t have to wait long. Keith felt like putty, that first O had gotten him loose.

“Go for it, baby,” murmured Keith.

“You sure?”

“Give me that good dick.”

Lance paused. “Good not great?”

“For fuck’s sake Lance!” snapped Keith.
“Kidding,” said Lance, already spreading lube over his dick. Then he positioned himself and pushed into Keith, moaning with the sensation. Keith let out a gasp. He’d somehow managed to forget how big Lance was even he’d just been speaking directly to his dick. “Good to move?” asked Lance, always so thoughtful.

“Move however feels right,” said Keith, all breathy. How many times over the last five days had he fantasized about letting Lance just go crazy on him? Yet Lance managed to surprise him by gripping behind his knees and yanking in towards him, giving him that extra inch to bottom him out and fill him up completely. “Ah,” gasped Keith.

“Good?” asked Lance, this time he seemed more pleased than concerned.

“So good,” mumbled Keith.

Now Lance was just fucking grinning as he started to move, rolling his hips and increasing his speed steadily. Thank the wood maker who made Lance’s bed frame at exactly the right height for this treat of a position. Lance felt so fucking good and he loved watching his face as moved inside him.

“Fuck Keith,” mumbled Lance. “When you look at me like that you almost make me -”

“Do it,” growled Keith as Lance rocked his body. “Come inside me. Fill me up.”

“Fuck Keith,” groaned Lance, dropping his face down to kiss Keith’s chest. “I’m not trying to finish that fast.”

“But I want it,” begged Keith and fuck if he wasn’t coming again already. He was so sensitive today and he was so hyped up from being back with Lance and getting that greeting from him. “Fuck Lance,” moaned Keith, gripping legs tight around Lance’s hips.

Lance pulled out before Keith had even come down yet. “Turn over,” he directed, tugging at Keith’s arm.

“’kay,” muttered Keith, very lightheaded and very much wanting to please his boy. Lance gave his butt a tap and Keith crawled forward on the bed. Fuck. He was a cow… Keith felt the bed shift as Lance crawled up behind him.

“You said I could spank you, right?” asked Lance.

Keith experienced a little shock of excitement. “Yeah,” he confirmed. “You gonna do it for real this time?”

“No one home to overhear us,” said Lance and Keith could hear the wicked in his voice.

“Mmm show me what you got,” said Keith, laying his chest down on the bed and popping his ass up.

Lance spanked him with that big, calloused farmer hand of his, connecting with a satisfying smack and a sting that made Keith’s skin buzz. “Fuck yes,” he muttered into the bedding.

“Oh, you like that?”

“Almost as much as your dick – ah!” Lance hit him again. This time on the other cheek. Symmetry was key and the sting felt so good.
Then Lance was spreading open his cheeks again and Keith felt him sink in. Keith arched his back in pleasure. He loved Lance just going for what he wanted. Then Lance just went for it, fucking Keith hard from behind. All Keith could do was grip the sheets for dear life.

Then Lance’s moves changed from pounding to rolling as Lance moaned.

“Fuck yeah, fill me up,” mumbled Keith, reaching down to pump his own cock, thinking about Lance shooting his cum into him and loving it. Fuck. Keiht was so done. He spilled his own cum onto the sheets than collapsed forward as Lance’s weight dropped on top of him. Both of them spent. Welcome home sex was definitely an amazing thing.

The weight of Lance shifted as he kissed Keith’s shoulder and up to his ear. “Hey,” whispered Lance. “Did I make you come three times in a row?”

“Yeah…,” said Keith, quietly.

“Am I just amazing or….?”

“The Galra can have cluster orgasms,” explained Keith. “I mean, I’m not full Galra and I don’t usually go back to back, but those three were probably the closest together I’ve ever managed.”

“Yeah, I mean, I’ve seen you do two pretty close, but wow,” mumbled Lance. “I feel like a fucking king right now.”

Keith snorted. Lance was such a dork and he was so hopelessly in love with him.

“I mean,” continued Lance, “I’m not even going to bother feeling insecure over how you know the Galra cluster orgasms are a thing.”

“Don’t worry about it,” said Keith, lighthearted as he adjusted himself to get nice and cozy on the bed.

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Keith fell asleep immediately after. Boy hadn’t slept in days so it was no surprise. Lance couldn’t sleep. He was way too keyed up having Keith there. He’d spent five days swinging back and forth between being thrilled over what had happened with Keith and then terrified that Keith would have a change of heart and he wouldn’t hear from him again.

It did not help that there was no way to reach Keith when he was on mission. He so often travelled out of range of Lance’s phone, which only had range to the edge of the solar system. Lance had wished he could’ve gotten some reassurance from Keith while he was away that what had happened was real and it was destined to be reoccurring. That something was starting between them and Keith felt it too.

It was a terrifying wait to hear from him again and he was never more thrilled than when he got that message that Keith was already on his way. And now here he was in the naked flesh and in all his perfection and glory. Lance was so happy just to bask in Keith as he slept.

“Can you turn those fucking things off?” mumbled Keith, half asleep.

Lance didn’t know what Keith meant until he noticed the soft blue light on Keith’s face. Lance touched his fingers to one of his cheekbones and watched the light dim. Well, that explained why Keith’s face looked so angelic. Lance’s Altean marks were glowing right on him like an instagram filter.
Lance couldn’t shut the marks off so he turned over instead so it was no longer shining on Keith’s face. Lance had known his marks could light up when he was really upset, but he’d never noticed them light up when he was happy. Keith had never mentioned them doing so. Of course Keith never mentioned them at all, which is what Lance wanted. He wished he didn’t have to look at them in the mirror everyday. It was not his choice to have the most traumatic moment of his life stamped on his face permanently (and on his arms and legs to a lesser extent.)

On the rare occasion someone started discussing them in front of him or was so bold to ask Lance what they meant, he would walk right out of the room. Lance didn’t know what they fucking meant. He never wanted to know what they meant.

Lance’s inner spiral had almost completely ruined his good mood when he felt Keith scoot up against his back and snake his arms around Lance’s front, pulling him into a proper spoon. Lance smiled weakly. The marks could fuck right off. This was his time to bask with sleepy Keith who was the most affectionate version of Keith. This thought was backed up by Keith tracing kisses up the back of Lance’s neck.

“How long was I asleep?” asked Keith.

“Couple hours,” answered Lance. He noticed his phone light up on his nightstand and grabbed it, reading the text that had just arrived. “My family’s going to be home in ten.”

Solid of them to warn Lance. They’d literally never done that before so that worked out.

“Mmmkay,” mumbled Keith. “Getting up.”

“You don’t have to yet,” said Lance, sitting to block Keith’s path to the side of the bed. “We have ten minutes.” He emphasized the last two words, reminding Keith of what they could accomplish in ten. Heck, Keith could probably have ten orgasms with his Galra cluster orgasm quirk.

Keith, however, was not one to be subdued. He stood up on the bed and used his foot to knock Lance onto to his back. At first Lance took this as a good sign until Keith leapt over him and landed gracefully on the floor.

“You’re forgetting,” said Keith, picking up his Blade suit from the floor. “I gotta grab my bag from my ship and set up in the guest room before showering.”

“I can get your bag for you while you shower,” said Lance, swinging himself to sitting on the edge of the bed. “And bring it to my room.” Lance was blushing because oh god he should’ve mentioned this right from the start… “Because I told my family you’d be sleeping in here.”

There was silence as Lance’s confession hung in the air. At one point Lance had convinced himself that this would be an exciting thing to share with Keith, but considering his lack of reaction, he’d maybe misread something.

Keith’s back was to him when he finally responded with, “So like a boyfriend?”

His voice was neutral, it barely sounded like a question and Lance was so thrown he dumbly replied, “That’s… not the word I used.”

And then it just dangled out in the open to Lance’s horror because as he was saying it he realized it sounded like he was answering no to the boyfriend question when really he was just trying to be clear with what he’d said to his family.

It’s not like Lance hadn’t thought about the idea of Keith becoming his boyfriend, but he’d put off
the thought, thinking they weren’t ‘there yet.’ But now that he’d accidentally denied it he realized that sure, they were ‘new’ but Keith was old. Not chronologically old, but Lance had known him almost half his life and planned to be close with him for the rest of his life and just sleeping with Keith without thinking through what this would make the rest of their lives together look like was actually pretty irresponsible. They were either going to have to put a label on this or stop at some point and boy howdy, Lance did not want to stop. Not the sex, not the affection, not the deeper connection, not any of it.

The commitment that came with the ‘boyfriend’ label was the logical step to take, but it also it came with implied ‘romance’ element. Lance knew he had this big roadblock in his heart that read “BUT IT’S KEITH!” yet there was also this soft voice inside saying “it’s Keith…”

He wanted to just speak up and say something, say yes he wanted to be Keith’s boyfriend, but Keith was being so dead silent and weird so what if Lance clarified and Keith rejected him? What if he’d misread Keith’s tone and really Keith was disgusted by the thought and really Lance had the right reaction the first time?

The idea of Lance putting his heart out there again and Keith rejecting him… Fucking hell that was so scary.

He didn’t want to lose Keith… He couldn’t take another loss. So that meant he was going to have to walk whatever fine line kept Keith around. Tough part was figuring out what that was. It’s not like Keith would ever offer thoughts or feelings willingly.

So Lance said nothing. Just drew his arms across his chest, feeling equally like he’d fucked up and done the right thing. His disappointment must’ve showed on his face because when Keith did finally turn back to look at him, his eyes widened with concern.

“Lance, are you - ?” Keith cut himself as the sound of laughter drifted through the open bedroom window. Lance’s family had returned despite the ten minutes not being up yet.

“Shit,” muttered Lance, scrambling to grab his clothes off the floor. The sound of his bedroom door shutting, drew his attention and he looked up to see Keith had left, his Blade suit forgotten on the ground. He heard the bathroom door open and breathed a sigh of relief that Keith hadn’t just run out of the house…. naked… due to their super fucking weird exchange just now.

Lance reminded himself to focus and threw on his clothes and darted down the staircase just in time for his entire family to pour inside the door. He was then bombarded with a half dozen questions that were all a variation of, “Is Keith here?”

“Quiet,” hissed Lance, “Yes, he’s here and I need you all to be way more cool than you’re being right now.”

“What? No,” gasped Rachel. “I’ve been giving up my bedroom for years so you two can pretend you’re not a thing. It’s happened and I get to talk about it now.”

“No, stop. No mentioning us being a thing,” scolded Lance. Keith was clearly disappointed that his family knew anything about them. He couldn’t have him thinking he’d told his family they were an item.

There was a collective groan from Lance’s siblings and that’s when Lance noticed there were four of them, not three. “Veronica, what are you doing here?” cried Lance. Normally he’d be thrilled by her visiting, but her timing sucked.
“Acxa messaged me and said Keith literally ran off to go see you,” said Veronica, excitedly. “I figured something was happening finally and I wanted a front row seat for the show.”

“No no no no, nothing’s happening and what are you doing messaging with Acxa?”

“Ummmmm...”

“Alright,” said Lance’s mom, addressing the group, “Lance has the right to his privacy.”

“Agreed,” said Papi, “Let’s give him and Keith some space. Meanwhile let’s get dinner on the table.”

Lance’s siblings, sister-in-law and his Meemaw groaned their disappointment.

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Keith opened the bathroom door a crack when he heard Lance talking to his family downstairs and heard his name spoken multiple times.

“No, stop. No mentioning us being a thing,” Lance’s voice easily travelled up the stairs. “Veronica, what are you doing here?”

“Acxa messaged me and said Keith literally ran off to go see you,” said Veronica’s voice, just as loud as her brother’s. “I figured something was happening finally and I wanted a front row seat for the show!” Keith winced. He hadn’t mentioned leaving mid-mission to come see Lance and he hadn’t intended to.

“No no no no, nothing’s happening and what are you doing messaging with Acxa?”

Keith’s back dropped against the wall. He wished he hadn’t listened in. He didn’t need to hear Lance’s continued denial of them being in a relationship. Fuck. He wished he hadn’t taken such a dumb chance and asked about the boyfriend thing. Of course it completely freaked Lance out.

He had had a plan with Lance! Draw him out slowly like a wounded animal.

Actually, that had been Plan C. Plan B had been to fuck him and get out of there. Plan A had been to never make a move or say anything ever. For a General in the Blade of Marmora, Keith was terrible with following through on plans.

The sound of footsteps on the stairs brought Keith out of his head and back to reality. He looked through the crack (which was the wrong move when he was naked and it could’ve been anyone) just in time to meet Lance’s eye as he peeked in. Keith panicked and slammed the door shut.

“Keith?” came Lance’s voice through the door followed by a soft knock.

“Yeah?” squeaked Keith.

“Everything okay?”

No.

“Towels,” said Keith’s mouth completely of it’s own volition.

“What?”

“I need… a towel.”
“Oh, uh, they’re in the cabinet… as always.”

“Right. I see them now,” said Keith, not moving from his spot because yeah, he knew damn well where the towels were, he’d been visiting here for years.

“Great so…” Lance trailed off.

“I’m going to shower now,” said Keith quickly.

“’kay… enjoy,” said Lance.

Keith winced, squeezing his eyes shut. Great. Now Lance knew he’d been listening.

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Quietly as he could, Lance dropped his forehead against the wall because he just needed a minute to feel as bad as fucking possible. Keith had heard him talking to his family. Keith was clearly freaking out right now.

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Keith smelt like Lance. He’d used his tropical body wash and his citrusy shampoo and that really rich conditioner Lance had deliberately pointed out to him the first time he’d showered there and strongly suggested Keith’s ends needed the attention. Lance had a whole fruity, tropical theme to the scents of his products which he told Keith many times was important so that they blended in a pleasing way. Even his aftershave smelt like coconut.

Wrapped in Lance’s favourite blue towel, Keith crept between the bathroom and Lance’s bedroom. Once he was safely inside (without having run into one of the fifty-thousand McClain-Sanchez’s that lived under this one roof) he spotted his bag on Lance’s bed. So this was it. This was Keith staying in Lance’s room. The idea maybe would’ve made him happy before, but the denial of them as a couple… what did that make him? A guest with benefits? He would’ve accepted that maybe a few weeks ago now… Fuck, he felt like he’d really put himself out there by ditching the mission to see Lance again so soon.

A quick rummage through the bag reminded Keith that everything in there was dirty. Right, because he’d been on mission and hadn’t washed a damn thing. Fortunately, he’d left some of his clothes at Lance’s for just such an occasion.

Keith went into Lance’s drawers and found a grey t-shirt that was his then picked through Lance’s jeans until he found a pair of his black ones hiding underneath all the blue. It was when Keith found his own socks inside Lance’s sock drawer that he had this surreal moment. He’d been visiting for years… he knew and used all of Lance’s beauty products… despite his continued denial over knowledge of farming he did in fact know that milk came from a cow not a chicken and more so he knew what crop rotation was, what the proper PH balance of top soil should be, and what an auger was. Bigger than that, he kept clothes in Lance’s bedroom mixed in with his…

He’d been acting like Lance’s boyfriend for years. Still he wasn’t Lance’s stupid fucking boyfriend.

Keith slammed the sock drawer shut. He got dressed, trying to ignore the sour feeling in his gut. He towed off his hair then combed through it with his fingers (a habit Lance said was not suitable for his hair type and “for crying out loud, Keith, use the mousse I bought you!” but he still wasn’t his fucking boyfriend.) Then he looked at himself in Lance’s full-length mirror and fretted that his hair was still damp. Judging by the smell, dinner was almost done. Lance would be in the
kitchen right now helping his mom finish it up. Keith didn’t want to be seen at the dinner table with damp hair despite the fact that he had many times sat at that table with wet hair.

Keith sat down on the bed, holding his head in his hands and wondering why the fuck the moisture content of his hair suddenly mattered.

There was a knock on the door. “Keith?” Why wasn’t Lance just coming inside? It was his bedroom after all.

“Yeah,” answered Keith, feeling like this would be enough for Lance to just come on in.

“Dinner’s ready,” said Lance, still speaking through the door, “whenever you wanna come down.”

“Thanks,” said Keith then realizing he’d forgotten to put emotion in his voice so he added, “I’ll be down in a minute.” Nope. Still no emotion.

“’kay,” answered Lance then Keith heard him head back down the stairs.

Keith took a deep breath. Why was he being this way? It was just dinner with Lance’s family. Same ol’ same ol’. Nothing terrible was going to happen.

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Dinner was terrible. The reason it was terrible was stupid. Despite Lance having warned his family not to make a big deal about Keith being there, they were indeed acting like it was a big deal.

Keith had been coming to dinner for years and Lance’s family had always treated him like just another family member. That suited Keith, just blending in, no one making a fuss over him. Well, tonight they were making a fuss. He was suddenly a ‘special guest’ instead of a regular feature and everyone wanted to direct the conversation his way and ask his opinion on every topic brought up. Keith didn’t know what was worse, that he was being pressured into talking so much or that every other question or so Lance would angrily snap at the person who asked in Spanish. This would be followed by more family members raising their voices and speaking heatedly in Spanish (worth mentioning that the name ‘Keith’ really stands out when the other words aren’t English.) Lance’s parents had to keep shutting it down and calling for order.

Keith suspected Lance meant well, or at the very least could tell Keith was uncomfortable. He tried at one point to take Keith’s hand under the table. Keith snatched it away without knowing why he was being rude and then, because he didn’t want Lance to feel hurt, pretended it was so he could pick up his fork. He then proceeded to eat his entire meal with his left hand, despite being right handed and all so he didn’t have to touch Lance right now. Normally he loved touching Lance, but everything was currently crazy.

He was so mad at Lance’s family for not following instructions and so mad at Lance for trying to shut them down, but he was mostly mad at himself for reacting so negatively to everything around him.

He just… He kept having this same obsessive thought that wouldn’t leave him alone.

She’d been treated like a special guest the first night she came here… Back then Keith would’ve killed to be the one invited to dinner, but Lance invited her instead.

He’d had to invite himself over again and again for years. Only just now they were suddenly giving him all this attention and it was pointless because he wasn’t Lance’s fucking boyfriend.
“Excuse me,” said Keith right after Rachel had become the third person that night to ask Keith if he would be staying longer this time. Keith stood up, not bothering to answer the question and walked out.

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“I told you,” hissed Lance when he heard Keith go up the stairs. “I told you all to be cool.” Fuck this was going so badly. His family of course could not be trusted to leave Keith be and Keith seemed so uncomfortable and Lance had no idea what to do to make him feel better.

“Where is Uncle Lance’s husband going?” asked Nadia from the kid’s table.

Lance groaned and slumped forward onto the table.

“I’m sure he’s just freshening up,” said his mom, trying to sound positive.

“Or waiting for you upstairs,” said Veronica, leaning her chin on her hands and wiggling her eyebrows. “Did he flash you any kind of secret sign?”

Lance turned bright red. He had so many regrets concerning telling his family about Keith. The whole table was laughing at Veronica’s suggestion that Keith was upstairs waiting to have sex with Lance when suddenly they stopped. There was a noise over head.

“Um… is Keith on the roof?” asked Rachel.

“No,” said Lance, “he wouldn’t…” Then there was the unmistakable sound of something heavy dropping off the roof and onto the ground outside. “…be so loud because he’s supposed to be like a ninja and I will be back…”

His family watched him in silence as he got up and headed out the front door.

It was raining out, but lightly. Just a light sprinkle to make the air smell fresh and to make it a ridiculous time for Keith to take a walk. Lance took big strides to catch up with the silhouetted figure retreating into the night.

“Keith!” Lance called out. Keith turned back and stopped. “Keith,” said Lance, catching up to him. “You’re not actually leaving are you?”

“No,” said Keith, shifting on his feet. “Just walking…”

“…Away… in the rain…with your bag… towards your ship.”

Keith was quiet, but the guilt on his face said everything.

“I’m sorry about my family,” blurted out Lance because it’s the only thing he could really point to that might be wrong. “They’re a lot and even though I asked them to act normal, they didn’t listen.”

“It’s a lot…,” said Keith, crossing his arms across his chest, “Them treating me like I’m special.” Strange thing to complain about…

“You are special, Keith,” urged Lance, “you’re so special.”

Lance watched Keith’s face react almost as if he were offended. Typical Keith. Lance had no clue how to compliment him and it was so frustrating. Lance sighed. He didn’t want to get mad at Keith even if what he was doing was upsetting him.
Keith looked away then said quietly, “They’re not doing anything wrong. You’re not doing anything wrong. Forget it.”

“I don’t wanna forget something if it’s bugging you,” said Lance, recognizing the usual signs of Keith shutting down emotionally.

“No, really,” said Keith, turning back to him, his face opening up a bit. “It’s not a you thing. It’s a me thing. I…” He trailed off and looked at the ground.

“I know,” agreed Lance, sadly. “Everyone has their triggers, especially after that war. I can’t always know what’s going to set you off so I promise I’ll try not to take it personally. And if you have to leave to deal, I won’t take that personally either. It’s just… I really hope you’ll reconsider and stay. One of my triggers is people leaving me so…”

“Lance,” said Keith, his face serious and dark, “I’m not leaving this place. I’ve always been in this place. It’s you who just got here.”

Lance was confused. This was his farm and Keith was visiting so what did he mean about Keith being there and Lance just arriving and… oh. Keith didn’t mean literally. Did he just use the word ‘always?’ And he said he wasn’t going to leave… “That’s a lot to process,” said Lance out loud.

Keith looked embarrassed and turned away. Keith kept doing that. Giving Lance these little hints that would fit into the puzzle Lance was piecing together for what they were, but he always looked horrified after. Lance wished he could reassure him properly, let him know what Keith wanted to say wasn’t going to scare him away. Lance didn’t know the right words, but… he was always willing to try.

“I’m here now,” said Lance, “I know we’re notoriously bad at sharing things, but we’re both occupying this spot.” Lance picked up Keith’s hand and put it on his heart and held it there and then he put his own hand on Keith’s heart and said, “This is our space now.”

Lance had been in a hundred battles with Keith if he’d been in one and never had he seen Keith look so terrified. He didn’t know how to reassure him, but at least he would try and keep trying. Lance tipped his forehead against Keith’s. “Please don’t go. Stay the night.”

Then Keith was kissing him and Lance wasn’t sure if that was a yes or a distraction until Keith dipped out long enough to say, “We’re staying clear of your family,” before kissing Lance again and Lance had to laugh directly into Keith’s mouth. He was happy. He’d accomplished something. He’d opened Keith back up a bit when he’d threatened to shut down. That was huge.

Keith was pulling back just a bit and then whispered, “I’m sorry my feelings are so stupid.”

“Don’t,” warned Lance, holding Keith’s face. “Your feelings are not stupid. You just need to tell me what they are. I’m the dumb one, okay? I need things spelled out for me.”

“You’re not dumb, Lance,” croaked Keith, “I never thought that.”

Lance shook his head. “I know you never did.” And then they were kissing again, a mix of heat and emotion making Lance hungry for touching as much of Keith as possible.

“Wait,” said Keith, pulling back and Lance grew worried, especially when Keith looked so pained. What he said really surprised Lance. “I’m yours,” said Keith, not daring to look Lance in the eye, “whether you want to label it or not I just… I’m yours.”

Fuck. Lance’s heart was exploding. “Of course I want you to be mine. I will literally go crazy if
you’re not. I just worded things stupidly and then I got scared because this stuff has gone so badly for me in the past… I mean –“

“Lance,” said Keith, gripping Lance’s shirt at the shoulders and demanding eye contact. “I’m not her.” Then Keith wilted a bit and Lance wondered if he’d meant to reassure him with that statement or if he was apologizing.

“I know you’re not, Keith,” said Lance, his voice threatening to break. “You stayed and you’re here and you’re always here for me and you know have no idea what that means –“

Lance was cut off by Keith’s kiss and Lance couldn’t agree more that words would just get clumsy at this point and they needed to show each other what they meant to each other. Lance wanted Keith to know what he was to him and how much him opening up meant to him. Their hands were traveling all over each other, but they needed to find some kind of purchase to lean against because Lance had to have Keith right now. He had to.

So they stumbled as they kissed, Lance trying his best to guide Keith backwards safely so he didn’t fall, right until Keith’s back connected with the tree and Lance thought yes, the tree would do and he could finally start undoing Keith’s belt.

“Lube?” he asked.

“Bag,” replied Keith, his mouth plump and swollen.

“Shit,” muttered Lance realizing Keith had dropped it back where they’d started. He jogged back to the spot and went rummaging through Keith’s bag with shaky hands.

Keith was his…

He’d said he was his…

Lance found the lube and jogged back to find Keith had completely removed his pants and underwear which worked perfect for Lance, immediately pulling Keith against him and running his hands over his smooth ass. Lance didn’t understand how he was this lucky. He really didn’t.

“Bonito,” murmured Lance. Keith laughed and it was a lovely sound.

They shared the lube. Keith took some in his palm and smoothed it over Lance’s cock as Lance dipped his lubed up fingers into Keith while whispering sweet nothings in Spanish. He’d wanted to do this before, the first time they’d had sex, but he’d been too shy then. He hadn’t felt safe like he did now.

“That better be dirty talk,” warned Keith in raspy, about to get fucked voice.

Lance just laughed, kissing Keith again and marveling how it felt even more amazing than it had before. Better yet, Keith felt so open, still stretched from having sex earlier. This was perfect because Lance really couldn’t wait.

Lance hooked his arms under Keith’s knees and hoisted him up around his own waist. Keith let out a little gasp as Lance pushed his back up against the tree. Lance searched Keith’s face in the dark for any indication this was a terrible idea, but Keith just kissed him deeply, his arms wrapped tightly around his shoulders. Lance pressed Keith harder against the tree so he could free his arm and use his hand to guide himself inside Keith, sinking right in.

Keith’s moan was a puff on hot breath on Lance’s face.
“Keith,” mumbled Lance, repositioning his arm under Keith’s leg. “I like you so much. You’re all I think about.”

Keith responded to this by wrapping his hand behind Lance’s head and pressing his face hard into his. He sucked his lip hard into his mouth and bit down just a little. Lance moaned into Keith’s mouth. He adjusted his stance and figured out how to properly fuck Keith in this position.

“Yes,” moaned Keith, his voice sounding freer than usual.

Lance didn’t want to hold back. He didn’t want to hold back anything. Not when everything he gave to Keith, he got back tenfold. That’s why the rolling of his hips got faster. That’s why he had to go as deep as possible on every thrust.

He needed Keith. Fucking needed him. Needed to have as much as he possibly could from him. So he had to kiss him while he fucked him and grip his knees so tight and feel Keith scratch along his back. Fuck. This was the best it had ever been and it had already been so fucking good.

“Wait,” said Keith, suddenly.

Lance paused, confused and kinda light headed, but knowing that instruction was important.

“Down, down, down, down, down,” said Keith so Lance lowered him, concerned, but as soon as Keith was standing, he was pushing Lance down onto his back. Ohhhhh so he meant DOWN.

Then Keith was straddling Lance and lining himself up so he could sink down onto him and oh fuck that felt good. Then Keith was bouncing on his cock.

Lance was getting so close to coming, but he had to teasingly say, “such a fucking power bottom.” But to be fair, Keith had been letting Lance control a lot lately and Lance was so fucking turned on by Keith having his way with his dick and doing whatever he needed to do to get himself off.

“Just fulfilling… my promise,” said Keith, slowing his pace, “To fuck… you in the dirt.”

“How are you real?” moaned Lance. Keith was so sexy and he was Lance’s to have and to fuck like the hilly billies they both were (let’s face it.)

Keith started to stroke himself as he bounced so Lance smacked his hand away so he could take over. While he was jerking Keith off, and feeling the most delicious heat in his lower gut, he became aware that he was still wearing a shirt. Lance used his free hand to hike his hem up all the way past his nipples because he knew Keith was going to blow his load soon. He was starting to recognize the signs of when Keith was close.

“What?” said Keith, swallowing back a moan. “You giving me a target.”

Lance bit his lip and arched his back, as if to say, ‘fire away.’ Of course he was the one in charge of Keith’s dick so he increased his pace until Keith’s eyes shut and he started moaning. Cum shot onto Lance’s chest right on target.

Keith’s bouncing slowed as the orgasm subsided and Lance became concerned when it came to a full stop. Then Keith’s eyes shot open and he dropped himself down onto Lance’s chest, licking up the cum with one long zigzagging lick.

“Holy fuck,” mumbled Lance, his dick twitching inside of Keith. Guy was kinky as all hell and he was Lance’s.
With Keith leaning forward, now entertaining himself by sucking on Lance’s nipple, he figured out he could hike up his knees and use that purchase to fuck into Keith.

Keith made the cutest little squeak as Lance bottomed out then growled like he was angry that he’d made that noise. He was so cute and Lance was free to just thrust into his ass, fucking Keith to his heart’s content. Keith’s hands grabbed his and pushed them up above Lance’s head. Boy needed some control, but Lance still had the power below and he pounded into Keith, chasing his own orgasm until he was losing himself in it, the pleasure washing over him. And Keith was gripping around him, moaning his name into Lance’s chest because was coming again. Loving how he could do that to Keith gave Lance an powerful after shock.

“Keith… fuck…,” mumbled Lance. His grip had been released at some point so he ran his hands down and found his fingers tangled in Keith’s hair. He tugged at it until Keith’s face was aligned with his and he could kiss him again.

They were both completely out of breath and they kept having to pull apart to gasp for air, but they always came crashing back into each other, neither wanting to be done kissing.

Lance found himself wishing he hadn’t already confessed his feelings to Keith because he wanted to say more sweet things to him, but was running out of words. He switched to kissing Keith with light pecks while stroking his hair and saying, “Soy tuyo,” over and over.

Keith made a sound somewhere between a laugh and groan then collapsed onto Lance’s chest, just spent. “I’m no good at this.”

“No, you’re not,” said Lance, “But I’m willing to teach you sex.” Keith definitely growled this time. “Okay, what do you mean then?”

“Just… saying things. Sweet things.” Keith raised up his head and considered Lance. “You’re going to be all romantic aren’t you and I’m just going to be awkward most of the time, right?”

“Maybe,” chuckled Lance. Honestly, he was used to his attempts at being romantic being met with awkward silence.

“For future reference, I don’t mean to be rude. I’m just… well, I suck.”


“See,” said Keith, somehow offended. “That was romantic!” Keith was getting himself up which meant Lance finally had to leave the comfort of Keith’s ass.

“Don’t worry,” said Lance, “I’ll say something awkward and dorky soon enough to erase all this smoothness.” Lance gestured to himself.

Keith looked down at him like he was an idiot. “Yeah… that’ll about do it.”

Chapter End Notes

Honestly... these two weren't supposed to confess to each other so soon, but they really want to just be happy together. I can't deny them that... too much...

UPDATE: ForsakenAngel88 has made official art for this chapter which is on her
Chapter Six

Chapter Summary

Lance loves to bathe in Keith's old bath water
Loves to think that he couldn't love another
He can't help it
Keith's his kind of man

Chapter Notes

Those were obscure song lyrics lol. It's from Bathwater by No Doubt.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Keith didn’t want to go back to the main house yet and honestly they both looked exactly like they’d fucked in the dirt so really it was out of the question. So instead they walked around, holding hands and talking. The rain was light and because the weather had shifted to Spring it was warm. In made little licks at the dirt on their bodies, tracing patterns down their skin.

“Tell me about your ex’s,” said Lance, throwing Keith for a loop.


“That’s something currents do, right? Talk about their ex’s?”

“Oh, I guess… I mean there’s just nothing to talk about.” Lance tugged at Keith’s arm. Yeah, he wasn’t going to get away with dismissing the question. “I mean… there’s been guys… A lot of guys… but no one special. No one I really connected with. No one my heart, my brain, and my dick all agreed on.”

“So the holy trinity?” asked Lance.

“Yeah, they are usually at odds,” chuckled Keith. “I mean… except for this one person.”

Lance’s face lit up with pride. Keith had tried so hard not to blurt out to Lance that he was his. He still didn’t understand how those words came rocketing out of his mouth. He’d been so sure he’d scare Lance off, but seeing the pride that boy was taking in Keith’s every confession of feeling, made him want to lay everything out for him. Lance deserved to feel special. He wanted to give that to him.

“I feel that,” said Lance, rubbing his thumb on the back of Keith’s hand. “I’m the same. Just the one.”

“Wait…,” said Keith, “Not me then?”

“No, I was implying you! Geez Keith, were you not implying me?”
“Who the hell else would I mean? Besides, you’re the one with an actual ex.”

“Right….,” Lance mumbled.

“Look, if you’re not ready to talk about her…”

“No, I… I mean, I brought this up. It’s just… I didn’t have the holy trinity there.”

“Oh?” said Keith, I mean he knew they’d never had sex, but that didn’t mean Lance hadn’t wanted to.

“My heart was in it. That was for sure, but my brain just wasn’t sure half the time and my dick didn’t want to without my brain on board so…”

“Oh, I didn’t know things weren’t good,” said Keith. That was a fucking lie. He’d looked miserable with her. If Lance knew he was lying, he didn’t call him out for it.

“I dunno… There was only so many times I could tell her I – uh – I loved her and not hear her say it back.”

Keith was confused. “But she said…”

“She’d always love me, yeah that was the only time she said it,” said Lance. “So what does that mean? That she said it because she thought I wanted to hear it and she was leaving anyway? Or that she actually meant it but it wasn’t enough of a reason for her to stay?”

“Lance, those… those can’t be the only two reasons she could’ve said it. You lose in both those scenarios.”

“Yeah, I know,” said Lance, grumpily. “But it doesn’t really matter, not knowing… She left and that was it.”

“She sacrificed her –”

“Yeah, I know,” snapped Lance, cutting him off. “I know she was a hero and she saved us all. I’ve heard the exact same fucking savior speech any time I’ve expressed being upset that she’s gone. I understand the reason, but it doesn’t make it hurt any less. And fuck, I’m mad about it. Maybe that makes me a terrible person to feel mad at her, but I am…”

“You’re not a terrible person.”

Lance made a dismissive sound.

“Look, Lance… you know I don’t usually talk about this stuff, but when I lost my dad all the people around me wanted to talk about was how he died a hero. Do you think that meant anything to me? I was a kid and I had no one. I had no other relatives, no friends… He had been my entire world and he didn’t stop and think about that before he ran into that burning building. I was so angry and part of me still –” Keith was cut off by Lance hugging him which took him by surprise.

“Shit, Keith.” Lance’s voice was strained like he was trying not to cry. “I didn’t even think about you as a kid.”

“Oh…,” said Keith. Honestly, he’d been about to start crying too and he really didn’t want to. “I shouldn’t have made it about me.”

“No, I’m glad you shared.”
“I just meant to say I get the being angry thing. I don’t think you should feel ashamed for that. It’s tough being left behind. And I…” Keith blew out air. Was he really going to share this? “I kinda had this moment where I acted way too much like my dad…”

“What does that mean?” asked Lance.

“Do you remember the battle of Naxzela? When Lotor saved us by firing on Haggars ship?”

“Yeah…”

“Well, before he did that there wasn’t any way to get through the shield and stop Naxzela from exploding so I was going to ram the shields with my ship…”

“Oh…” said Lance, looking down at the ground. Keith had been expecting a stronger reaction. “I… I guess I did something like that too.”

“You…?”

Lance said nothing.

“Care to elaborate?”

“It’s too… I guess maybe I got electrocuted in Red while pushing Blue out of the way and maybe my heart stopped for a bit, but – “

“Lance,” murmured Keith, “Where the fuck was I when this happened?”

“The words ‘space whale’ come to mind.”

Keith shook his head. He didn’t know how to process this.

“It was different for me though. I was dispensable. The other Paladins barely noticed me. No one loved me.”

“Don’t talk about yourself that way,” Keith practically yelled. “Maybe it felt that way, but it wasn’t true. Saying no one loved you? I loved you!” And there it was. If Keith was keeping track, that was his second to last card.

Lance looked at him, wide eyed, a little lost. “You weren’t even around then.”

“Yeah, I didn’t know how to be the kind of person who sticks around yet. But I learned and I’m trying and I know… I know I almost blew it tonight…”

“But you stayed when I asked you to,” said Lance, “That’s what I needed. I – After she left I gave up and I thought I’d never try at anything again, but now… I’m trying too.”

“I see that,” nodded Keith. “And it means a lot that you’re doing it for me. I never thought we’d get here together.” Lance crossed his arms across his chest and sighed. “What?”

“I just… You loved me when you were gone? It’s so confusing.”

“I didn’t think you’d want that kind of attention from me. Look. I’m still doubting that you do.”

Not want attention from Keith? But Lance had been following Keith around since the Garrison,
trying to catch his eye or at least get him to remember his damn name so obviously he wanted… A thought struck Lance and he let out a sharp laugh.

“What?” asked Keith, concerned. “Are you okay?”

But Lance couldn’t answer. He was shaking from silent laughter. His knees felt weak. He had to sit so he did, just dropping down to the ground and onto his butt.

“What’s wrong?” asked Keith, hovering over him. “Do I need to get someone?”

Finally Lance’s laugh found its sound as he buckled forward, letting the absurdity of his thoughts ring out loud.

“Lance?” asked Keith, more awkward than concerned now.

Lance took a calming breath then said, “What have we been doing for all these years?” Then the shaking laughter overtook him again.

Keith dropped down to his knees beside Lance. “I dunno. I’ve been fucking around the universe while hiding feelings for you. How about you?”

Lance snorted. “Well, yours sounds more fun than mine.”

“What’s yours?” asked Keith, a bit of a laugh finding its way into his voice.

“Obsessing over you without any awareness of my attraction to boys then I felt super rejected when you left for the Blades then I tried getting a Princess to love me. We both know how that went…” Lance listed these off on his fingers. “Recently I’ve just been farming. I dunno.”

“Obsessing over me?” asked Keith, dropping down to his bum now.

Lance was still laughing and shaking his head. “I thought you were the most closed off person I’d ever met… but fuck it’s me, isn’t it?”

“I’m willing to share the title,” chuckled Keith, leaning his shoulder against Lance’s. “I honestly held the belief that if I ever shared anything with you about my feelings, you’d run the other way.”

“I might’ve,” said Lance, throwing out his arms with a laugh. “I don’t know. Oh man…” Lance had laughed so hard his eyes were watering. He brushed the tears away with the back of his hand. “This conversation is all over the place.”

“You’re telling me,” agreed Keith.

“But… I used to want so badly for you to be open with me so it’s insanely great that you’re sharing now.”

“I will echo the insanely great sentiment,” said Keith.

Lance took Keith’s hand and leaned his forehead against his. He leaned in for a kiss, but as he slinked his arm around Keith’s lower back and Keith winced.

“What? What’s wrong?” asked Lance.

“Oh nothing,” lied Keith, but Lance was already spinning him around and pulling up his shirt to see the scratches that trailed down his back far below his waistline.
“Shit, what is that?”

“That would be courtesy of the tree,” answered Keith.

“Keith,” whined Lance, “why didn’t you tell me it was hurting you? No wonder you wanted down.”

“Honestly, I didn’t noticed it at first and then it was kinda working for me.”

Lance was fussing over him despite there being nothing he could do. “I’m so, so sorry.”

“I’m fine,” said Keith, “I heal quickly.” Lance was still pouting. “Hey, let’s head back.”

As they walked back to the main house they watched the lights go out side like candles blowing out on a cake. It had gotten later than they realized and everyone had gone to bed so they had to creep in.

Lance went to shower first so Keith lay on the bed on his stomach, feeling drowsy. He couldn’t believe all he’d confessed to Lance and yet… they were good and Lance was happy and they kept moving forward and growing closer. It honestly felt like a miracle and the cynical part of Keith was having trouble believing that after all this time wishing he could belong to Lance, he was finally his.

“C’mon,” whispered Lance, poking his head into the room.

With strained effort Keith got himself back up and followed Lance across the hall and into the bathroom. With great confusion he noted that Lance was still in his dirty clothes. The bathroom was dark except for a few candles lit around the room.

“What’s happening here?” asked Keith, his instincts setting off alarm bells even though he knew this wasn’t dangerous. Still, there was this strange soft music playing that made his brain crazy.

“I drew you a bath,” said Lance, leading Keith further inside by taking his hand. “Remember? I’m romantic and you are awkward and currently frozen so we’re living up to expectations.”

“It’s too much,” muttered Keith.

“It’s a bath,” said Lance. “I put in a plug and turned on a tap.”

“But the music…”

“Just some Enya to help you relax.”

“It’s repetitive and mind crazy-ing.”

“The music can go off,” said Lance, stepping away from Keith to turn off a speaker. “Although, that must be a Galra thing, not liking Enya because every human alive loves Enya.”

“There’s candles!” said Keith, pointing.

“You can blow them out if you don’t like them,” said Lance, stepping real close to Keith. “Make a wish maybe.” And his voice was so soft and his face so near that Keith had to kiss him.

When the kiss ended Keith leaned his forehead against Lance’s and muttered, “My wish already came true,” shocking himself with the sappiness.
Lance clapped a hand over his heart. “You are romantic! Now get undressed before the water cools too much.”

“You’re… staying?”

***

Lance had his reasons for staying. That being he really, really, really wanted to wash Keith’s hair. “Properly for once” were his words.

“And now we let it sit,” said Lance, fingering Keith’s ends as he kneeled behind the tub. Keith had thought it was all super cheesy, but he had to admit that the feeling of Lance working on his hair was super relaxing and allowed him to stop caring how strange this was. “See, that’s what you’ve been doing wrong with this conditioner. It needs to sit for at least five minutes to let the moisture soak in rather than rinsing it right out like you’ve been doing.”

“How can you telling?” asked Keith. “You have a camera in the shower or something?”

“This is how I can tell,” said Lance, pulling on a strand of Keith’s hair and holding it in front of his face so Keith could see. “The split ends is how I can tell. Besides,” said Lance, folding the strand to the back with the rest, “if I was watching you shower, I’d wouldn’t have been able to pay attention to your hair.” Keith could hear the blush in Lance’s voice.

“Yes, you would’ve…”

“Yes, I would’ve… But only after getting crazy turned on.”

“You’re holding it together now,” said Keith.

“Barely… I mean, I’m definitely a little turned on.”

“You’re a robot. I’m fully turned on,” snickered Keith. He titled up his face so he could catch Lance’s eye. Lance took hold of Keith’s creamy hair and gave it a soft yank to bring Keith’s head back further over the edge of the tub then he leaned down and kissed him.

It was a strange position to get kissed from, but Lance’s need to kiss him, combined with the tender presses of upside down lips made Keith long for more. He dipped his chin up when Lance retreated, silently begging to be kissed again.

“Hang on,” said Lance, shuffling on his knees around the back and to the side of the tub. “Let me get a better angle on you.” When he was beside Keith’s head, Keith reached his far arm out to grab Lance by the neck and pull him in closer for more kissing.

Lance’s arm slipped into the water to run a hand across Keith’s chest as they made out. Fingers traced along the definition of his pecs, a thumb playfully flicked across his nipple causing Keith to hum his approval into Lance’s mouth, but only when that wandering hand started to travel downwards on his stomach did Keith understand the meaning behind “better angle.”

“Lance,” chuckled Keith, shifting a bit, but not actually resisting.

“Let me pamper you,” mumbled Lance, keeping his hand firmly planted on Keith’s abdomen. “You did it for me so many times…” His voice was quiet honey in Keith’s ear. “Let me show my appreciation…”

Keith responded by nuzzling his cheek against his before capturing his lips for a deep, lazy kiss.
Encouraged, Lance’s hand continued on his path downwards into the depths of the bathwater. Keith sighed as Lance’s hand found him and his palm ran lightly down his length. It was a new sensation. Lance’s usual strong calloused hand felt like a stranger underwater.

Keith arched his back, leaning into that graze of a touch and losing contact with Lance’s lips in the process.

“You’re so beautiful Keith,” hummed Lance, directly into his ear. “Beyond the bad haircut, you’re the most beautiful person I’ve ever seen.”

“That can’t be true,” mumbled Keith.

“Shhh,” hissed Lance. “If you’re planning on being negative, it would be best if you shut up right now.”

“But,” began Keith.

Lance ripped his hand out of the water and placed it on top of Keith’s head. “Don’t make me do it, Keith. Don’t make me push you under water and hold you there.”

“You wouldn’t!”

“I will if you sass talk me while I’m seducing you,” said Lance, putting just a little pressure on Keith’s head.

“Fine,” muttered Keith, deliberately sinking so low his mouth was under water.

“Good,” sighed Lance, letting his hand sink down underneath the surface again. “I have been giving your ass so much attention, but your cock deserves love too.”

Fingers traced over the head and down Keith’s full length and balls before drifting back up again. It was such a light and teasing touch, but it got Keith breathing deep and he had to push himself back up to have his chin above water. He wanted to suck in more air to fuel his heavy beating heart, but as soon as his lips were out again, Lance was on him, kissing him. His grip was so light as he stroked him. Water didn’t allow for lubrication so the game became applying just enough pressure, allowing that and the swirl of the water to create a slow build.

“Bonito,” mumbled Lance, moving to kiss Keith’s ear. Bonito, Keith knew that one. It meant ‘beautiful’ in Spanish. Whether Lance meant Keith or his cock, he couldn’t know. “Dame tu corazón…” Keith didn’t know any of the words beyond ‘tu.’ They were just sounds to him, but hearing Lance speak Spanish was such a turn on that he could be whispering death threats and Keith wouldn’t care… Actually, Keith might be into that too..

The flickering of the candles, the warmth of the water, Lance’s lips alternating be kissing his neck and whispering Spanish nonsense into his ear while his hand expertly danced and twisted around Keith’s cock….

Keith was so relaxed yet keyed up at the same time. When he came he had the most surreal orgasm with his hormone flooded brain briefly convincing itself he was floating. Not in water, but in space. But then there was Lance’s strong arm around his shoulder and his heavy kiss to ground him back on Earth where he belonged. The pleasure lasted so long, going from a dizzy drop to a hungry spike of energy. Keith had to release it by twisting up and grabbing Lance with dripping wet arms and kissing him until his nerves calmed down and met a soft landing against Lance’s chest.

“Wow,” muttered Keith, “No one’s ever done something like that for me before.”
“I gotta stand out somehow,” snickered Lance.

Keith knew he was joking, but felt compelled to say, “You stand out. More than head and shoulders above you stand out. Like a giant.”

“I know,” said Lance, planting a soft kiss on Keith’s temple. “I didn’t mean to sound jealous. It’s strangely hot that you’ve had all this experience and now you just want me. Maybe that’s an odd perspective.”

“No, it works. I feel like I’ve been satiating myself on snacks and now I finally get a meal,” Keith purred. “You are just spoiling me.”

“It was a good way to spend the five minutes,” said Lance, confidently.

“Five minutes?” repeated Keith.

It was only when Lance turned on the tap and directed Keith’s head under the stream that he remembered the conditioner in his hair. He relaxed as Lance’s skilled fingers ran through his locks, rinsing out the rich cream.

“I would love to braid your hair sometime,” said Lance. “I used to braid Rachel and Veronica’s hair when we were little.”

“Sure,” agreed Keith.

“Wait... really? Braiding hair is on the table?”

“Yeah, we braid each other’s hair in the Blade sometimes. Before missions. It’s a warrior bonding thing.”

“Oh... I can’t wait to braid you!” Lance seemed to be speaking directly to Keith’s hair.

“Not while it’s wet,” warned Keith, “It’ll dry all crimpy.”

“Oh, you with crimpy hair,” said Lance, shutting off the tap. “Now that I’d love to see.”

“No.”

“Can I cut your hair?”

“Hell no!”

“Just the dead ends!” insisted Lance. “I cut everyone else’s hair on the castleship. I’m good at it. I wouldn’t make it short or anything. I’d leave the iconic mullet. Maybe just shape it a bit... with layers... maybe an undercut... Oh! Or a side shave!”

“Lance!”

“Never mind. I’m a impulsive monster and I can’t be trusted.”

“Just kiss me more, okay?” laughed Keith. “It’s all I want from you.”

Lance pecked him on the lips then stood up and pulled off his shirt. Keith watched with hesitance as Lance undressed completely then slipped himself into the bath, the water level rising up almost to the brim.
“You know this water is disgusting, right?” said Keith, making the best room he could for Lance, under the circumstances.

“Might not care,” said Lance, cuddling up against him. Their body positions were a bit awkward, kinda like a half tilted spoon, but the warm water felt nice and any contact with Lance relaxed Keith.

Lance sighed and wrapped himself around Keith as best he could in the cramped space. He seemed so content. It made Keith even happier if that was possible.

“You ever think we’d take a bath together?” asked Lance.

“You wouldn’t even share a pool with me once,” laughed Keith.

“We’ve come a long way since then.” Lance leaned his cheek on Keith’s shoulder.

“We really have,” said Keith, leaning his head in turn against Lance’s head.

“I’ve tamed you. Domesticated you even.”

“Hey,” said Keith, taking offense. “Tame, but not broken. I’m still wild.”

“Wild is definitely the world I’d use for you,” said Lance, nodding against Keith’s cheek. “Do you… Is there anything you don’t like in bed?”

“What bed?” snorted Keith. “We’ve had sex in a bed twice.”

“You know what I mean. Any kinks or scenarios you don’t like or…?”

Keith thought about this for a second. “Women.”

Lance laughed. “Okay, but seriously.”

“I’ll put it this way,” said Keith, “I doubt there’s a scenario you could come up with that I wouldn’t be into.”

“Cause I’m your kink.” Keith could hear the grin in Lance’s voice. He knew exactly how that boy sounded when he was getting a big head. “I never thought I’d enjoy bath time hand jobs until you introduced me to them.” As he said this he ran his own hand down Lance’s abs to caress his semi-hard cock.

“Hey now,” said Lance, more breath than protest. “I said I was just doing it for you. After all you gave me all those blowjobs without me returning the favour.”

“I don’t mind being ahead in the count,” said Keith, tracing light fingers over Lance’s length. He could feel Lance’s heart fluttering in his chest. “I love being better at something than you and lording it over you.”

“I’m not going to – ah – argue with you on this one,” said Lance. He was pressing himself into Keith’s hand, fully hard now, encouraging him to keep going. Of course Keith’s horny boy wasn’t going to turn down a hand job.

Keith traced kisses along his temple, not at the best angle to reach his mouth, but definitely in a good spot to stroke him.

“Have you ever thought about me,” began Lance, his voice so breathy Keith almost couldn’t make
him out, “when you were with someone else.”

Keith pressed his lips together in a sad attempt to hide his embarrassed grin. Keith tried to look away, but even from Lance’s angle he seemed to read Keith’s face.

“That’s a yes,” said Lance, breathy and very happy. Okay, so Lance actually liked that Keith did that. That’s a freebie. “Tell me about it.”

Keith shook his head. “I don’t wanna talk about anyone else.” He looked down at Lance. ‘Not when I finally have you…,’ he thought.

“What about when you were alone… on the castleship… did you ever…?”

“Relentlessly,” said Keith, accentuating his point by increasing his pace.

Lance released a small moan and a shiver. He was getting off on the idea of Keith objectifying him. Keith could tell him stories…

“Remember the time I almost crashed Red into that moon because I said my wrist was stiff from swinging my Bayard too much?” Keith lowered his voice to a whisper. “That wasn’t the reason…”

“How much do you have to… to injure your wrist?”

“All… night…” Keith punctuated each word and Lance moaned and squirmed against him.

“And you’d touch yourself… like this?” asked Lance, rolling into Keith’s hand.

“Minus the water…” Keith thought again. “Except for the one time I did use the pool…”

Lance giggled. “You’re kidding.”

“I had this vision in my head of you in a bathing suit…”

“Ke-eith!” muttered Lance, squirming again. Keith was going to have to hold him still. Keith maneuvered his other arm around to press lightly on Lance’s chest. “Did you ever…” began Lance, continuing his own sided game of dirty truth or dare, emphasis on the truth, “pretend it was my hand?” Lance’s heart was pounding against Keith’s chest.

“Yes, or your cock.” Keith really clicked that last k sound in his mouth and suddenly Lance was writhing and moaning.

“Keith, ah fuck,” mumbled Lance, arching against him. Keith continued stroking him at just the same pace until Lance was finished coming and slumped heavy against him.

“So we both share a kink,” said Keith, pressing a kiss to Lance’s temple.

“Hmm?” Lance wasn’t really verbal yet.

“You.”

“Me?”

“We’re both attracted to you.”

“I am not,” grumbled Lance. “I like the version of me you see.”
“So you…”

“Fuck off,” muttered Lance, folding himself into Keith. “I like you and me. Together really.”

“Yeah, I like that too,” said Keith, leaning his head back against Lance’s.

Lance chuckled to himself.

“What?”

“Nothing.”

“Tell me.”

“It’s just a weird thought.”

“And?”

“If I say it, I’ll kill the mood I worked so hard to create.”

“Just fucking say it,” said Keith.

Lance spread out his arms and said, “Now we’re soup.”

Keith gave his head one deep nod then said, “Yep. You ruined it.” Then he was struggling to get up under the weight of Lance.

“C’mon, Keith. You made me say my dumb thought out loud.” He was forced to get up and out of Keith’s way. “This one’s on you!”

Keith just ignored him and went for the towels.

“I like us as soup!” argued Lance, stepping out of the bath.

“Not helping your case,” said Keith, throwing a towel in Lance’s direction.

“It was a spicy soup…”

Keith pointed at him. “You need to stop talking.”

“But… I’m good to the last sip.”

“Go to bed Lance,” groaned Keith.

But of course Lance forced Keith to blow-dry his hair before they went to bed. “I’m not sleeping with you with wet hair!” Finally (after Lance had put three!! different kind of products in Keith’s hair and used an attachment on the hairdryer that Lance called a diffuser, which seemed to just weaken the blow of the dryer) they were able to climb into bed and fall asleep wrapped up in each other.

*****

Lance woke up before sunrise as usual, but decided to just stay in bed and cuddle with sleeping Keith. When he’d been depressed he’d struggled with motivation to get up in the morning so he’d decided to take on the earliest morning chores himself so he had an excuse to get up everyday. It had become habit, but he knew that if his parents got up and saw he’d skipped his chores, they’d go ahead and do them for him without worrying or feeling the need to check on him like they used.
Eventually he fell back asleep and was surprised by the time when he woke up again. Carefully he crept out of bed, deciding to be annoyingly romantic and bring Keith breakfast in bed.

It was well past breakfast time, but Lance could smell the coffee in the kitchen. Fresh pots were always being made to fuel the family throughout the day. Lance was expecting the kitchen to be empty at this time, but instead he found his dad sitting at the kitchen table, drinking a coffee and reading the newspaper.

“Buenos días, papá,” said Lance, heading for the coffee machine.

“Buenos días, mio,” said his dad, “Or should I say, buenos tardas?”

Lance chuckled. “Yeah, slept in a bit. Why are you here? I thought you would be out working the fields.”

“I was, but I needed a break. Your siblings are competing to see who can hit that crazy high Mariah Carey note and now I have a headache.”

“That’s terrible,” said Lance, sitting down at the table, “I’m the only one who can hit that note.”

“That’s what I told them!” agreed Pop-pop then he settled down and said, “So, I heard you go to bed late last night. Was Keith with you?”

“Yeah,” said Lance shrinking down.

“I figured by your smile he got him to come back. How is he doing?”

“He’s good,” said Lance, wondering how else to describe Keith’s emotional state.

“Good. I felt so bad for how embarrassed he got at dinner. I hope you apologized to him for your siblings acting like such little shits.”

Lance laughed. His dad didn’t swear that often so it was amusing when he did. “I did. I was really unhappy with them not listening to me when I asked them to play itcool…”

“So were your mother and I. Mamá really let them have it.” Lance raised his eyebrows. His mother was usually so sweet so it was rare she actually scolded them, but when she did… oh boy. “She wouldn’t let Roni sleep over. Sent her straight back to the Garrison with no dessert.”

“Good,” agreed Lance.

“But you know,” said Pop-pop, “I do understand why they were behaving in such a way.”

“To torture me.”

“No, mio,” said Pop-pop with a shake of his head, “It is because they saw you when you were struggling the most. When they used to worry that you’d never smile again. And yes, we’ve all watched you be so strong and pull yourself out of that pit and we are all so proud of you for that, but… we remember feeling scared for you. So seeing you have someone who makes you smile like Keith does well… it feels like a win for the whole family. It feels like cause for celebration.”

Lance smiled, his heart warmed by the support his dad was showing when last week he’d been worried his dad wouldn’t accept him as anything other than straight. But then… he frowned.

“What is it, mio?”
“I remember feeling scared for me too,” said Lance, “And I know it wasn’t just a broken heart that got me there it was… so much of what I experienced, but Keith is so tied to what I went through. I have this list in my head of all the things I never want to try again and falling for someone was at the top of it. I didn’t choose to feel this way and I’m frightened it’s going to end like before.”

“That was an extreme circumstance, mijo.”

“I know, but Keith takes risks just the same… I think what I’m really worried about is that I’m going to quit to protect myself because… I do that a lot lately. I don’t want to lose Keith. I don’t want to screw this up.”

“Mijo,” said Pop-pop, pushing aside his newspaper and taking his son’s hand, “Something about Keith I’ve noticed is he can be reactive, hotheaded in the moment, but overall he is a very patient man. He has to be to keep coming here for years, waiting for the day you might return his feelings. I would wager he won’t give up on you easily. You can probably screw up with him three maybe four times before he even considers changing his mind about you.” His dad chuckled. “If he’s even capable of that.”

“Did he… talk to you about his feelings?”

Pop-pop laughed hard. “No, of course not. I’m speaking on what I observed. We all could see how dedicated he is to you. You have some wonderful friends, mijo, but we don’t see them often. Keith always takes time to come see you even though he has the most pressing job, the farthest away. He wants to be near you. That’s how I know how he feels. I believe just wanting to be near someone is the best expression of love… and, if you don’t mind me saying, it’s pretty obvious by how much you brighten during his visits how you feel about him.” His dad sipped his coffee then muttered into his cup, “Especially lately…”

Lance choked on his own coffee. He really wished his parents were less coy about the whole sex thing. “You know,” said Lance, when he’d recovered, “if the whole family knew this, you really could’ve told me how Keith felt and how I felt.”

Pop-pop shook his head vigorously. “Oh no, mijo, we could never breathe a word of it to you because you know what would happen? You’d deny all of it. You’re so stubborn you’d go out of your way to make sure nothing ever happened between you and Keith. No, we knew we had to let you discover your feelings slowly on your own. That’s what’s always worked best for you.”

“Did you guys like… have family meetings about this behind my back or…?”

“Yes, so many meetings.”

“This is all crazy,” laughed Lance. “My family is obsessed with me.”

“We’re obsessed with your well-being. We are proud of you and happy for you. That should be your take away.”

“Uh hey,” said Keith’s voice. He was standing at the entrance to the kitchen.

“Oh no,” said Lance, his face falling. “Go back to bed.”

“It’s late,” said Keith, raising an eyebrow.

“Yeah, but I was going to bring you breakfast in bed, but dad distracted me.”

“It was a nice thought,” said Keith, heading over to the coffee maker. “I could smell the coffee
“Get a lot of coffee out in space?” asked Pop-pop, not reacting to the hand kiss at all, which was good.

“Not good stuff like this,” said Keith, taking a sip with his free hand.

“I would’ve thought your answer would’ve just been no.”

“Well, human tourism is becoming a thing,” said Keith, “and where humans go, coffee shops crop up… actually usually the coffee shop comes and the people just appear. We’re apparently getting a Starbucks on Daibazaal.”

“So weird,” muttered Lance.

“I would like to see that,” said Pop-pop, “I’ll take your mother out for a latte on Daibazaal.”

Lance snorted.

“I am serious. We’re getting up there in age and haven’t travelled much besides between Cuba and the States. Now that intergalactic travel is a thing and so easy with these wormholes, it would be nice to see a completely different planet.”

“I… can’t picture that,” said Lance.

“I’m sure Veronica could hook us up with a ride from the Garrison,” said Pop-pop.

“I can take you myself in my ship,” said Keith.

“Even better,” said Pop-pop with a smile.

Lance couldn’t believe this exchange was happening. There was a knock on the kitchen window. Lance turned to see his brother waving at their dad. He opened his mouth and Lance was grateful for the glass mostly muting a terribly off key Mariah Carey high note.

His dad sighed and stood up, “Break’s over. See you boys later.”

“Bye Mr. Sanchez,” said Keith.

“Keith, please not so formal,” he warned before waving goodbye. He’d been telling Keith for years to call him ‘Pop-pop’ since that’s what everyone close to the family called him, but Keith naturally didn’t want to cross that boundary.

When his dad had left Keith said, “That would be something. Taking your parents to Daibazaal.”

“That’s not happening,” said Lance, clearing his cup and going to see what he could fix Keith for breakfast.

“Why not?” asked Keith. “They’re game and you could come along. Take them to see Altea. They’d probably like it better than Daibazaal. Way more touristy.”

Lance dropped his mug into the sink a little too loudly. “Yeah, really not happening,” muttered
“Coran would love it if you visited,” said Keith, “You know you were always his favourite and he only sees you once a year now.”

“Can we drop it?” asked Lance, spinning back.

“Not without a good reason why,” shot Keith, “You’d think you of all people would want to spend time on Altea now that it’s back –“

“Why is it back?” snapped Lance.

“Well… Pidge explained it like -,” began Keith, but he was cut off by Lance’s groan.

“Never mind.”

“You know, I deal with Altea and Daibazaal all the time,” said Keith, “I can’t avoid those as a topic of conversation so you wanna give me a heads up on the specific trigger for you here because I don’t want to randomly piss you off while trying to be polite to your dad?”

“Because you treat it like I have a connection to that planet like you do with Daibazaal, but I don’t. All it is to me is this place that I feel like is a shrine to my heartbreak and it’s where the Lions left us so no, it’s not touristy to me and it’s not a place I want to visit.”

“Okay,” said Keith, “I’m going to tread lightly here. Your marks…”

“Were given to me.”

“Maybe,” said Keith, “but mine…” Keith pointed at the Galra mark on his cheek.

“I don’t want it!” blurted Lance. “I don’t want some mysterious alien heritage like you and I don’t want to think they have some special meaning regarding my destiny. I don’t want any of it.”

“Okay,” said Keith, his voice thick. “I don’t want to upset you. If Altea is just going to be some random planet to you, I will refer to it that way.”

“Thank you,” said Lance, hugging himself and feeling shitty for getting mad at Keith.

Keith got up and walked up to him and wrapped himself around him.

“I’m sorry,” mumbled Lance. “I’m damaged…”

“I don’t see it that way at all,” said Keith, softly, “You’re growing. But I like you this way already. Growth spurts and all.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” chuckled Lance. “But you’re nice and I don’t feel like I deserve you.”

“Wrong,” said Keith, “You do, okay?”

“Okay,” repeated Lance.

Keith took Lance’s face into his hands and gave him a proper kiss then he said, “We both get to freak out sometimes. It’s gotta be part of the deal.”

“Deal,” agreed Lance, grateful for that.
“It’s different seeing you get angry.”

Lance blushed.

“I didn’t say it was bad.”

“I just… I used to think the way you showed people you cared was by being happy around them. Then when I was severely depressed I felt like I was letting everyone who cared about me down. That I was rejecting them.”

Keith shook his head. “I’m moody as hell, Lance. I don’t think that’s true or no one would like me or believe I liked them.”

“I like you so much,” said Lance, rocking himself against Keith.

“You have no idea what that means to me,” said Keith, nuzzling against Lance’s neck.

Lance felt himself choke up. He was so used to his confessions being met with dead air or worse, with the person immediately leaving him. On no wait… “Can you stay?” asked Lance. “I know you usually only stay a night, but can I keep you longer?”

*

Keith had been dreading this conversation. It was always hard for him to leave, but today was worse because he felt the need to justify it. Unable to properly explain himself, he instead pulled out his comm and held it out for Lance to look and scroll through the messages that had been piling up since last night.

“Something big happen?” asked Lance.

“The warlord we were about to take down when I left –“

“About to take down?” repeated Lance, looking up at him with curiosity.

Keith blushed. He’d never actually explained what had happened. “I kinda left mid-mission because I couldn’t wait any longer to see you.”

Lance’s face softened. “You’ve never left mid-mission before.” Then his expression shifted to concern. “Is that what went wrong?”

“No, the lesbians took her out, but the problem was she had a sister we didn’t know about.”

“Oh…”

“And the sister had a ship with a Zaiforge cannon.”

“Shit. Is everyone okay?”

“The Atlas intervened before the sister could target the planet,” said Keith, reassuringly, “But not before the cannon took out a close orbit moon. The debris from it entered the planet’s atmosphere. Axca’s leading the Blades in evacuating the effected parts of the planet.”

“And you… have to be there.” Keith could tell by Lance’s pause and neutral tone he the thought this mission could happen without Keith. Frustrated, he pushed through the speech he’d been plotting in his head since he’d woken up.
“The end of the war set the Galra on a path to peace, but it’s far from achieved. You can’t flip a light switch and expect a race of people who have been conquering planets for 10,000 years to just cut it out. The return of the planet Daibazaal was a catalyst for the majority of the people to support the Blade in reigning in those continuing to colonize other planets, but there are so many factions out there still resisting change and lately they’ve been getting bolder. I’ve had to order half my foreign aid workers back from humanitarian missions to help take down rogues and warlords and dictators. Honestly, it’s a mess out there…”

“So they need you out there,” said Lance, looking down at his feet, his arms crossed at his chest.

“Come with me,” said Keith before his brain could filter the thought. Did he really just lay his last card out on the table…?

Lance turned away and suddenly became very interested in the dials for the stove’s burners.

“It’s a rescue mission, Lance,” said Keith, raising his voice, as if Lance really wasn’t hearing him instead of choosing not to listen. “Not a battle. You wouldn’t need to engage in combat, just help direct citizens away from meteors.”

Lance flicked the dial on then reached to the side and grabbed a pan from the drying rack in the sink, twisting it in his hand before placing it on the burner.

Keith sighed, feeling like he’d picked the wrong battle. No one could disassociate like this version of Lance… “Or you could just wait in my ship while I… rescue people…” His voice was losing power as he spoke. “That way I can… see you right after and… you can just be near me.” His voice was a whisper by the end. He had to face it, this was the one card that didn’t play well.

Lance tapped his fingers on the counter then flicked off the burner again. He turned to face Keith with wide eyes. Keith was expecting a fight, but instead Lance held up his fingers and said, “Ten minutes!”

“What?”

“Ten minutes,” said Lance, starting to head to the kitchen door.

“What does that mean?”

“Every time you say you have to go, I get to request ten extra minutes with you so wait right there!” said Lance, excitedly. Then he turned and ran out and up the stairs yelling, “The ten doesn’t start until I come back!”

Keith was so confused. Last time he granted Lance a ten minute extension it was spent having sex over top of the wood pile. Did Lance think they were going to have kitchen sex? That seemed risky… Was he getting lube upstairs?

Alone and confused, Keith was left that way for about a minute. Finally Lance came back downstairs with – get this – more hair products plus one of those combs with the long stabby part on the end.

“What’s this for?” asked Keith, knowing full well it was all about to go in his hair. He just didn’t understand why.

“You said in the Blade you braid each others’ hair before missions. I’m going to use my ten minutes to braid you.” Lance dumped his stuff on the table and directed Keith to a seat.
“Oh, okay,” said Keith sitting down. The request kinda threw him, especially since he’d been expecting Lance to fight with him or at least beg him to stay. Instead he got fruity smelling products massaged into his hair by Lance’s depth fingers. He actually liked the feeling of Lance playing with his hair… It shouldn’t have been a surprise to him that if Lance liked doing something with him, Keith would automatically like it to. He was a real suck for pleasing him.

“And done,” said Lance, securing the elastic on the end approximately ten minutes later.

Keith reached back to run his fingers along the braid, but it felt weird. He was about to ask Lance why when he hit him with a cloud of hairspray.

“Seriously?” coughed Keith.

“I don’t want it shaking loose during battle or rescuing or whatever,” said Lance. Keith heard the snapping sound from the boy’s camera on his phone. “Look.” Lance stuck his phone in front of Keith and showed him the pic of what was not a normal braid.

“What did you do?” asked Keith, deadpan.

“Fishtail braid,” said Lance. “Don’t you like it?” the pout was evident in his voice.

“Uh…,” began Keith, figuring he needed to say something nice right about now, but being terrible at those things…

“It looks cute from the front,” said Lance as he snaked an arm around Keith’s neck and held his phone out in selfie mode.

“It looks… normal,” said Keith, inspecting the front view.

“Right, maybe it’s just you that’s cute,” said Lance, nuzzling his face against Keith’s. Keith smiled as Lance pressed a kiss to his cheek then SNAP. Lance withdrew his phone and ducked away from Keith.

“Did you just take a photo of us?” asked Keith, mildly horrified. He turned to see Lance typing away on his phone.

“Babe,” said Lance, all casual, “If we’re officially an item now, we need to start taking couple’s photos.”

Keith wasn’t exactly on board for cutesy photo taking, but he loved Lance calling them a couple. “Can I… see it?” asked Keith.

“Just sent it to you,” said Lance.

Keith’s communicator lit up so he snatched it off the table. He opened up the message from Lance to see… Oh wow, a legit looking couple photo of them. Keith felt weird about how he looked, but he did look happy and Lance of course looked great.

And then to Keith’s horror, the replies started rolling in… because Lance had sent the photo to a group chat.

Pidge: well that's fucking adorable
Hunk: kjslfjdkfsklfjd I AM SO HAPPY!! I'M SCREAMING!!
“Lance…,” said Keith, anxiously. “Did you mean to send that to the group chat?” He could’ve sworn he’d muted this chat…

“Of course,” said Lance, proudly. “Time we told our friends, right?”

“Hello?” came Lance’s voice behind Keith. “Hey, Hunk!... I know, right? Yeah, he’s right here though so I can’t talk about him… Well, he’s about to leave…”

“I can’t go,” said Keith, turning to Lance.

“Sure you can, Sweetie,” said Lance, covering the mouthpiece on his phone, “You’ve got your hair all did up, you just need your Blade suit on and you’re good to go.”

“No, I mean I don’t want to leave yet,” said Keith and shit if he wasn’t actually blushing. “I wanna stay with you.”

“Yes! Stay!” said Lance, striding across the kitchen and pulling Keith into a tight hug. “It would mean so much to me.”

“It’s settled then,” said Keith, hugging Lance back. “One more night.” The lesbians could handle the evacuation mission. Keith couldn’t handle leaving Lance.

“Guuuuuuuuuuys,” came Hunk’s voice from the phone still in Lance’s hand. “You’re going to make me cry… Too late I’m already crying.”

“We’ll talk later, Hunk,” said Lance, loudly before hanging up the phone.

“Let’s do something different though,” said Keith. “Let’s get off the farm. Is there anything around here?”

“There’s a small town with a bar about an hour’s walk from here,” said Lance.

“A bar sounds perfect,” agreed Keith. Lance smirked. That was… suspicious. Keith’s face fell. “What?”

“It’s a country bar.”

Keith groaned. “Of course it fucking is.”
Chapter End Notes

The next chapter will have to include a playlist because... you'll see...

Thank you for the support and comments! Y'all are amazing!

BBBKxoxox
Chapter Seven (a.k.a. "Country Prom")

Chapter Summary

Now that Keith's back in the Atmosphere
With drops of Daibazaal in his hair, hey, hey
He acts like summer and walks like rain
Reminds Lance that there's a-time to change, hey, hey

Chapter Notes

I'm going to do that annoying thing fic authors do where they apologize for a chapter being LONG. Okay, yes you like reading more, but I want to give a heads up that this is over 17,000 words and by far the longest chapter I've ever posted for any fic so make sure you set aside a good amount of time to read it. Get snacks, get comfy, hydrate.

This chapter contains smut followed by cheesiness and hilarity. It also has a playlist on Spotify

I will list full song credits in the end note. Every song cue is obvious except A Million Dollar by Joel Plasket which is my song for when they're getting ready to go out and Save Horse a Ride a Cowboy is just on the list for obvious reasons.

Have fun! See you in the end notes!

BBBKxoxox

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lance cooked them brunch. Keith was famished and ate about four pieces of toast along with the other food. No matter where he went in the galaxy, nothing beat toast and butter. No other culture could replicate something so simple and crunchy and delicious. Lance liked to joke that Keith came to visit the toaster instead of him. Well… he was a little bit right…

“You could just buy a toaster and bring it to space,” suggested Lance.

“They never get bread or butter right so there’s no point. Besides, I like having a reason to visit.”

“I’ll give you a reason to visit,” cooed Lance, leaning in to give Keith a kiss that ended in a gnaw on his jaw.

Keith’s communicator kept going off while he helped Lance wash dishes. He’d already sent messages to the appropriate Blade people to let them know he’d be gone another twenty vargas and to only send necessary updates. Apparently the definition of “necessary” was a broad one. Ezor seemed to be punishing him by live texting him the entire mission. On impulse he opened up the kitchen junk drawer and dropped him communicator inside. He shut the drawer and suddenly felt a
weight lift off of him.

“If we’re doing this, we’re dressing the part,” Lance said now that the dishes were done. He strode across the kitchen and grabbed a cowboy hat off the hooks in the mudroom and expertly flipped it onto his head.

“Understood,” said Keith with a nod. “Let’s not do this.”

“But don’t you want to show me off?” asked Lance with a cute grin as he ran his fingers along the hat’s brim.

“I’m more of a keep-you-to-myself kind of guy.”

“Well, I want to show you off,” said Lance, grabbing Keith’s hand.

“I could tell by the photo in the group chat,” said Keith. He sighed. Honestly, if it would make Lance happy, he was gonna do it. “Fine…”

Lance grinned then opened up the back door and bellowed. “DAD, CAN KEITH BORROW YOUR COWBOY BOOTS?” Oh no… what was Keith getting into?

“SURE! WHY?” came his dad’s response from out in the field. Man, those two could really yell when they wanted to. No wonder Lance was always so loud. He had no concept of an indoor-voice just a yell-across-the-farm-voice.

“WE’RE GOING OUT AND DRESSING TO KILL! EVERYONE’S CLOSETS ARE NOW FAIR GAME!”

“WHAT? NO!” screeched Rachel’s voice.

“Shit,” muttered Lance as he swung the door shut and locked it. Keith heard something large slam against the door. Through the window in the door he saw Rachel trying to get in. Her eyes locked with Lance’s then she darted to the side. “Fuck!” he yelled pushing back Keith and running through the kitchen. “Get the front door!”

But Keith just slowly walked behind, arriving in time to see Lance lock the front door himself as a furious Rachel slammed into this door too.

“Ha!” said Lance, sticking out his tongue at her as she glared at him through the front door’s window.

“Let her in,” said Keith. “We don’t need her clothes anyway.”

“Sure we do,” said Lance, turning to Keith with a smile. “Her legs are the same size as yours.”

Okay, yeah no, Keith was going to regret saying Lance could dress him.

*****

Lance went on a wild raid of all the bedroom closets until Rachel climbed in through an open window and chased them out of her room with a rake. With the spoils, Lance laid out several outfit options for Keith on his bed, which Keith didn’t have an opinion on beside, “No.” Then Lance declared that he couldn’t fully decide on what either of them were wearing until he found his own cowboy boots because he wasn’t one hundred percent sure he was remembering the colours right and he didn’t want Keith to clash.
“Why would your shoes need to match my outfit?”

“Oh Keith,” sighed Lance, dragging a tired hand down his own face. “I’m gonna need you to either embrace your inner gay or mute your outer straight for the remainder of time it takes to design our look for tonight.

Keith almost protested, but then he realized it was coming from a place that Lance had just deem Keith’s “outer straight” and therefore exactly what Lance didn’t want to hear.

Lance went into the hall and reached up to the ceiling to pull at a string with a toggle. He gave it a tug and down collapsed the steps to the attic.

“After you,” said Lance, with a gesture and a bow.

Keith took one step onto the steps and felt a smack on his ass accompanied by the word “Git!” Keith snapped his head back to see a very proud Lance smirking.

“Not a cow,” said Keith.

“Beg to differ.”

Keith continued to climb, this time nice and slow, popping out his booty and letting Lance get a show.

“Keeeeeith,” he whined.

“What? I’m just climbing.” He was only wearing sweats and very tempted to let his waistline dip down a bit… that would be embracing his inner gay, right? Or rather, unleashing it.

Tempting…

He peeked back down to see Lance was looking away and now refusing to climb until Keith was at the top. Honestly, it was way too easy to turn him on, but he could tell Lance wanted to focus so… Keith would reluctantly re-cage the inner gay.

Keith was able to stand at the top since the roof beams peeked overhead. The attic was mostly rafters stuffed with insulation, but with islands of plywood laid out where stacks of stuff were stored. Lance climbed up behind Keith then expertly tightrope walked across a beam like he’d done it a million times. Keith was still taking it in.

“Is this asbestos?” asked Keith, pointing down to the closest patch of pink insulation.

Lance had arrived on a plywood island with a wooden chest under a pile of cardboard boxes. He glanced at where Keith was pointing.

“No.”

Keith took one step onto the beam then pointed at another square. “Is that asbestos?”

“No.”

“Okay, but is that one - ?”

“None of it’s asbestos, Keith,” snapped Lance then he added, “Or it’s all asbestos. I don’t actually know what asbestos is.”
“We’re gonna die,” whined Keith, freezing on the beam.

“We won’t,” said Lance with an eye roll. He went about unstacking the boxes. “My siblings and I played up here all the time as kids and we grew up fine. We used to play dress-up with the old clothes and have races across the beams,” Lance chuckled. “One time Rachel slipped off beam while running – I mean she claims I pushed her, but that’s mostly an exaggeration - and fell straight through to my parents’ bedroom and landed between them on the bed.” Lance laughed again. “Super crazy timing too because my parents had both been in the middle of changing their clothes and they got tired at the same time and decided to lie down and - ”

Keith was just waiting for it.

Lance’s eyes went wide. “Oh my god! They were in the middle of having sex and Rachel fell on them! No wonder she’s so messed up.” Lance shuddered.

“Wow,” said Keith with a slow clap. “That is a very late in life realization.”

“I don’t wanna talk about it,” said Lance, abruptly.

Keith made his way over to a plywood island that looked appealing. It had a rocking chair and a little table beside it with a record player. There was also a box that contained records and a cooler than contained some very old and very warm beer that Keith considered partaking in then thought better.

“Looks like a mini mancave,” said Keith, poking through the record box. Not like he knew any of these artists.

“Actually, it’s my mom’s ‘Had it up to there’ spot,” said Lance.

“What does that mean?”

“Well, when she’s ‘had it up to here,’” said Lance holding a flat hand up to his chin, “it means she’s about to chew us out, but when she’s ‘had it up to there’” said Lance, holding that same flat palm above his head, “it means she’s heading up to the attic to drink and listen to records.”

“Cool,” said Keith.

“We’re not supposed to touch that,” said Lance, as Keith was poking at the record player.

“You weren’t when you were a kid,” said Keith, “and with good reason.” Keith blew the dust of the top then turned it on and let the needle drop on the record what was already sitting there.

I keep a close watch on this heart of mine
I keep my eyes wide open all the time
I keep the ends out for the tie that binds
Because you're mine, I walk the line

“I actually know this,” marveled Keith. “My dad listened to this music.”

“Whoa, you’re not a total alien,” snickered Lance

“Shut up,” shot Keith, sitting his ass down in the rocking chair.

“So you’re not gonna help me?” asked Lance as he opened up the wooden chest.

“Nope,” said Keith, letting the rocking do the rest of the talking.
Keith leaned back and did a scan of the rafters. Okay, so there was a spider web above him, but as long as that little guy stayed put, they wouldn’t have a problem.

“Bingo!” said Lance, pulling out a pair of boots. He inspected them closely. “Sapphire blue,” he muttered, poking at the top bit with the swirly pattern. “I’d been remembering the shaft as cerulean. Plus the vamp is more tawny than caramel. Thank the ancients I checked. Fashion disaster narrowly avoided.”

Keith didn’t know what he was talking about. To him they just looked blue and brown. Keith was definitely outer straight and therefore should not say that thought out loud.

“Sure they still fit?” asked Keith.

“Only one way to find out,” said Lance, going to stick his foot in one. “Gonna look weird with the sweat pants.”

“Take’em off,” suggested Keith.

“…Like ‘no pants’ off?” asked Lance, pausing with one knee raised.

“You heard me,” said Keith, giving Lance a naughty smirk.

“You’re joking.”

“I’m not because when you think about it, the only outfit you’re sure as heck not going to clash those boots and that hat with is your birthday suit.”

As sure as night is dark and day is light
I keep you on my mind both day and night


“You told me to embrace my inner gay.” Keith shrugged. “This is my inner gay’s opinion.”

“Your inner gay is slutty,” said Lance, his voice sounding dry like Keith had sucked the moisture out of his mouth (not yet he hadn’t.)

“True. But you knew that.” Keith stuck out his long legs and crossed one over the other all casual-like.


And happiness I’ve known proves that it's right
Because you're mine, I walk the line

“Open your eyes,” said Lance, after a minute steeped in anticipation.

Keith let his eyes slowly scan up as he opened them. Cowboy boots… bare legs… and a cowboy hat just at the spot he was planning on lingering.

“Shouldn’t that hat go on your head?”

“I’m being coy,” answered Lance, still looking a little embarrassed.

“Don’t be coy, be a cowboy.”
Lance brought his hand up to gracefully place the hat on his head. Keith let his eyes follow the smooth motion in which Lance simply put on a hat on. The grace of his every movement always fascinated him. Then Keith let his eyes very obviously wander south.

Lance already had a semi.

Good boy.

Keith considered the full look as Mr. Cash switched to singing a new song. It was hot as fuck, but... it could still be upgraded.

“You need an accessory,” stated Keith.

“The hat and the boots are accessories,” replied Lance, “Wait... do you mean a prop? Gee, your mouth is so not gay if you mix those two up.”

“My mouth is pretty gay when I suck your dick.” He said it bluntly and got a nice blush from Lance in exchange.

Keith kicked up to standing. He’d seen something and wanted to inspect it. He hop stepped over to Lance’s plywood island and stepped around him, ignoring him and all his naked glory. He could tell Lance was trying to move in just a bit, to request a bit of contact, but Keith didn’t want the distraction. Keith pushed aside a box and discovered exactly what he’d hoped he’d find after seeing the end stick out.

“Know how to use one of these?” asked Keith, giving the lasso a little twirl. It didn’t do what he wanted it to do. That was a little frustrating.

“Yeah, ’course,” said Lance.

Keith handed it to him then walked by without so much as a finger brush. He hopped the gap and sat back down, palms in his lap, expectant.

Lance seemed to take the hint. “Not much room in here,” he said, giving it a twirl.

“Excuses,” muttered Keith.

“You’re a bit mean today.”

Keith shrugged. “You told me to embrace my inner gay. My inner gay is slutty and mean.”

Lance spun the lasso back and forth around his body, as graceful in his motion. Perfect body control in everything he did. In sweat pants it was very obvious how turned on Keith was getting.

Suddenly that lasso was in the air, coming down around Keith and pulling tight around him and the back of the chair.

“If you’re mean, you get punished.” Lance’s voice sounded like liquid heat. Muscles tensed, his whole body was braced as it pulled so damn tight on that rope, assuring Keith there was no escape. Lance’s face, that had been just a little flustered a moment ago, looked so self-assure now, like he’d suddenly decided what he wanted.

“Oh, fuck yes,” mumbled Keith as Lance used the lasso rope to pull himself along until he was right in front of Keith. Then Lance took all that excess rope and spun it round and round Keith, effectively tying him to the chair.
Lance lowered himself down to his knees in front of Keith. “This okay?” he asked, softly.

“I believe my ‘fuck yes’ speaks for itself,” said Keith as he lifted his butt up enough to help Lance pull his pants down to free his very hard dick.

“Good,” said Lance, “Because my mouth is pretty gay too.” He pulled off his hat as it was definitely going to get in the way for this next part. Keith expected him to toss it aside, but instead with a fancy wrist roll he put it on Keith’s head.

“Oh, fuck no,” protested Keith.

Lance tapped the hat so it sunk properly into place on Keith’s head.

“I do not consent to the hat,” growled Keith.

“Hey, be a good little hick,” hummed Lance, taking Keith’s dick into his hand. “Wear your hat and I’ll make your punishment quick.” Lance licked up the side of Keith’s cock, causing the owner to completely stop caring about fashion.

Lance began bobbing on Keith’s dick. This was only the second blowjob Lance had ever given and he already took his cock like an expert, going from sucking to licking and stroking then right back to sucking. Keith couldn’t even think of anything smart to say. He was just way too busy feeling that aching heat right where Lance’s lips were touching and drinking in this sight in front of him. How many times had he fantasized over the years of Lance doing just this? Yet, he was unprepared for how great it would feel.

Keith discovered by accident that if he rocked the chair with his feet pressing up to tip toe he could push himself in and out of Lance’s mouth just a little deeper and harder. Lance choked then pulled off.

“You’re still being bad,” he warned.

Keith wanted to say something smart, he really wanted to be a sarcastic bitch right now like his inner gay would be, but… fuck, his inner gay just wanted Lance’s mouth back. So he just squirmed and whimpered, but resisted asking nicely because fuck that.

Lance held his stern look until he was sure no talk back was coming and then he resumed his good work, slowly lowering his lips onto Keith’s cock and drawing out a deep moan.

It was the not getting to touch him thing, see. That made it so fucking good.

Lance increased his pace, diving in like a man on a mission if that mission was sucking cock. Keith held still this time and didn’t let the chair rock because he was getting so close and if he didn’t get off soon, he’d have to break his hand free and do it himself.

“Lance, baby, yes,” Keith mumbled among the moans, which served to encourage Lance to go from 100% effort to 110%. Now he was choking on Keith’s cock every now and then when it bumped his throat, but it was Lance’s own fault and he wasn’t stopping this time.

When Keith came it was like electric convulsions trying and failing to break his body free from its ties. Being unable to move created this feedback loop and increased his pleasure until he was panting and sucking in breath because holy shit.

“Hmm,” came Lance’s voice. Keith had shut his eyes to try to calm his heart, but he could feel Lance lightly stroking his still hard dick. “I wonder how many I can get out of you this time…
Let’s go for a record.”

This was for sure a cluster orgasm record Lance was talking about. Keith was like yes, but also like wait because he knew his body could take a lot in battle, but the idea of Lance fucking him in a record-setting capacity was intimidating.

But on the other hand.

Oh, fuck yes.

Lance went right back to sucking his sensitive cock, which made Keith feel not okay in a very good way. His eyes didn’t want to fully focus, but the glowing marks on Lance’s face were hard to miss and so was that bare booty, sticking out over those cowboy boots. Keith wanted to touch the booty so bad.

“Lance,” began Keith, shocking himself with how raw his voice already sounded. “Climb on my lap.” Keith hadn’t even decided to say that, it was just coming out as the thought occurred to him, but he couldn’t take another orgasm without touching Lance. Not when he was naked and gorgeous. He wanted to feel Lance’s weight on top of him, have his bare skin pressed to him, drape his Lance over him like a blanket.

It was almost trance-like that Lance obeyed his request, his eyes just a bit glassy. As he stood, Keith could see the reason clear as day. Lance was rock hard yet had been wanting to just take care of Keith multiple times in a row. Boy couldn’t neglect his own needs like that. No, they both needed this. Needed each other.

Lance’s slow graceful slide onto Keith’s lap tipped the rocking chair back a bit so when Lance’s bare knees spread open and slide underneath the armrests, he was tipped right against Keith’s chest. Since they were both going for a kiss their faces knocked, but within a moment they found the right angle and the right pressure, too damn hungry to accept setbacks as defeats.

More adjustments with Lance’s body got the chair a little less angled while Keith used his feet to steady them. The rocking was a positive… once they were able to figure out what they wanted.

In this position, Lance’s cock was pressed into Keith’s own. He took both into one of his big farmer hands, gave them a delicious stroke then paused.

“This is a thing, right?” asked Lance, his tone a bit confused. “This is something people do?”

“Yes,” confirmed Keith, hiding desperation in his voice because it was all up to Lance to get them off. Not to say he didn’t trust Lance to get him there, he did more than any lover he’d ever had, but Lance could get a bit distracted. “Let’s fuck your hand together. I wanna come with you.”

This is where the rock of the chair became handy (pun intended.) Sure it Lance’s hand, but Keith’s feet controlled the rock that added that extra kick to each stroke. Soon Lance was mewing, his chest rising and falling rapidly as he pressed his upper half into Keith. Keith found he could reach Lance’s neck so he went to work there, kissing and sucking, trying to be kind and not leave a mark, but sometimes that rock of the chair made him suck a tiny bit too hard…

This is when Keith realized that he was more of a bad hick than he knew. Somehow, without his own knowledge, he’d worked an arm free from its binding.

Maybe it was all the Blade training. Maybe his subconscious always went to work finding solutions to being captured. Maybe he just really wanted to touch Lance’s butt.
Yeah, likely the last one.

Lance was too far gone to even piece together that Keith had got a hand free. All the cum and spit on Keith’s dick and the precum from Lance’s made their shared handjob so slick and good. Keith would’ve stolen some of that good wet for his fingers if he thought he could get away with without Lance noticing he had an arm out.

Instead he left Lance’s neck alone and pushed his fingers into his own mouth and covered them with spit. With Lance’s legs open like that, his cheeks were spread open too so it was so easy for Keith to reach around and find his target. So easy to rub those wet fingers over Lance’s asshole.

“Ahh – fuck,” panted Lance, his body arching against Keith. Then he seemed to realize what this meant. “You - your hands…”

“This okay?” asked Keith, rubbing across Lance’s entrance.

“Oh, fuck yes,” mumbled Lance.

Historically, Keith had not given Lance’s ass nearly enough attention and he really wanted to make up for that. So Keith kept rubbing and Lance kept stroking and that rock of the chair kept making everything press a little hard with a creek of the plywood below. Soon Keith’s fingers were not so much rubbing the outside as they were dipping inside. Lance’s moans were so pretty in Keith’s ear and soon he found Lance was rocking his body to take control of the chair motion so now Lance was fucking them with his hand and fucking himself with Keith’s fingers.

Lance mumbled something sexy sounding in Spanish that morphed into English with a “I’m coming, Keith…” and after a gasp for breath he add, “Come with me.”

He didn’t need to tell Keith twice since he’d been concentrating on holding back while Lance enjoyed himself. Keith let his senses take it all in properly, the weight of Lance and the feeling of him tighten around his fingers, Lance’s naked skin all over him and his hand working his cock while pressed against Lance’s own, then there was Lance’s breath and his voice and his smell.

Keith was gone. He moaned Lance’s name while he felt Lance’s cum mixed with his own slicked down across their dicks as they road it out together. Maybe he hooked his fingers inside Lance a little too rough (he was coming and not responsible for uncontrolled muscle contractions) because it did something extra to Lance, causing him to whine and roll and squirm his hips long after Keith’s orgasm had subsided.

Then he was dropping his full weight onto Keith and making the rocking chair dip farther back than the factory would’ve suggested was safe. Lance was Keith’s blanket. He was perfect and the only accessory – er – prop he ever needed.

Keith hadn’t actually taken his fingers out of Lance’s ass yet so it was Lance who eventually grabbed him by the wrist and pulled his whole arm out to the side.

“You weren’t supposed to break free!” he scolded.

“You weren’t supposed to put a stupid hat on me.” Keith tried to reach for it, but Lance held his wrist and used his other hand to adjust it as it had gotten tipped back during all the action. Keith tried to wrestle his wrist free to get it off him.

“Your hands are dirty!” snapped Lance. But since Keith wouldn’t let up, Lance finally snatched it off himself and flung it across the attic. Keith smirked, having gotten exactly what he wanted.
Lance caught that satisfied look. “You definitely need further punishment.”

“Your idea of punishment is orgasms so yeah, go for it,” agreed Keith.

“You fingered me so I have to pay you back,” said Lance.

“Good luck in this position,” taunted Keith, but actually, no really, please do that.

Lance peeled himself off of Keith and maneuvered himself to standing. Keith immediately missed him. Like his skin missed his skin and almost ached with loneliness. It was wild. Lance bent and went about unraveling the lasso wrapped around Keith and the chair.

Being released and free to moved on his own was bizarre. Keith missed the security of Lance in control, but no sooner was he free than Lance spoke.

“On your knees. Elbows on the chair.”

Keith knelt down on the plywood and rested his elbows on the seat of the rocking chair. A little kick from those boots and Keith closed his knees. Next thing he knew he felt Lance using the rope to tie is ankles together and felt this burst of… pride? Like well done, Lance! Was that a strange reaction?

“Take your elbows off and lean down onto your chest,” Lance instructed. Keith lay his chest down on the seat of the rocking chair and as soon as he did, Lance took his wrists and held them together behind Keith’s back.

“Are you fucking hogtying me?” gasped Keith, because the sass mouth could not be stopped.

“I need you more secure,” said Lance, defensively as he wrapped the rope around Keith’s wrists. At least it was a nice smooth rope and not an itchy one. Keith had been tied up by some pretty cheap ropes in the past.

“Fucking hillbilly,” cursed Keith. “You wanna fuck me like an animal?”

“I’m going to ride you like one.”

“I ride you,” countered Keith, “You’re my steed.”

“No, I believe I just rode your lap and also, if you wanna ride a steed you gotta be a cowboy and cowboys wear the hat.”

Lance got up and when he returned, from what Keith could see from his awkward position, Lance was wearing the hat himself again. Because of course. This was just Keith’s life now and as Lance slid Keith’s sweatpants down so just his ass was exposed, he decided he had zero complaints.

“Scratches are looking better,” muttered Lance, breaking character.

“I heal fast,” confirmed Keith.

“Good. The ties are loose,” said Lance, “You can wiggle free again if you feel the need to.”

“I can escape even if they’re tight, but thanks for that,” said Keith.

With that cleared up, two strong hands spread open Keith’s ass cheeks and he gasped as Lance’s tongue licked between them. Keith settled into pleased hums as Lance ate out his ass like a good country boy. The best thing about sex with Lance (and there were a lot of positives) was he did
everything wholeheartedly and fuck, getting eaten out wholeheartedly felt amazing.

“Lance, it’s so good, moaned Keith.

“Come for me again,” mumbled Lance, the cool breath hitting the spit on his ass.

This gave Keith pause because as good as this fucking felt, he needed a bit more to come. “Can you finger me a bit first?”

“Come like this,” said Lance, pausing to like. “Do it for me.”

“I want to,” said Keith slowly, but feeling that bit of worry that he knew he likely wouldn’t get there and that worry made him less revved up. His instinct was to just reach down and jerk himself off while Lance did his nice work, but he forgot he was tied and as soon as he shifted he start to slip off the chair.

Lance was quick and caught him before he rolled to hit the floor. “You okay?”

“Yeah, I…” Keith wondered if the floor would be good ‘cause he could rut there, but then plywood...

“You wanna stop?” asked Lance, pulling Keith back onto his knees.

“No! I just really could use a finger,” he admitted.

“Sorry,” said Lance, “I’m acting on impulse here and if it’s not working...”

“Lance,” said Keith seriously, looking back over his shoulder. “It is working. It’s so fun and amazing and I’m totally into it. I just want you to fuck me with your finger and hit my prostrate, okay?”

“Of course. I should’ve listened. You’re the boss.” As Lance said this, he was using he had that wasn’t around Keith’s waist to massage his ass cheek. “Actually – uh – do you have a safe word perchance? Just in case this really does get to be too much.”

“Weblum,” answered Keith automatically.

“That’s… you know you should choose a less common word.”

“Weblum never comes up while having sex,” said Keith, defensively.

“Oh no? How about the fact that I just ate your ass like a Weblum eats planets?”

“I’m not – ah – changing it.” Lance was lightly stroking Keith’s cock while tracing fingers over his entrance. “What’s yours?”

“Um, well, I’ll be coming up with one on the spot so… hat?”

“No.”

“Rocking chair?”

“No.”

“… Record player?”
“Stop naming things in the room!”

“Fine! How about… Iverson?”

“Iverson? Why?”

“Because he’s the anti-sex and when I think of him all things sexy grind to a halt.”

“I guess that works,” agreed Keith since Lance’s hand stopped stroking him during this part of the conversation. “Now I believe you were gonna finger me until I come for a third time, right?”

“Yeah, totally, uh, lean down again.” Lance guided Keith’s chest back onto the seat of the rocking chair. “Lube…” muttered Lance. He automatically started patting Keith down.

“I’m wearing your clothes, not mine so don’t look at me.”

“Dammit,” Keith heard Lance mutter. “Fuck it. I’m risking detection. I’ll be right back!”

With that Keith listened to the sound of cowboy boots across the beams and then down the stairs. They never even closed up the stairs… Fuck, they were crazy. Especially since Lance was scurrying to his bedroom in nothing but boots and cowboy hat while Keith was hog tied, exposed, and presenting himself for anal penetration in a place anyone could just walk up and see. What if Lance’s mom decided it was time for her “had it up to there” spot?

Keith listened to Johnny Cash croon about something while he waited for a Lance. Mere seconds later he heard Lance pounding up the stairs followed by the sound of him closing the attic pull down stairs (good!) Next he heard Lance’s steps running across the beams.

“Success!” he declared as Keith turned his neck so he could kinda see over his shoulder. “You still good? Not weblum?” He could hear the lube being opened.

“You need to just finger me al – ah – fuck!” Lance just went in knuckle deep right away, shocking Keith.

“You’re still pretty loose,” said Lance, his tone soft, “You feel really fucking good.”

“Bet I’d feel better on your dick,” said Keith, his voice a breathy mess.

“Fuck, Keith… Don’t get me going.”

“I absolutely want to fucking get you going. Don’t tell me you’re going to tie me up like an animal and not fuck me like one?”

“Keeeeith,” hissed Lance, his fingers thrusting hard and getting a little sloppy, less focused. That heat was pooling low. This was exactly what Keith needed.

“I can’t help it,” said Keith with a bit of a pout. “I want your cock so bad.” That dirty talk had him, it pushed him over the top. Got Keith moaning as he gripped Lance’s fingers. It felt so good like it was vibrating through him.

Here’s the other thing, that dirty talk had Lance too because Keith was even finished coming when he felt Lance enter him, giving him another shock of pleasure.

Lance was finally fucking him from behind while Keith was hogtied like an animal and kneeling on the dirty attic floor. None of this was planned, but it had become exactly what Keith wanted.
“Fuck, Keith, you’re so sexy it drives me nuts,” mumbled Lance, fucking into him hard.

“I – felt that way – about you,” it was hard to speak when Lance was pounding him like this, “for years…”

Lance slowed to a roll, “Yeah, but you’re so kinky… I can’t compete.”

“Lance,” said Keith in the harshest tone he could muster while still having the boy’s dick in his ass, “barn sex, tree sex, bathtub sex, attic sex with restraints – all your ideas – ahh!”

“Yeah but…”

“You were mostly a virgin a week ago, but now – ah!”

“I guess…”

“You’re kinky. I’m just happy – ah – to be along – ah – for the ride.” Okay, talking was so hard when he was getting such good dick.

“Hey, I’m riding you,” said Lance, getting a competitive edge to his voice just as he bottomed out a little harder.

“Yeah – oh fuck…” Okay, Keith could not argue anymore. Especially not when Lance gripped his hips and just went for it. Keith wished there was a well placed mirror so he could take in the whole picture. He could only imagine the sight of him tied up and helpless while filled up with cock. He wanted to see how Lance looked naked and fucking with that stupid fucking hat on his head and being the weird kinky hillbilly he was meant to be.

I fell into a burning ring of fire
I went down, down, down
And the flames went higher

“What the fuck is this song?” whined Keith, becoming aware of what Johnny Cash was singing.

And it burns, burns, burns
The ring of fire
The ring of fire

“Shit, okay,” said Lance even though he was still fucking Keith and not turning off this mood killing song.

I fell into a burning ring of fire
I went down, down, down
And the flames went higher

Keith heard Lance shifting around then he saw a hand with a boot wave in front of him then something heavy hit that record player and stopped it.

“Dammit,” swore Lance, “If that’s broken I’m dead.”

“Worry when you’re not inside me,” urged Keith. Lance had slowed down too much for his liking. But then Lance started right back up with gusto. He was muttering something in Spanish again while he reached around Keith’s waist to give his cock some attention. Just a few pumps in and Keith was done. He was so high on the idea of them and imagining what they looked like that the extra sensation had him soaring.
“Yes – fuck yes,” groaned Lance as Keith gripped tight around him.

“Come in me, baby,” moaned Keith though he wasn’t sure if it came out of his mouth clear enough to understand. He was moving from fire to putty as Lance moaned and sputtered his last thrusts into him.

Keith just had to breathe it out for a minute after. He wasn’t used to four orgasms so close together and it made him a little light head. Water. He needed to drink lots of water. The nice thing was Lance wrapping his arms around Keith’s middle and leaning lightly on him and kissing between his shoulder blades.

“That was really something,” said Lance, when he finally spoke. “You were amazing. Thank you.”

“I came four times,” said Keith. “I should be thanking you.”

“Yeah, but you also went through with all my weird shit.”

“I liked your weird shit,” said Keith with a chuckle. “I’m never bored with you.” Really he loved Lance’s weird shit, but he kinda shied away from that word.

Lance set Keith on his knees and went to untie him starting with his ankle restraints. “Can I get you something? What do you need now?” asked Lance.

“Water, shower… you,” said Keith, glad Lance couldn’t see his face.

“We’ll have a shower together. Boom. Three birds. One stone.”

“How is that the water thing taken care of?”

“Drink shower water. You’re a hick now. No need for fancy filters or cups.”

“Fuck you,” muttered Keith.

“You already did. A lot. Oh hold still, you have a spider on your ass.” Lance said this all casual like he hadn’t just told Keith there was a fucking spider on his fucking bare ass!

“What?!” shrieked Keith, instinctively trying to swat it to fucking death, but forgetting his hands were tied so instead he whole body got swung about like a club, tipping him off balance and slamming him into Lance. Next thing he knew they were both down and rolling off the plywood into the probably-not-but-maybe asbestos insulation.

“Fuck!” cried Lance, who threw out an arm and a leg to one side, catching on a beam, then his other arm went to block keith from rolling further than hanging halfway off the plywood, but that second foot… that second foot, the one still wearing a boot… Keith heard it puncture through the insulation and then the drywall ceiling. “Shit, no!”

Keith had to squirm to get back on the plywood. This would’ve been a good time for him to use all his training to break free and make sure that fucking spider was dead because Lance was no longer telling him what was happening there!

…Or help Lance out because his leg was stuck…

“How is it dead? I mean… are you okay? But like seriously, is it dead or is it still on my ass? Oh my fucking god, what if it crawls up my asshole? Fuck, Lance, kill it.”

“Babe, I’m trapped, but lucky for you that tiny ass little spider is super fucking dead.”
“Oh thank goodness,” sighed Keith. “So, uh, can you untie me so I can help you out?”

“Um no, That’s backwards. You need to get me out so I can untie you. Then we need to change my name and leave the country because I think I put my foot through my parents’ bedroom ceiling my and mom is going to have my fucking head and for fuck’s sake Keith, you are a Blade, how are you afraid of spiders!”

“I’m not,” protested Keith.

Lance was somehow managing on his own to push up with his arms and get his leg pulled out. When he was free, instead of going to help Keith, he looked through the hole. “We’re in luck. It’s just Rachel’s room and she’s got headphones on so she didn’t even – oh she saw me – Hey Rach!”

“WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK LANCE?!” came Rachel’s voice from below.

“Funny story… See, Keith’s afraid of spiders…”

“I’m not afraid of spiders!” protested Keith, “It’s just when they touch me, I feel the need to kill them. That’s not the same as fear!”

“I’M TELLING MOM!”

Lance looked at Keith with panic. “Pull up your pants. We need to get dressed like now!”

“… You still haven’t untied me!”

“Would this be a good time to tell you that I don’t actually know where the spider went?”

“Fuck!” screamed Keith and he’d never broken out of bindings so fast!

*****

Lance forced Keith to do “the staircase walk” which was ridiculous because Lance had been the one to dress him.

“Oh, you look nice,” said Lance’s mother, clapping her hands together. Keith could only assume she was being forced to watch and say nice things.

Lance’s dad whistled. “Very sharp.”

“You look like a supermodel,” said Lance’s nephew.

“A real Claudia Ship-shipherd,” added Nadia.

Keith scowled at Lance. “Okay, you paid them to say that.”

“I did no such thing,” said Lance.

“You were mouthing along as they spoke!”

Lance turned and slipped something into Nadia’s hand then whispered, “Get out of here. Get out of here.”

The two of them ran off while Keith finished descending the stairs. Rachel’s jeans were very fitted, Pop-pop’s boots were awkward as well, Marco’s shirt was… well, Keith liked Marco’s shirt. It was red and black plaid. There was a small design on the collar that was a bit much for Keith, but
he could ignore it.

“You look breathtaking,” said Lance as Keith stepped off the stairs.

“You literally just saw me,” countered Keith.

“The angle of the stairs made you so much hotter! Seriously, babe, you were moving in slow motion. Wasn’t he?” Lance turned to his mom.

“Uh…”

“He was moving very slowly,” agreed Pop-Pop. “You are right, mijo. Your man is very, uh, fetching.”

Keith scowled.

“Okay, you have to stop getting angry every time anyone compliments you,” sighed Lance.

“I’m not angry. This is just my face.”

“Now for the finishing touch,” said Lance, picking up the cowboy hat off the table and twisting it around to place on Keith’s head.

“Whoa pardner,” said Keith, stepping back out of reach of the hat. “That’s going to fuck up my hair.”

“Keith, language,” warned Mrs. McClain.

“Look who suddenly cares about his hair,” mocked Lance.

“You’re the one who made me shower and rewash it because the fishtail braid wasn’t going to work with this look and you’d already set it with the hairspray!”

“And I stand by that,” said Lance.

“And you set a timer up in the bathroom so I’d keep that conditioner in for the full five minutes!”

“It’s the only way you’ll learn.”

“Then you made me mousse it and defuse it and rebraided it!” Now he had ‘french braids’ along the sides with all of it pulled into a ponytail at the back. “If you think we did all that so you could give me hat hair, you’re dreaming.”

“Keeeeith,” squealed Lance, cutching his hands together.

“What?”

“That was the gayest thing you’ve ever said.”

“Twas pretty gay,” said Pop-Pop with a nod.

Keith wanted to say something sarcastic about all the times he’s talked about Lance’s cock probably being the gayest stuff he’s ever said, but then his parents were present.

“What are you doing?” asked Keith, deadpan. Lance was holding out his fingers in a frame.

“Mental picture,” explained Lance. “You seriously look so good right now.”
“Okay, but phones exist.”

“Yes! Phones exist!” Lance pulled his out of his pocket and snapped a pic of Keith then turned it for a selfie.

“Let me,” said Lance’s mom. She took the phone and held it up. “C’mon Keith. I know that’s just your face, but pretend to smile.”

Keith was happy… just not great with attention, but he looked at Lance and used him as motivation to smile.

“It’s like you two are going to prom with all this fuss,” laughed Pop-Pop.

“Is it?” asked Lance. “Neither of us got to do stuff like that…” Then he was thoughtful. “Should I have ordered a limo?”

“Walking is fine,” stressed Keith. “Goodnight Mr. Sanchez, Mrs. McClain.”

“Call me Pop-Pop, Keith. Seriously. Oh, and make sure you bring him back in one piece.”

“I will,” said Keith, tugging Lance to the door. Lance was distracted looking at the photo on his phone. Keith would feel a lot less anxious when it was just him and Lance alone on this date.

They stepped out onto the porch and they were off.

“Is that going to ruin your hair?” He asked, pointing at the cowboy hat Lance had decided to put on when Keith refused it.

“Honey, my hair products are next level. There is no hat alive that could ruin this hair.” Lance gave Keith’s hand a squeeze as they walked down the steps.

“You look nice too,” said Keith, trying to say the correct thing. He always thought Lance looked good, but tonight he’d chosen his outfit specifically for his date with Keith and even if Keith didn’t see how it was nicer than usual, it felt nicer.

“Thanks,” said Lance, “It’s the Canadian Tuxedo.”

“Tuxedo?” repeated Keith, super confused. Lance was wearing jeans with a blue button up and a jean jacket overtop. Nothing so fancy as to us the word ‘tuxedo.’

“Denim on demin,” said Lance then when he could tell Keith was still lost he add, “the nickname is meant to be ironic. Like all the good nicknames.”

“Right,” said Keith, “Well, I like it.”

Lance awkwardly laughed then said, “Sorry I’m so extra. I’m just happy.”

“Don’t apologize for being yourself,” said Keith, squeezing his hand. “I’m sorry I’m so awkward. I’m happy too, just bad at showing it.”

“Don’t apologize for being yourself,” echoed Lance. “I know you smile plenty when we don’t have an audience.”

The hour-long walk would be good for that. They’d have some alone time the Sanchez-McClain farm didn’t allow. But of course as soon as they stepped onto the dirt driveway, the family pick up truck drove up and stopped in front of them, blocking their path. There was country music blaring
from the cab and Rachel and Marco were sitting in the bed of the truck, waving at them.

“Get in losers,” said Rachel, leaning over the side of the truck bed, “We’re going drinking!”

“Wait,” said Lance, “Are you trying to crash our date?”

Marco sucked on the butt of his joint then flicked it over the side. “You think you can go to our bar without us?”

“I… well, I promised Keith,” stuttered Lance.

“What’s the fucking hold up?” came a third voice from the passenger window.

“Lisa?” gasped Lance as his sister-in-law leaned out the passenger side.

“Just get in the fucking back and let’s get this show on the road! Woo!”

“We got a sitter,” said Luis, stepping out of the driver’s side. “Lisa’s already three drinks in…”

“We’re gonna get crazy tonight, bitches!” cheered Lisa.

“She hasn’t had a night out in awhile,” said Luis, seeming a little embarrassed.

Lance looked at Keith. “Your call.”

“Seems like Lisa’s going to the same bar whether we accept a ride or not,” said Keith.

“You sure?” pressed Lance.

“It does seem like I’m dating your entire family so I don’t think I actually have a choice.” Keith squeezed Lance’s hand to reassure him that he wasn’t angry.

“Yeah, Lance,” giggled Rachel. “He’s our collective boyfriend now.”

“Keep your eyes to yourself,” lectured Lance, pointing at Rachel. “He doesn’t swing that way! God, you’re just as bad as Veronica!”

“But you dressed him so pretty,” snickered Marco.

“Vultures. All of you.”

Keith rolled his eyes and walked towards the truck. Marco and Rachel stood to offer Keith their hands to help him up, but he just put on hand on the side and launched himself in.

Marco looked at Rachel, “I don’t know why we thought he’d need our help.”

Lance climbed in beside Keith and they sat, leaning their backs against the cab. Lisa slapped the side of the door three times then yelled, “Roll out!” The siblings burst out into cheers and whoops as Luis sped them down the long dirt driveway.

Marco lit up another joint and offered it to Keith and Lance. They both declined, but when Rachel pulled out a flask they accepted that, passing it around between the four of them.

“I’m sorry, but it has to be said,” yelled Rachel over the roar of the truck speeding down the dirt back roads. “That hold is incredible.” Keith was confused because she was pointing at the side of his head. “May I?” Rachel ran her fingers along the side of the braid there. “Staying put even in
“What’s your mousse game there?” asked Marco, scooting closer.

“Smell it and see if you can tell,” said Lance.

Then his siblings both smelt the sides of Keith’s head.


“For his texture, of course.”

“Oh, it’s so cool you have a new hair texture to play with! I’m so sick of us all having the same hair. I need a new hair dolly,”

“What hold level?” asked Marco, still examining Keith’s head. “3? 4?”

“Both,” answered Lance. “3:1 ratio.”

“So a homemade 3.25 hold?”

“Genius,” said Rachel with a nod.

Something was dawning on Keith. “So you’re all into hair? Not just Lance?”

“No, we woke up like this,” laughed Rachel, flipping her long, wavy hair over her shoulder. “Our mom was a cosmetologist back in Varadero,” said Marco. “Before we moved stateside to take over the family farm.”

“Did I never mention that?” asked Lance.

“You might have and I just didn’t listen,” said Keith. “So… all those times you complained about my mullet… Was it because you were hoping I’d ask you to fix it?”

Lance shrunk down and blushed. “Was that… not the right way to communicate that?”

Keith wrapped his arm around Lance and kissed him on the cheek. “Okay. You can trim my hair.”

“Yes!” said Marco, fist pumping and Keith worried he’d just agreed to all of them working on his hair.

“Oh! We can do a hot oil treatment!” said Rachel rubbing her hands together.

“Have you thought about a side shave?” asked Marco, blowing out a puff of pot smoke.

“That’s what I suggested!” said Lance, excitedly.

“No side shave,” said Keith, putting his foot down. “Just a trim.”

ZAP! Lance and his siblings cried out in shock and suddenly there was a big wet tongue on Keith’s face.

“Kosmo!” he laughed, pushing the giant wolf face back so he could look at him. He was completely filling up the truck bed and pushing all the passengers to the outer edges.

“Big blue butt… in my face,” whined Rachel, but Keith couldn’t see her anymore.
“Hey, boy,” gushed Lance, reaching up to give Kosmo scratches under the chin. “I haven’t seen you in so long! How did you get here?

“You made a big jump, didn’t you?” said Keith. “You teleported all the way across the universe!”

“I’m fine… just crushed… if anyone cares,” mumbled Marco from a place Keith could no longer see.

“I didn’t know he could go that far,” said Lance.

“He must’ve been worried about me,” said Keith, stroking his wolf’s nose. “I never leave the Blades for more than twenty vargas.”

“And he can just find you? That’s incredible.”

Keith felt that warm feeling in his head he got when Kosmo was communicating a thought to him. “No, I’m staying another night… there’s not much for you to do where we’re going… They won’t let you in a bar.”

“You should go wait back at the farm,” suggested Lance, “Say hello to the horses.”

“Didn’t he hump a horse last time he was here?” asked Marco.

“No!” said Keith defensively. “The horse humped him and that’s why I stopped bringing him. But you can go visit Kaltenecker… Yes, I know she’s your rival, but sometimes those turn out to be your favourite fellow animals…”

The cab window slid open behind Keith’s head.

“Holy fucking shit!” gasped Lisa, “Is that Kosmo? Luis! Luis, pull over so I can pet that blue fucking doggo!”

Lisa’s intensity did not bode well with Kosmo who flipped around and jumped off the back of the moving trunk, sprinting his way back to the farm.

“Fuck,” groaned Lisa. “I wanted so many pets.”

“You can cuddle him when we get home later,” suggested Lance.

“My face smells like cosmic dog butt,” moaned Rachel.

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“You drove past the town,” shouted Lance, sticking his head into the open window at the back of the cab.

“Naw,” yelled Luis. “We got a tourist with us. We gotta do the thing.”

“Yes, awesome!” agreed Lance.

“What’s the thing?” asked Keith. Lance just grinned. “Something hick-ish?”

“No, it’s touristy,” said Lance.

“Let me guess, we’re going to see the giant ball of twine? World’s biggest hay bale? World’s largest hoe?”
“No, honey, that’s you,” said Lance, giving Keith’s shoulder a squeeze. Marco and Rachel burst out laughing.

Lance figured Keith would either react with offence or confusion, which is why it was a total surprise when his response was, “Universe.”

“What?”

“Largest hoe in the universe. I’m intergalactic.”

“Yes!” cried Rachel with delight, crawling forward to high five Keith while she laughed. Marco was laughing so hard he nearly tipped over, but then, he tips over a lot when he smokes in a moving vehicle.

“See! I told you he was funny sometimes,” said Lance proudly.

“Sometimes?” echoed Keith.

“You know you’re not funny when you’re in leader-mode and other times you’re just mean.”

“I’m funniest when I’m mean.”

“I wanna see,” said Rachel. “Be really mean to Lance!”

“No!” snapped Lance.

“I’m sure I’ll be at some point,” said Keith with a shrug.

Lance knocked on the back of the cab. “Turn up the radio!” Luis cranked it and they spent the last few minutes of the drive singing along to Kenny Rogers.

You've got to know when to hold 'em
Know when to fold 'em
Know when to walk away
And know when to run

Luis turned off the road where a sign boasted ‘Point of Interest.’ When he pulled over, everyone piled out.

“Who wants to go first?” asked Luis.

“Me!” said Rachel, barreling forward.

“Rach, no! Keith and Lance should go first,” said Lisa.

“Too late!” said Rachel, skipping up onto the stone marker. “Take my photo!”

“No one’s taking your photo until after Keith’s had his turn,” said Luis.

“Turn at what?” asked Keith.

“Standing on the tri-point,” said Lance, leading Keith forward. He glared at Rachel, but she stood there stubbornly.

“The what?”
“Where the three states meet,” said Rachel, she spun in a circle and pointed as she said “Colorado, Kansas, and sweet, sweet Nebraska.”

“No,” said Lisa, stepping up. “You mixed up Kansas and Colorado.”

“You’re both wrong,” said Marco. “That’s Virginia.”

“Dude, we are no where near Virginia,” said Lance.

“Fine. West Virginia.”

“This is Kansas,” said Luis, pointing back to the truck.

“We came from Nebraska!” argued Lisa.

“Yes, but we have to go through Kansas to get to the access road to get here so we technically came from Kansas so that’s Kansas.”

“Why isn’t this better marked?” asked Keith, looking around for more signage.

“Look at the sun,” cried Lisa, pointing into the sky. “It’s late afternoon so it’ll be in the west and – ah!” Lisa ducked down and shielded her face. “I looked directly at it. Curse you, sky fire ball! Why are you still up?”

“You just got drunk a little early,” said Luis, rubbing her back.

“Anyone good with directions?” asked Lance. “We gotta figure out which state is which way.

Keith sighed. “Yeah, so Luis was right this is Kansas and –“

“Tell us from here,” said Rachel, hoping off the stone marker.

“Fine,” said Keith, stepping onto it. “Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas” and as soon as Keith turned to the front, Lance snapped a photo.

“Got it! Got the tourist photo!” cheered Lance as Keith scowled.

“So that was a trick,” muttered Keith.

“Lance, get in there!” ordered Luis. “We’ll take one of the two of you together.”

“Yes,” said Lisa. “You need to do the photo where you’re kissing in three states at the same time!”

“You gotta be kidding me,” said Keith.

“C’mon, it’s the fun tourist thing to do!” urged Lisa.

“I’m not a tourist,” said Keith. “I was born there,” he said, pointing to Colorado. “I went to school there,” he pointed back to Nebraska, “And I can see Kansas from your farm.”

“I didn’t know you were from Colorado,” gasped Marco.

“How could you?” said Rachel. “Keith never talks about himself.”

Lance could tell Keith was getting a little worked up from all the attention so he stepped up onto the marker and hugged Keith from behind. “One photo together.” Luis was snapping it on his phone instantly.
“Now kiss,” demanded Lisa.

“Have we not established that I’m local?” said Keith. “I don’t need the tourist photo.”

“But Luis and I have fifty photos of us kissing at three corners.”

“And we’ll take fifty more,” said Luis, hugging his wife from behind and kissing her on the top of
the head.

And maybe Keith would’ve relented if Rachel hadn’t immediately followed that sweet moment
with, “Kiss, kiss, kiss!”

“No one’s kissing with all of you watching,” warned Lance. Immediately all four of them put their
hands over their eyes. “But the photo…” Luis held out his phone, trigger finger at the ready.

Lance sighed and rolled his eyes at Keith. “Okay, we did it,” he lied. “We kissed.”

They immediately removed their hands and went to check the phone.

“You motherfucking liars,” hissed Lisa. “There was no kiss!”

“We totally kissed and it was hot, but Luis obviously snapped the photo at the wrong time.”

“It was a video, asshole,” snapped Rachel.

“I don’t want y’all taking a video of us kissin’! Dangit…,” muttered Lance. “Now my y’all’s are
coming out!”

“You know what,” said Keith, “I want to go to the bar so let’s fast track this.” Lance had no idea
what he meant. At least not until Keith scooped an arm behind him, dipped him backwards and
kissed him full on.

Lance heard some whoops and definitely some snaps of photos being taken, but he was completely
wrapped up with the thought that Keith had kissed him in front of his family and that was huge.

They stayed longer so everyone could get photos at the tri-point and Luis and Lisa took their fifty-
first photo of them kissing across three states. Keith volunteered to take the photos, which was
likely a sneaky way for him to avoid being in more photos. Lance was glad it was Keith taking the
photos because while his siblings were focused on making goofy poses, Lance really just couldn’t
keep his eyes off Keith.

Agreeing they were together was one thing, but Keith asking him out then letting his family crash
it was huge. Plus he let him dress him up and now he wasn’t just putting up with his family’s extra-
ness, but participating in it… It meant so much to Lance and he really wanted to show Keith how
much it meant tonight at any opportunity he could.

“Do the thing!” encouraged Lisa as she looked at Lance.

“What thing?” asked Keith.

“It’s too cheesy,” whimpered Lance, “I don’t want Keith to see me do it.”

“But it’s tradition, bro,” pressed Luis. “We’ve never visited Three Corners without you doing the
thing.”

Keith had his eyebrow raised when he said, “Whatever it ‘the thing’ is you best do it so we can go
drink.”

“Fine.” Lance stepped in front the marker then taking a huge step past it, said “Toto, I have a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore.”

His siblings reacted with huge laughs and cheering. Lance looked over at Keith to see him cringing.

“I started doing it as a kid,” said Lance, defensively.

“Yeah, maybe outgrow this tradition,” suggested Keith.

“Alright folks,” announced Luis, “the sun is setting over Colorado, which means it’s bar time.”

“Wouldn’t that be West Virginia?” asked Marco.

“Nothing is Virginia, Marco!” growled Rachel, grabbing her brother’s arm and pulling him back to the car.

“Stick him in the front, Rach,” said Lisa. “I wanna sit in the back where the action is. No way I’m missing another fuckin’ pupper visit!”

“No,” said Luis, “You always stand up and it’s not safe.”

“Promise I won’t,” said Lisa, but Lance could see she was crossing her fingers behind her back. As soon as they pulled onto the road, Lisa stood up. “I’m the King of the World!” she screamed, throwing out her arm.s Lance and Rachel immediately scooted over to brace her.

“At least hold on!” yelled Rachel.

“Y’all need to get on my level,” cried Lisa, finally relenting and putting her hands on the top of the trunk’s cab.

“I’m trying!” said Rachel, sticking her flask between her knees so she could open it one handed. She took a big gulp and passed it to Lance who took an equally generous sip. He offered it over to Keith who didn’t notice at first, his gaze was out behind the truck, looking back at the sunset, back at Colorado…

“You always loved your sunsets,” said Lance.

Keith looked over startled, liked he’d forgotten he wasn’t alone. “Pretty this time of year.”

“Yeah, Spring’s nice,” agreed Lance, looking out at the green of the corn fields.

The music drifting from the cab suddenly got louder.

Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads

“Marco’s DJing,” said Rachel with a roll of her eyes. “Marco!” she yelled, pounding on the back of the cab. “You’re not from Virginia!”

“Virginia is a state of mind!” Marco yelled back.
“We want something heartlands,” begged Lisa, dropping down to peer through the window. The song cut off and changed to a new intro Lance recognized.

“Yes!” cried Rachel in approval.

“You’re a beautiful person, Marco,” said Lisa through the window. “And I love you so fucking much right now.”

Rachel and Lisa belted out the lyrics along with Lady Gaga

It's been a long time since I came around
Been a long time but I'm back in town
And this time I'm not leaving without you

They stopped when Lisa smacked Rachel on the arm. “Keith is Lady Gaga, right?”

“What the fuck?” said Keith, softly.

“Yes!” said Rachel excitedly then she turned to Keith. “Sing it to Lance.”

“I’ve never heard this song in my life”

Lance chuckled. “Of course you haven’t… Colorado.” Keith gave him a playful glare.

“Lance, you sing to him,” said Rachel.

“No, no,” said Lance. Keith had heard him sing to himself sometimes on the Castleship, but he wasn’t about to sing a song directly to Keith.

“Sing to your man!” ordered Lisa, punching Lance on the arm.

“Ow, Lise!” moaned Lance, rubbing his arm.

But then the chorus started and Rachel and Lisa took back over. Lisa sounding drunk and off key and Rachel sounding decent (she was nearly as talented as Lance, but not quite.)

Something, something about this place
(Something), something about lonely nights
And my lipstick on your face
(Something), something, something about my cool Nebraska guy

And when they sang “Nebraska guy” they both pointed at Lance while staring at Keith.

Yeah something about baby you and I

Rachel and Lisa both stood up, belting out the song like the trunk bed was their stage and the upcoming road was the audience. Lance just had to laugh at them and at Keith who had that frozen look he gets when he doesn’t know what he’s supposed to act like in a certain situation. The two of them passed the flask back and forth while the show continued.

There's only three men that I am a certain my whole life
It's my daddy and Nebraska and Jesus Christ
Something, something about the chase

Six whole years
“Wait,” said Rachel, spinning back around. “Six years, Keith! Was it six years?”

“Six years?”

“The chase!” said Lisa, dropping onto her butt as she spun around and not on purpose.

“Uh,” said Keith, looking awkward and scratching the back of his neck. “’bout that. I guess seven years for me, but Lance experienced less time so five for him.”

“That averages six,” gasped Lisa, grabbing Rachel by the knee and pulling her down.

“I know! Keith is so Gaga.”

“What does that mean?” squeaked Keith.

The women just laughed and went back to singing along.

Since they were no longer standing up and needing a spot, Lance crawled over to where Keith was sitting. He cuddled up next to him and leaned his head against Keith’s shoulder. Keith responded by wrapping his arm around Lance.

Five of Lance’s years. Seven of Keith’s… wow.

******

The bar was even more lackluster than Keith expected and smelt a little musty, but hey, he wasn’t picky. This was the only time he’d ever convinced Lance to travel to a second location with him. It wasn’t space and it wasn’t even close to space, but it was not the farm and that was a victory.

The McClain-Sanchez siblings and spouse were greeted by multiple people when they walked in. Luis gave the bartender a high five. Lisa crawled up on the bar to give the same guy a hug. Marco had stopped outside to smoke yet another joint with some guys who called him “bruh” and Rachel marched right to the back of the bar to tell off a guy named Jason.

“Fuck you, Jason!” she said, giving him the finger.

“Yeah, fuck you, Jason!” yelled Lisa from the bar.

“I told you not to come around here!”

“Yeah, she told you not to fucking come around here no more!” echoed Lisa.

“There’s nowhere else to go!” snapped Jason, staying put at his table.

“Hey Jason,” said Luis, giving him a wave.

“Oh man, is Jason here?” asked Marco, wandering in. “Dude, what’s up?”

“Getting’ the fuck outta here is what he’s doing,” said Lisa, then she knocked her elbow into her husband. “Tell him.”

“I guess… fuck off, Jason,” said Luis, tentatively.

“Whatever,” said Jason, turning back to his table.

“Enjoy your night, Jace,” said Marco with a wave.
“You two should fucking back me up,” snarled Rachel, shoving her brothers backwards.

“Why? Didn’t you key his car?” asked Marco.

“And I’d do it again!”

“She’d fucking do it again,” said Lisa, being the truest back up.

Keith leaned into Lance and whispered, “Do you know who Jason is?”

“Oh sure, he’s the guy who owns the car Rachel keyed.” Then he shook his head. “No, I don’t know anyone here. I’ve only ever come here for lunch. I do not know who the drinking hours people are.”

Designated Sober Person Luis herded everyone into a booth. Lance continued being very touchy feely with Keith, pressing their knees and shoulders together even though there was plenty of room. Once again, Keith was not complaining.

“You had a lot of that flask on the way over, didn’t you?” asked Keith.

“Yes, I did,” said Lance with a nod of his head. “And as always my tolerance sucks.”

“Yes, it does,” agreed Keith with a laugh. Keith took his hand under the table and linked their fingers together.

Lance took off his cowboy hat and hung it up on a hook on the wall above them. Keith was both not sorry to see it go and really sorry to see it go.

“Now, I see some familiar faces here,” said their waitress, walking up then she looked right at Keith. “Hold up. You two are new.” The woman smacked Lance’s brother on the shoulder. “Marco, help a girl out and introduce us.”

“Annie, that’s our other brother and his boyfriend.”

The waitress’s eyes lit up. “Lance and Keith! I shoulda guessed.”

“How do you know my name?” asked Keith.

“Yeah, he hasn’t even been my boyfriend for twenty-four hours,” agreed Lance.

Annie’s eyes shifted to the other siblings who all looked away and started sniggering. “Y’all need a minute to sort your family shit out… or?”

“We’re ordering!” said Lisa then she proceeded to order so much booze for the table.

“Do you serve food here?” asked Keith, concerned that Lance really needed to get something in his stomach or he was not going to survive even an hour drinking next to his siblings.

“Sure,” said Annie. “We do it both ways.” Then she stared at Keith, expectantly.

“Both ways?” he repeated.

“Cheese or no cheese.” More expectant staring. Was that really enough information to go on?

“They only serve burgers,” said Lance.
“Oh, um cheese for him, none for me.”

Annie nodded and took off.

“Aw, babe, you ordered for me,” said Lance, knocking his shoulder into Keith’s.

“Easy with a limited menu.”

“Oh my god,” said Lisa, laying her head down on the table. “Where are our drinks? It’s taking so long.”

“It’s been three seconds,” said Lance.

“Wanna smoke?” asked Marco.

“Yes!” said Lisa, popping to standing.

Luis watched his wife head to the door. “That woman is going to be passing out by eight thirty,” he said, shaking his head.

The drinks came just before the food. Keith made sure Lance ate everything on his plate before he allowed him to do shots with his siblings.

“Thanks for looking out for me, mom,” said Lance, sarcastically.

“I’m just thinking of your longevity.”

“Oh, I’ve got longevity,” said Lance, running his hand up and down Keith’s thigh.

Dammit Lance. Don’t be sexy in public.

Something made Keith’s instincts tingle. He looked past Lance over to the other side of the bar. One table past the Jason table there was a middle-aged man with a beard looking Keith’s way. Keith didn’t enjoy the attention.

“Let’s play a game,” said Lance, pulling Keith up to standing. Marco and Luis were over playing pool.

“Shots first!” said Rachel, appearing with a tray of shot glasses.

“Shots shots shots,” sang Lisa, doing a little twirl as she arrived beside Rachel.

“Might wanna slow it down there, Lise!” called out a voice.

“Fuck off, Jason!” yelled Lisa.

“Nobody fucking asked you, Jason!” yelled Rachel. Then she muttered. “I’m going to key that fucker’s car again.”

“Yeah, you are, girl,” said Lisa, grabbing a shot off the tray.

Keith cheered Lance, Rachel, and Lisa as they drank their shots together. He enjoyed the burn of Earth alcohol. He was so sick of drinking alien stuff and finding it too late it would make his mouth cold or itchy or worse… Whiskey was good. It was predictable.

Rachel challenged Lance to darts, which was foolish of her because Lance literally couldn’t miss. It
didn’t matter that he was already half in the bag - then soon almost completely in the bag after another round of shots shots shots – Sharpshooter nailed that bullseye every time.

“Keith could definitely tell you something about me always hitting the spot,” said Lance with a grin. This was met by a loud collective “ohhhh!” from his siblings.

Keith would be embarrassed, but… hell, if Lance didn’t care about oversharing, neither did he. He was just enjoying watching Lance come alive. It was his favourite show that had gone on hiatus a long time ago and finally it was being revived.

“You need a moving target,” said Luis, marching over and ripping the dart board right off the wall. Before he even finished his follow through on the pull there was a THUNK as Lance had just sunk his dark directly into the bullseye.

“Please,” said Lance, with a cocky grin. “Give me a challenge.”

Keith whistled. “Sharpshooter is back.”

Everyone took turns with the dart board, trying to move it as fast or as far away from Lance as possible to see if he would miss… Lisa stood on top of the bar, waving it around (she liked to climb up there a lot) – THUNK. Marco got down on the ground and rolled across the dance floor with it – THUNK. Rachel grabbed it and made a break for the Ladies room with it, but – THUNK – Lance got it before she made it past the threshold.

“We need more of a challenge,” said Luis.

“Blindfold him,” said Lisa, tenting her fingers dramatically.

So they blindfold Lance and – Ah! – he nearly clipped Jason’s ear as he was walking to the bathroom because the whole thing with sharpshooters is… they need to be able to see their target.

“Kinda disappointed,” said Rachel, “Not gonna lie.”

“I thought he was like Matrixing the target,” admitted Lisa.

“I’m bleeding,” moaned Jason.

“NOBODY CARES!” the two of them yelled together.

“Yeah, bleed to death, Jason,” shot Lance.

“That was so mean,” cheered Lisa, before hugging Lance.

While Lance was facing Jason in the hug he mouthed ‘I’m so sorry.’ Keith laughed. Of course Lance couldn’t be that mean to a stranger.


“Oh right,” he said. “Uh, human targets?”

“That sounds dangerous,” said Keith. “I love it.”

“We should check with a sober person on this one,” said Lance. Everyone turned to look at Luis.
Luis tapped his finger on his chin. “Survey says…” He threw out his giant arms. “Human targets!”

Everyone cheered.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” said Annie, stepping in. “How much blood are we talkin’ here?”

“None, if I do it right,” said Lance.

“As long as there ain’t so much someone slips on it, fine by me.”

“I kinda like this bar,” said Keith.

“Wait,” said Rachel, narrowing her eyes at Annie. “So in theory we could human sacrifice Jason on the dance floor and you’d be cool with it as long as we collect the blood as it spills?”

“What?” cried Jason.

“If ain’t messy, it ain’t my business.” Annie threw up her hands and walked off to serve other customers.

“Annie, got any apples?” Lisa called after her.

“No,” she answered, “but the general store’s open ‘til eight.”

“On it!” cheered Lisa and darted for the door.

“Wait for me!” Rachel went running after her.

“Smoke break,” said Marco. “Keith?”

“Still no,” said Keith then he remembered to be polite “But thanks.”

With the women gone, Luis went to go talk to Jason.

“You’re having fun,” said Lance, slipping his fingers through the belt loops on Keith’s jeans.

“You’re having fun,” countered Keith.

“Yeah, I am.” Lance leaned in to kiss Keith, but he leaned back. “Hey, why so shy?”

“Public,” said Keith with a shrug. He still felt eyes on him and the problem was, it wasn’t just one set anymore.

“It is going to be a long night if I have to wait to kiss you.”

“It’ll go faster if you’re enjoying yourself,” said Keith.

“Which I am,” said Lance. “Who knew drinking with my siblings at a bar would be fun.”

“Not me.”

Lisa and Rachel came running back in not a minute later. That general store had to have been right next door for them to be so fast, but then again the whole town was one street so if it wasn’t next door, it was close. Lisa was literally swinging a full bag of apples above her head like a lasso then THUNK – THUNK – THUNK – three darts sunk into the bag.

Keith looked at Lance. “Were you keeping those in your pants?” he asked.
“Maybe,” said Lance, shyly.

“That ain’t the game,” said Lisa, dumping the bag of apples on the bar. Rachel pulled one out of the bag – THUNK – It immediately had a dart sticking out of it.

“How do you have more?” gasped Keith, wide eyed and looking at Lance.

“These targets are way too big,” said Lance, ignoring Keith.

“Here,” said Rachel. She lifted the same apple to her mouth and knicked the side with her teeth. As soon as it was away from her mouth – THUNK – there was a dart sunk into the tiny little mark. “I wasn’t ready yet.” Rachel balanced the apple on her head then lowered her arm “Ta – ” THUNK – “Da?” Now there were two darts stuck in the mark plus the old dart stuck in the side.

“Seriously,” said Keith, giving Lance the side eye.

“I’m out now,” exclaimed Lance, throwing out his arms. “Only six come with the dart board.”

“Six darts…,” repeated Lisa.

“Six of us,” said Rachel, “… equals six targets!”

“Wait… who’s targeting us?” asked Marco, wandering back in.

“Lance is! Keep up!” said Rachel, tossing an apple at him. It hit Marco square in the chest and then just dropped. Half a second later, he looked down like he’d just realized he’d been hit.

Lisa and Rachel shared a look. “He’s buffering,” said Rachel before walking up to him and pulling out Marco’s hand and dropping the apple directly into it. Marco held it up to his face, inspecting it. “You can’t make a bong out of it,” said Rachel, firmly. “First Lance needs to dart it.”

“Can I after?” asked Marco.

“Yes, of course,” said Lisa. “I will help you.”

“Five targets,” said Lance.

“Wha?” came the response.

“Lance can’t be a target for himself,” agreed Keith.

“Annie!” called out Rachel.

“Busy,” said Annie, crossing back to the bar. “Working.”

“Tommy!” shouted Lisa, directing this at the bartender.

“Also, working,” he replied.

“Ugh, fine,” groaned Rachel then turned around and hollered across the bar. “Luis come back and bring Jason!”

**

“So here’s the drill,” said Keith, using the voice that Lance liked to call ‘leader-mode,’ “Take your apple, knick it with your teeth. That’s the target you’re in control of. Lance is going to close his
eyes so we have time to spread out inside the bar. You can hide your person. You cannot hide your apple so no sticking it inside your jacket. When Lance finds you, your apple should be in a visible place. The point of the game is moving, creative targets. Annie’s going to time how long it takes Lance to locate everyone and hit all six targets.”

“Yeah, I totally going to remember to do that,” said Annie, leaning over the bar.

“Not filling me with confidence here, Annie. Okay, any questions?” Keith looked around. Jason raised his hand. “Good. Everyone prep your apple. Lance, close your eyes.”

Lance closed his eyes, listening to the shifting and scuffling and swearing of the others. Did they think they were being subtle? No, they were drunk. The only one he didn’t hear move was Keith. Boy could be hanging from the ceiling like a bat for all he knew.

When they quieted down, minus the giggling, Annie said, “Starting the timer in three… two… one… Go!”

By the time the countdown finished, Lance not only knew where everyone was (minus Keith,) but had a game plan for how he’d take them out.

First was Jason, who had gone back to his table to sit with his friends and was eating his apple, completely ignoring the game. No wonder his sisters thought was the worst. THUNK - When the dart hit the apple Jason was so surprised, he dropped it into his pitcher of beer. The beer splashed up and sloshed onto the table, causing him and his friends to jump.

“Hey!” cried Jason, but Lance was already moving on.

One foot on a barstool gave him the leverage to roll across the bar, stopping himself before tipping over. Luis was crouched back there and Lance had thrown his dart and – THUNK - sunk it into the knick in the side before Luis had even reacted.

“Two out of six!” announced Tommy as Lance flipped himself off the bar and onto his feet.

Rachel was hiding behind the pillar beside the dance floor. He could see her sticking out since it wasn’t wide enough to conceal her, but before the visual confirmation he’d heard her move there. Honestly, he’d expected her to be trouble (like she’d been his whole life,) but instead this was an easy one.

“Weak, Rach,” said Lance, prepping his throwing arm as he went to circle around to her side. Before he could get any closer, she surprised him by spinning out from behind the pillar to face him. Her eyes were crazy, but the apple was stuck in her mouth, the knick pointing towards Lance. He tossed his dart on sight, but then – FLAP – the dart was swatted off course by the American flag Rachel waved in front of her like she was a bull fighter. She must’ve stolen that thing off the wall and she was damn proud too. She was making these huffy laughs that were being blocked by the apple in her mouth.

‘This would be a fun one,’ thought Lance as he dove to the floor. He retrieved his dart and rolled to his feet in no time. He had more darts in his pockets, but he couldn’t risk someone stealing the one on the floor. Besides, this one had Rachel’s name written all over it. As soon as he was ready and arme again, Rachel had that flag waving in front of her face.

He couldn’t risk throwing and getting it knocked away again so instead he just moved in on Rachel. Lance advanced on her, forcing Rachel to get back as he reached for that flag. She was whipping it back and forth as if the speed would stop Lance from grabbing it.
Rachel’s knees banged against a barrier. She’d backed herself right into Jason’s table. Lance had
the flag out of her hands with a quick flip of his wrist. Then wanting to really relish his win in the
most bratty little brother fashion, he reached behind her as she smacked his chest in defense and
grabbed her by the hair, bending her back as he very precisely pushed the dart into the target by
hand.

Rachel ripped the apple out of her mouth. “My fucking hold!” she yelled, mouth still full of apple,
as Lance let go of her hair.

Jason let out a sharp, mocking laugh. Rachel turned around and spat out the apple directly into his
pint of beer.

“What the fuck?” he screeched.

Then Rachel slam dunked her remaining apple into his pitcher then threw out her arms in an
invitation for him to retaliate.

Lance ignored them, bending down to get close to his next target. Marco was underneath Jason’s
table, sitting crossed legged on the ground between everyone’s legs. He didn’t look up at Lance.
He was too focused using a butter knife to carefully crave a face into his apple. He must’ve made
the first knick, decided it looked like an eye and decided to complete the smiley? Lance flicked the
dark into the apple and stayed long enough to confirm by Marco’s lack of reaction that he hadn’t
noticed before moving on.

“Four out of six!” called Tommy as Lance strode across the bar. He knew exactly where Lisa was
hiding.

Lisa screamed when Lance kicked open the Ladies Room door. “Occupied,” she snapped. Lance’s
eyes searched her person to see where she’d hidden the apple. Of course… of course Lisa had
stuck her apple in her cleavage. “You wouldn’t dare,” said Lisa smugly.

THUNK

Oh Lance dared. He had the dart in the apple sitting in her bosom before she could finish the word
‘dare.’

“PERVERT!” yelled Lisa as Lance exited the bathroom. He stopped to scan the bar. Where the
hell was Keith hiding?

“He’s right behi –” began Marco before Rachel slapped a hand over his mouth.

Lance spun around.

Nothing.

Lance moved slowly around in a circle, doing a full 360 scan of the bar. Why wasn’t he seeing
anything? His instincts were going crazy. When he faced his family again who had congregated on
the dance floor he noticed they were looking at him… but not quite at him. Lance spun around and
captured a blur before it disappeared.

“We’re giving away his position by looking,” gasped Rachel. “Everyone mind their own damn
business.” On that cue everyone spun around.

So Keith was definitely out in the open but somehow staying completely out of Lance’s eyeline…
He would need to listen for him.
Dun da dun da dun daaaaa

Music from the jukebox. Marco was standing in front of it as he loved to DJ. He’d always had a knack for choosing the perfect song for the moment.

Well you're a real tough cookie with a long history
Of breaking little hearts like the one in me
That's okay, let's see how you do it
Put up you dukes, let's get down to it

Then all his siblings were yelling out the words. He wasn’t even sure if they were protecting Keith by distracting Lance’s senses or if they were just drunk and rocking out… probably the second one.

Hit me with your best shot
Why don't you hit me with your best shot
Hit me with your best shot
Fire away

Lance kept circling slowly, trying to focus his instincts despite all the noise. Okay, so his siblings weren’t looking at Keith and giving him away, but… there was a table beside Jason’s that had a couple men who were looking just past… The hairs stood on Lance’s neck. That fucker was right behind him!

“I know your game now,” said Lance, still looking forward.

“Then get me already,” purred Keith, directly into his ear.

Lance spun, multiple calculations being made in his head at once. He could envision the stance Keith would take against him as he’d trained with him enough to know. The question was, where was the apple on Keith’s person? The guy was not creative and far too cocky to think he needed to be so that meant he was holding it. Which hand? Keith favoured his right… might try to block Lance with it which meant the apple was in the left hand.

Lance faced Keith.

Keith went to block.

Lance stabbed to the left and…

Realized too late while he was trying to pinpoint the mark he needed to hit on the apple that Keith didn’t have the apple in his left hand!!

Lance stabbed Keith’s left hand.

The horror of his mistake was just starting to sink in when Keith waved the apple in Lance’s face (with his right hand) and said mockingly, “You missed.”

The question of why someone would not react to getting stabbed in the hand with a dart was quickly answered by Lance’s brain reminding him that Keith was infamous for fighting himself nearly to death so of course he had zero reaction to being just a little bit stabbed.

Lance was far too in awe of this to block Keith when he used his apple hand to shove Lance back, causing him to let go of the dart so it was just stuck in Keith’s hand now.

And that’s when things got weird – not before now – but just now.
Keith pulled the dart out of his own hand, held it out, and said IN HIS FLIRTING VOICE, “Never minded a little prick…” Then he licked the blood off the end of the dart (!!!) and added, “But you knew that.”

Lance was just starting to question why the fuck this was all so hot when that word choice struck him…

“Little?” he repeated and then it was so fucking on.

In a fighting back kind of way it was on, not on in a sexy way … mostly. That was Lance’s fucking dart! And Lance needed his fucking dart so he could fucking stab it in the fucking apple and win the game!

Hit me with your best shot
Why don’t you hit me with your best shot

Lance went for it. He fucking went for it. There were two goals: Dart then apple. First he needed his damn dart back and the only way was hand to hand combat with Keith.

A few blocked blows in and Lance got his hands on the dart, but he couldn’t get Keith’s grip off of it. Then time skipped forward and Keith had him twisted around and pinned against his chest. Lance had the dart in his hand, but Keith’s hand was over his and currently that dart was positioned with the tip to Lance’s throat because that’s where Keith wanted it to be and he was so damn strong.

“Don’t make me do it,” said Keith.

“No one’s making you hold a dart to my throat,” screeched Lance.

“Yeah, but I am going to push hard through if you don’t break my hold so you are making me… Nebraska.”

“That’s it,” said Lance through gritted teeth. “You’re going down, Colorado!”

Lance summoned all the strength that his injured pride could muster – which was a lot- and broke out of Keith’s hold without shedding any more blood. More than that he had the dart!

“Nice,” said Keith, “But you still need this.” He tossed the apple in the air and Lance saw his opportunity. He went to swing, but Keith caught his arm and shoved him back then caught the apple.

Dammit! Keith was so fast and strong and Lance was so rusty, but he was not going to give up. He was not going to lose this game with no name that they’d made up on the spot! It was too important!

The dart was Lance’s sword (albeit smaller than he was used to) and he needed to get this sword into that apple. So he swung and stabbed and tried to anticipate where Keith moved that apple.

That boy was quick, but Lance was finding he was quick too and he was getting so many close hits that he finally pushed Keith into making a last ditch effort.

Keith threw the apple. Drew back his arm and hucked the thing across the whole dang bar!

But Lance saw this move coming so as soon as that apple hit air he was ready to send his dart right after it and it was only a matter of figuring out exactly when in the spin that tiny mark would be
exposed so Lance could throw his dart at the exact right moment and –

THUNK

The dart met its target at the apex, hitting that mark perfectly and together that apple and dart continued their trajectory until they landed directly in Jason’s fresh pitcher of beer that Annie had just set down.

SPLASH

Oh yeah, that momentum had created a big mess, splashing half the beer out of the jug and onto Jason’s shirt causing him to jump up and curse.

Jason’s swearing was drowned out by the sound of Lance’s family cheering and rushing him. A moment later he was being squashed by four bodies and Annie was yelling out “Time” as she looked at her watch, but Lance was just looking at Keith and that proud look on his face and that was better than any congratulations his siblings could give him.

Dammit Keith. Why couldn’t Lance kiss him in public again?

“Four minutes, twenty-nine seconds,” announced Annie.

“Thought you could’ve done better,” said Keith, but his words didn’t match that sparkle in his eye.

“Who would’ve known you could do such cool stuff?” laughed Luis, patting Lance on the back.

“I did help save all of reality once,” said Lance, “and this was just a bar game.”

His siblings laughed like he was joking. Maybe he was?

“Keith should do something Paladin-cool now,” suggested Marco.

“Yeah!” agreed Lisa. “Take out that thing you have that grows.”

“Lisa!” gasped Lance.

“Yeah, the one you keep in your pants,” added Rachel.

“The one that’s this big,” said Lisa, holding out her hands, “but when you get excited it gets this big.” She spread her hands out further.

“Stop it!” demanded Lance. “You’re wording it so weird! You mean his blade!”

“Yeah,” agreed Rachel, “The thing he stabs guys with… over… and over… and over.”

Lance was blushing. “You two are the worst!”

“Please Keith,” said Lisa, ignoring Lance. “I wanna see you activate it.”

“Please please,” added Rachel.

“I’m not taking my blade out in a bar,” said Keith. The women grumbled their disappointment.

“Do something cool,” said Luis. “Lise and Rach will have a fit if you don’t give them something.”

This was true. Lance went, “Ugh, sorry Keith.” Then he reached over and lifted his boyfriend’s shirt up, exposing his abs.
“Ah!” cried Lisa in delight.

“Oh my gawd!” gasped Rachel. “I love bisexual Lance so much!” Then she skipped over and hugged him.

Keith shook his head as he adjusted his shirt, but he was smiling.


“This is a country bar for ya, Keith,” said Luis. “In city bars you get the cops called for shit like this. Here, you get drinks on the house” Luis lifted up his shot only to have Lisa snatch it and take two herself in succession. He was the driver after all.

“I’ve been to country bars before,” said Keith. He gulped down the whiskey shot and put the glass back on the tray.

“When?” gasped Lance.

“Before we met… well, the second time we met. After I was kicked out of the Garrison. I maybe went to a few around here. Not this one though.”

“Wow,” said Lance. “I never really thought about you doing things during that year you were missing from school. Just… I dunno, brooding in the desert?” Lance took his shot then gasped at the taste before returning his glass. “Plus weren’t you seventeen?”

Rachel let out a snicker. “Right ‘cause kids never sneak into bars at that age.”

Luis was suppressing a laugh too. Lance wasn’t sure what was funny.

“Hey guys,” called out Marco. He’d at some point wandered over to the jukebox, smiley face apple in hand. “I think I accidently just fed my life savings of credits to the jukebox so, uh, help me pick some songs.”

Marco didn’t have to tell them twice. Rachel and Luis ran straight to the jukebox. Lisa took a detour so she could huck her apple into Jason’s drink before making her way to the jukebox.

“Coming?” asked Lance, looking at Keith.

“I think I’m going to see if Annie has a bandaid,” said Keith, holding up his bleeding palm.

“I am so sorry,” said Lance, gently taking Keith’s hand and cradling it between his own.

“Don’t be,” said Keith, “It was fun seeing the old Lance come out. You go pick some music. Dance.”

“You’ll dance with me?” asked Lance, hopeful.

“I’ll watch you dance,” said Keith because of course he wouldn’t be the type to dance.

“I wish I could kiss you,” said Lance, the words just dropping out of his mouth.

“Later,” said Keith. “Have fun on the dance floor first.”

Yeah, I'm gonna take my horse to the old town road
I'm gonna ride 'til I can't no more
“Not this song,” moaned Luis.

“It’s a good song,” countered Marco.

“It’s not country,” argued Lisa.

“It’s as country as anything else on this jukebox,” said Lance, skipping over to join his siblings.

“Country or not,” said Rachel, “It’s boring.”

“It’s boring and it’s not country!” yelled out Jason.

“Hey, fuck you, Jason! Nobody asked you!” yelled Rachel.

“It’s a good fucking song, Jason!” yelled Lisa.

“Yeah, it’s a good fucking country song, Jason!”

****

It should surprise no one that Keith doesn’t dance. Outward public expressions of joy aren’t his thing. It was very much Lance’s thing though and watching Lance happy was Keith’s thing so it all worked out. Plus he was grateful for the quiet time where he could just sit at the table and recharge.

Keith watched Rachel and Lance cross arms then spin themselves on the spot. Seemed like the twisting motion was meant to untangle them, but instead they got stuck with each of them facing away then it turned into a tug of war between them, each insisting the other spin the opposite way they started. Keith chuckled. He’d always found their dynamic amusing. Lance was so nice to every member of his family… except Rachel. Rachel he was so rude to. Kinda reminded him of how Lance would pick on him out of everyone else. Maybe that meant Rachel was his favourite?

The five McClain-Sanchez-Dubois family members were so dynamic and distracting that Keith didn’t notice he wasn’t alone until he felt the weight shift on the bench beside him. His instincts told him friend, not foe. This was confirmed when he looked to see Veronica cozying up beside him.

“Hey bro,” she said, that bit of tease in her voice that he’d come to expect. She gave him a friendly knock with her arm.

“Hey Veronica,” said Keith. He was happy to see her today. Last night was a nightmare, but when he was in a good mood Veronica was good company. She was his favourite of Lance’s siblings. She was exceptionally smart and at least as funny as Lance. Plus she’d put in her time as a soldier (being almost as good a shot as Lance.) Keith definitely had more in common with her than anyone else in Lance’s family.


“Okay… hey sis.”

“There we go,” said Veronica, giving Keith a pat on the head. “Oh, nice hold,” she said running her hands over Keith’s braids.

“Why do people in your family keep saying that? Is that a real compliment?”

“Compliment to Lance, yes. He made you so pretty.” Now Veronica was petting him like a dog.
Finally she slapped her hands down onto her thighs and said, “So? You happy?”

“Yeah,” said Keith.

“No, really Keith, I’m asking you, are you happy?”

“Yeah.” Keith felt like he was being given a pop quiz that he didn’t study for and also didn’t know what the subject was.

“Honey…” Veronica took his chin in her hands – boy she was touchy today – and turned his head to look directly at Lance. “You got him. You finally got him. This is huge! Tell me you’re happy!”

Keith felt the blush spreading on his cheeks. He dropped his face into his own hands to both hide the look and muffle the sound of his suddenly high-pitched voice say, “I’m sooooo happy!”

“I knowooow,” squealed Veronica, taking his shoulders and shaking him.

“Please don’t tell them,” said Keith, looking at the others on the dance floor.

“The vultures, no. They’d eat you alive. Plus you’ve got your cool guy rep to protect. But seriously, Keith, look at Lance.” Her voice got all gooey. “He’s so happy too.”

Keith tried to look at Lance and really see and appreciate it, but it made his heart too full and he had to look down at the table.

“And fam too,” continued Veronica. “They are so happy.”

“They’re drunk,” countered Keith, looking back up at them belting out the words to yet another song he’d never heard before.

“Yes, but also they’re celebrating. This is for you Keith this is your initiation to the family and in a way it seems late, but… honestly, we’ve all been ready to officially welcome you for so long. Like, me personally, I was ready to call you bro at the Garrison simply based on the fact that Lance had memorized your class schedule in order to keep tabs on you because he was sure you were ‘up to no good.’ He was crushing hard. He didn’t know it was a crush, oh, but I knew.”

“You are the smartest McClain-Sanchez.”

“Yes, thank you. Keith,” said Veronica, grabbing his hand. “By the way I’m going to touch you a lot now that we’re family.”

“Yeah, I’ve noticed the touching…”

“Keith, I know this is loud and in your face and not at all seeming like an party specifically organized to please you, but this is their misguided way of letting you know you’re part of our brood now. How do you feel?”

“Terrified,” said Keith with a gulp. “I didn’t know that was what we were doing! I didn’t mentally prepare for this.”

“Hey, bro, I got you. That is why I travelled all the way here –“

“Aren’t you like a hour long drive from the Garrison?”

“- such a long harrowing journey –“
“I saw you last night. It seems pretty easy for you to pop over.”

“- braved the wilderness to be here for you… as your buffer.”

“Oh good,” said Keith, taking a deep calming breath.

“Because those people,” she said, pointing to her siblings, “are fucking nuts and they want so badly to shower you with all the attention that would exhaust your introvert self and leave you a hollow shell incapable of ever socializing again. But fear not, I will step in whenever you need an out… unless I get drunk.” Veronica smiled. “In which case I will morph into one of them… and it’ll be six extroverts against one introvert. Ancients save us all.”

“I’m not sure I’m comforted,” said Keith.

“Yeah, I’m either going to help or hurt you. I don’t wanna lie. I might get swept up in the event.”

“It’s an event now?”

“Yes, because though it is your initiation into the fam jam, it is equally a celebration for Lance. It’s his coming out… it’s Pride! And more than that it’s another step in him becoming more like himself.” Veronica looked at Keith. “You help him. You’re a huge part of that and we love you for that… and we are going to show our love in an way that makes you scared of us.”

“Definitely worried.”

“But I’m going to help you.”

“Unless you get drunk.”

“Unless I get drunk.”

“Because then you become like them.”

“Just another bee in the hive. Buzz buzz. Hey… what are you like drunk?”

“I don’t know.”

“C’mon, bro. You can tell me.”

“No, I don’t know. I’ve never been drunk.”

Veronica sat herself up straighter. “But I see you drinking with Lance all the time.”


“Oh… my… god… why would you issue me this challenge?”

“I didn’t issue –”

“I must get you drunk!” Veronica gripped his arm. Then she turned and started waving at the waitress. “Annie!”

“Hey, Roni,” said Annie, skipping over and giving her a kiss on the cheek. “It has been too long.”

“It has. So with that in mind, can we get bottle service?”
“I ain’t suppose’t do that,” said Annie, her tone darkening.

“Please, Annie,” said Veronica. “You owe me one.”

“How?”

“Fourth of July… few years back… I did you that… favour.”

Annie’s eyes went wide.

“I remember it being a particularly…big… favour.” Veronica winked.

Annie cleared her throat. “What kind were you thinkin?’”

“Everything that isn't open.”

Annie scowled. “Seriously? I've seen you with alcohol poisoning. It ain't pretty.”

“No one's pretty with alcohol poisoning.”

“I’m giving myself a big tip out of your credits,” said Annie, turning to head back to the bar.

“Thanks doll!”

“What big favour did you do for her?” asked Keith.

“Oh honey, something that would make your gay boy ear cringe.”

“Yeah, don’t tell me then.” Keith looked back to the dance floor where Lance and his siblings were doing a dance all in sync. “Okay, how do they have a coordinated dance to this song?”

“Because there ain’t a lot of things to do on a farm and when you grow up a country kid your siblings are your only friends because everyone is so spread out. We had lots of time to do each other’s hair and play dress up, put on plays, and dance shows. We made our own fun.”

“Sounds like it,” said Keith, scratching at the label on his bottle of beer.

Veronica gave him a queer look. “But you’re from around these parts too, aren’t you? You’re kinda a country kid.”

“I’m a desert kid and when you grow up a desert kid… you don’t have any friends.”

“You know,” said Veronica. “I was just telling someone else important to me that growing up lonely doesn’t mean you’re missing something. You’re still a whole person and honestly, saying this without any liquor in my system, I really like you. I’m not basing that on how Lance feels about you either, but how I feel as a friend. You’re a really awesome person. But if you’re still sore about growing up without a family, rest assured,” Veronica nodded over to the group on the dance floor, “we’re gonna make it up to you tenfold.”

Keith smiled softly. “I really like you too.”

“Course you do. Everyone likes me. Shit, they’re line dancing,” gasped Veronica, looking out to the dance floor. Keith tried to look, but she grabbed him and turned him to face her. “Look away, look away! You can’t unsee this!”

Veronica forced Keith to look away for several minutes. When he was finally allowed to look
Keith saw the group was huddled over the jukebox again, arguing very loudly in Spanish. Lance seemed to win out on something because it was him who very dramatically hit the numbers for the next song. Then they moved like a herd, rushing back to the table.

“Keith we – hey!” cried Lance spotting his sister.

She was then met with a chorus of “Veronica!!” from the others.

“What are you doing here?” asked Lance.

“Y’all think you can go to our bar without me?” said Veronica, sliding out of the booth so she could greet her siblings with hugs. Marco held out his apple friend and hugged her with one arm. At least he hadn’t turned it into a bong… yet.

The current song ended and as the jukebox turned over suddenly all eyes were on Keith.

“This next song’s for you,” said Lance, heading towards Keith, seeming to have forgotten that Keith does not dance.

“Oh no, Keith doesn’t like dancing,” said Veronica, running interference just as promised by stepping between the booth and Lance.

“He doesn’t have to dance. We’re going to sing it to him,” said Rachel, trying to walk around Veronica and getting an arm thrown out to stop her.

Sing it to him? That was worse than dancing…

“Sing it to me,” suggested Veronica.

“But it’s like, Keith’s song,” said Marco.

“We picked it for him!” added Lisa.

“Sing it to me,” repeated Veronica, somehow corralling five people with her arms and pushing them towards the dance floor as the piano intro filled the air.

The girl had skills and a moment later all five of them were surrounding Veronica and directing their sing-a-long to her.

Now that she's back in the atmosphere
With drops of Jupiter in her hair, hey, hey

The five of them were circling with their arms sweeping around her as they belted out the words together.

She acts like summer and walks like rain
Reminds me that there’s a time to change, hey, hey

To Veronica’s credit, she was doing a way better job of being an audience participant than Keith would ever be. She was cupping her hands and fluttering her eyelashes in demonstration of how flattered she was by the attention.

Keith’s eyes were drawn away from the group by the man sitting at the table next to Jason’s. He was staring again like he had been all night and sure enough now he had two new friends with him also looking at Keith. Keith had a suspicion as to why.
Wouldn’t be a country bar without some homophobe vibing him

“Tell me!” the burst of volume from the Sanchez-McClain-Dubois singers snapped Keith back to reality. Maybe it was a mistake to look because as soon as he made eye contact with Lisa she broke free of the group and ran at Keith.

“Whoa there,” said Veronica, grabbing her arm and pulling her back to the group. “Sing to me. I want the attention.”

“No, it’s not right,” moaned Lisa, “We need the whole family.”

Keith felt a bit of heat in his cheeks. He didn’t know it was from the anticipation of embarrassment that being dragged to the dance floor promised it would be or because of the second confirmation in so many minutes of Keith being “part of the family.”

“This is the best part!” urged Veronica as she spun Lisa around and sling-shotted her back to the group.

Now that she’s back in the atmosphere
I’m afraid that she might think of me as

For this next part they all through their hands up in the air and literally screamed:

Plain ol’ Jane, told a story about a man
who is too afraid to fly so he never did land!
But tell me

“Oh, fuck is that, Jason?” gasped Veronica, pointing at his table. “Hey, fuck you, Jason!” She surged towards him with Lisa and Rachel automatically following to join in on the confrontation.

The problem was, this meant no one was running interference and Lance went straight for Keith now that there was no barrier.

“And tell me,” sang Lance, stepping clear of the dance floor and sliding on his knees right up to the booth. Damn he was graceful. “Did Venus blow your mind?”

He…

Lance could sing.

And he knew that to an extent having heard him singing to himself on the ship, but something was different this time. Even just the way he sang that last word gave Keith shivers.

Was it everything you wanted to find
And did you miss me while you were looking for yourself out there

Keith slipped into some kind of trance. That was the only explanation for why when Lance offered him a hand, he took it. It had to be why he found himself being led out to the dance floor.

Then he was in the thick of it and letting Lance’s hands and body guide him. Keith didn’t really think of himself as dancing, but he was near Lance and his brothers as they danced. Right then Veronica, Rachel, and Lisa returned, guiding a freaked out looking Jason onto the dance floor.

“What are you doing?” asked Veronica in a harsh whisper. “I was gonna convince them Jason was
“You sure?” asked Veronica. Behind her Lisa and Rachel had each picked one end of Jason and were grinding up on him, dancing to the instrumentals.

“Yeah,” said Keith with a nod.

Can you imagine no
Love, pride, deep-fried chicken

It was loud when all of them were surrounding Keith, belting out the lyrics.

Your best friend always sticking up for you

Lance twisted around to face Rachel, who had also stepped over to meet him. The two of them stuck their fingers in each other’s faces as they sang, “Even when I know you're wrong!”

Then Keith had Lance’s full attention again. Lance scooped his around Keith’s back and held out their clasped hands in waltz position as he spun the two of them around.

Can you imagine no first dance, freeze-dried romance
Five-hour phone conversation
The best soy latte that you ever had

This was something Keith hadn’t wanted to happen. To dance and be sung too and have all this attention on him, but now that it was happening… There was nowhere he’d rather be. He was staring right after Lance’s lips as he sang softly the words, “And me…”

Keith wanted to be kissed now. Why wasn’t Lance kissing him when he was clearly giving him signals that he was wanting to be kissed? Oh right… Keith had made a dumb declaration about not wanting to do public affection. Stupid.

It was just occurring to Keith that he could kiss Lance when boy was singing again.

But tell me
Did the wind sweep you off your feet
Did you finally get the chance to dance along the light of day
And head back toward the Milky Way?

Lance had him pulled nice and tight against himself. His voice was so beautiful and the moment so intimate that Keith didn’t mind putting off the kiss a bit longer if he could just keep hearing his happy boy sing to him.

And tell me
Did you sail across the sun
Did you make it to the Milky Way to see the lights all faded
And that heaven is overrated?

This was now Keith’s favourite song. He’d never heard it before in his life, but Lance had chosen it for him so now it was his favourite.

And tell me
Did you fall from a shooting star
One without a permanent scar

Okay, new plan. The moment he gets a singing break, just kiss him. Probably really soon so get ready.

And did you miss me while you were
looking for yourself

Just as Keith was starting to lean in, Lance stepped all the way back, completely releasing him. Keith had this strange moment of rejection until he saw all the siblings had formed a line and realized this had to be some premeditated choreography.

Na-na, na-na, na-na
Na-na, na-na, na-na

Oh god… they were all pointing at Keith while they sang now. This was… so much more of a spectacle than just letting Lance spin him around.

“And did you finally get the chance to dance along the light of day?” Lance sang lead while the others sang back up. They moved as a group, turning to the other side to point with the other hand (plus an apple) at Keith.

Na-na, na-na, na-na
Na-na, na-na, na-na

“And did you finally get the chance to dance along the light of day?” Lance sang lead while the others sang back up. They moved as a group, turning to the other side to point with the other hand (plus an apple) at Keith.

Na-na, na-na, na-na
Na-na, na-na, na-na

“Veronica!” snapped Keith when he spotted her on the end, completely participating in the madness rather than sheltering him from it.

“I’m sorry!” laughed Veronica. “I’m one of them!”

Jason was also trapped in the mix, being held put at the end of the line by a possessive Rachel.

Lance dropped down onto both knees in front of Keith as he sang, “And did you fall from a shooting star? Fall from a shooting star?”

Na-na, na-na, na-na
Na-na, na-na, na-na

Lance hopped back up to his feet, pulling Keith back into him as he sang, “And are you lonely looking for yourself out there?”

Emotions swirled inside Keith, because yes, he was lonely in space without Lance. The thought of it just seemed so empty and vast without him. But he had him here and now.

“Sorry,” muttered Lance. Keith assumed for making him dance and was going to reassure him that it was okay when Lance added, “I’m not going to be able to hold off on kissing you.”

Then Lance kissed him, which was exactly what Keith wanted. Lance was everything he wanted and he finally had him.

Chapter End Notes
Song credits:

I Walk the Line - Johnny Cash
Ring of Fire - Johnny Cash
A Million Dollars - Joel Plaskett
The Gambler - Kenny Rogers
Take Me Home, Country Roads - John Denver
You and I - Lady Gaga
Hit Me With Your Best - Pat Benatar
Old Town Road Remix - Lil Nas X, Billy Ray Cyrus
Drops of Jupiter - Train

Spotify Playlist

I'd like to thank RADifer, crazyrandomhappenklance, devoosha, Anime_fangirl823, and letmebelex for reading all my snippets (but really the entire fucking chapter) and cheering me on as I wrote.

ForsakenAngel88 has made an official Save a Lion, Ride a Cowboy art piece which is on her tumblr

I've made a blog on Tumblr so you can follow me there

Hugest thanks to you for reading!

BBBKxoxox
Chapter Seven Point Five

Chapter Summary

The angsty flashback chapter no one asked for including me, but it's chill because tomorrow I'm posting the 25,000 (or more, who knows?) word chapter set in the present time!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Muted flashes of red and blue… That’s where it all started…

*Keith didn’t understand why adults treated driving like a chore. This was amazing!*

*Mr. Shirogane’s car was especially fun. It was responsive, almost as much as the simulator had been, but this was better. Keith could feel the speed of this one, feel the force of it threatening to push him back from his perch on the edge of the driver’s seat (which was the only position where he could reach the pedals.)*

*It got better when he left the city, when he hit the highway and the open road. Everything opened up to him, stretching out far into the distance, leaving the weight of school and foster care and that ass-licking fuckwad James Griffin behind.*

*Keith reached out his left hand to push down with two fingers on the buttons that lowered the windows. He felt that air his face, felt that rush. Keith pressed the pedal down further, feeling that wind blow back his hair.*

*He thought he’d just take the car for a joyride, drive it around the block, blow off some steam, but shit… this could be his escape.*

*He could really do this. Just drive to the middle of the dessert, ditch the car and walk until his legs gave out. Wherever he ended up, that would be the spot. He’d make his new life there. He’d done it with his dad. His dad had done it alone before he had him. Keith could live the hermit life.*

*Just the thought gifted him with a sense of relief. Keith could feel a weight lifting off him the farther he got from the city, the harder he pressed that pedal. Alone he would never need to fight or hide or dumb himself down. He could be free.*

*There was this swelling sensation in his chest, this new form of energy coursing through him that was familiar, but he couldn’t name.*

*Happiness. That was it. It had been so long since he’d genuinely felt happy.*

*Keith saw the dust cloud in the distance before he heard the sirens. He was confused at first, seeing this billowy dusty obstacle coming up to block the road. Then when the noise kicked in he was able to make out the three police cars heading directly towards him, blue and red lights flashing.*
Well then…

Keith slammed on the brakes, satisfied by the way these tires gripped him to a complete stop before he threw that car into reverse and slammed that gas pedal again.

Keith tried to steer by looking over his shoulder, but the seats were too tall and obstructed his view of the rear window. That’s when he remembered there was a mirror for this. He turned front and adjusted so he could see where he was going. Apparently where he was going was directly towards a second group of three police cars speeding towards him from the direction of the city.

Okay, new plan.

The police wanted to surround him, cut off his route along the highway. No problem. Keith just wouldn’t drive on the highway anymore.

He turned the wheel until he was backing right off the road then cut it completely so he spun out into a 180 then took off driving forward into the desert.

Mr. Shirogane’s car was designed for off-roading. Those police cars, however, were not.

Even with the superior suspension, the car bumped along, making it a struggle for Keith to not slip from his precarious spot on the seat’s edge and lose his footing on the gas. He braced himself and sped on. The sirens were loud, still chasing him despite the rough terrain. For some reason that made it better.

The thrill of it made Keith’s heart race, and his fingers buzz, and his mouth grin so wide it felt like he’d crack his face.

Danger.

How did Keith not know danger felt like this? Like every part of him was waking up after sleeping for years.

This wasn’t like when he got into scraps. There was no caged in feeling of fighting for survival. No, in this race, he felt so certain. He would win.

Keith felt that shift in his vision. A single blink of the eyes and the world he was looking at had changed. The colours muted, his focus shortened, making the view of the distance blurry.

Odd. Confidence had never sparked the change before. Normally it was desperation, anger, fear… the dark emotions he struggled to keep dampened each and every moment of his day so no one saw his secret self.

He felt a sharp prick on the inside of his lip and knew the teeth had shifted along with the eyes. Such different timing for this to happen, but then Keith had never felt confident before… Besides, it didn’t matter. No one would look at him because he would keep them all behind, eating his dust.

Problem with losing his long distance vision though was he didn’t see the cliff until he was right on. Until he was hitting the breaks and cutting the wheel sharply to avoid Thelma and Louising it off the edge.

He missed the cliff, but he hit the cactus.

Dead stop. No. Not good.
Keith tried to reverse, but the cactus must’ve hit the tire because the car lagged and the steering was unresponsive.

No, Keith had just figured it out. Movement was freedom. Being still felt like death.

The cop cars caught up to him, surrounded him. Sirens, quieting to silence and flashing lights causing all that good that had ballooned up inside of Keith to sour into dread and panic.

Muted flashes of red and blue… the colours of the police lights wrong to his brain, interpreted different by his changed eyes.

“Alright kid, fun’s over,” came the police chief’s voice over a megaphone. “Step out of the vehicle.”

“Hold on, let me talk to him first.” The familiarity of the voice struck Keith. He’d heard it earlier in the day.

Door shutting, footsteps on dirt. Keith wouldn’t look up to confirm. Wouldn’t let him see his face. He threw out one hand, hitting lock on the doors.

Through his improved peripheral vision he watched Mr. Shirogane reach into the open passenger window and grab the car door handle, letting himself in that way.

Shit.

Keith buried his head between his knees, covering his head with his arms. He needed to calm down. He needed to change back before he was found out.

The car shifted slightly as Mr. Shirogane sat himself down in to passenger seat and shut the door.

“I don’t think we officially met. Keith, right? I go by Shiro.”

The friendly approach, huh? Not like any other adult had ever tried to pal Keith into submission…

“I would be impressed by that driving, but I watched you in the simulator earlier. Your skills transfer easily into the real world. Funny thing is some students excel at the simulator then choke in flight tests. Others test terribly then prove to be talented pilots in the field.”

“What do you want?” asked Keith, darkly. The buddy-buddy act needed to wrap up already.

“Beyond my car back? I guess in this moment I’d like you to look at me.”

Keith didn’t move. He heard the unmistakable whir of the window rolling up. He sensed an arm above him and heard the whir of the driver’s window. Privacy. No cops listening.

“Keith, it’s just us now. C’mon…,” urged Shiro. Keith felt a hand on his arm and his instinct to fight kicked in. He shoved it off, slapped it away, lashed out over and over with the one arm while he kept his face tucked. “Keith, stop! I already saw your eyes!”

Keith froze, terror entering his gut. He cowered, tucking himself in further, collapsing down between his knees and wrapping both arms around his head.

“No, it’s okay…” said Shiro, gently.

“W-when did -?”
“When I was walking up to the car. I’m a pilot. A great one. Catching details is what I’m best at.”

He couldn’t be… he couldn’t be caught. Not like this. Not when he was so close to getting away…

“Look at me, Keith,” said Shiro.

“Why?” hissed Keith. He didn’t want to be ogled.

“Because I want to talk to you and when I do it I want to look you in the eye like you’re a person and my equal, because that’s what you are.”

Keith didn’t even understand what that meant, but the word ‘person’ caught him right in the throat. Slowly he raised himself up, still squeezing his eyes shut. He waited until his head was turned to Shiro before slowly opening them.

“Good,” said Shiro with a confident nod. He wasn’t going to stare or gape first? Just… good? “Now I want to talk to you about the Garrison.”

“You gonna take me there to dissect me or sumthin’?”

Shiro let out a sharp laugh, startling Keith. “What would give you that idea?” asked Shiro, genuinely curious.

Keith had been so sure and now he felt dumb. “Because isn’t that like where the government’s hiding all the aliens and they do tests on them?”

“Is that what you are, Keith?” asked Shiro, his tone still so calm, so casual yet self-assure. “Are you an alien?”

“I- I don’t know,” said Keith, his shoulders inching up towards his ears. “Pops always said I got the eyes ‘cuz it was in my blood.” Keith looked down at his lap. “Whatever that means,” he mumbled.

“Must be hard, not knowing.” Keith shrugged it off, but Shiro kept talking. “Keeping a secret all by yourself. Worried if someone found out you’d get… dissected.”

“What is it is,” said Keith, picking at the faded knee of his jeans.

“Just because something can’t be changed, doesn’t make it easy.”

Keith kept quiet. He didn’t like having a conversation where he didn’t know where it was going or what was expected of him. It would be easier if this guy just acted disappointed.

“While I was riding with the police I put a call in with child services…” Oh, here we go… “I talked to your case worker, Diane.”

Keith snorted in response.

“She gave me a quick rundown on your history.” Ah yes, hence the gentle tone. Charity case sympathy for the win. “You’ve moved homes a lot, had trouble fitting in.”

“She didn’t word it that way,” mumbled Keith.

“The word ‘discipline case’ came up some more. Do you know what people mean when they say that about you?”
“Yeah,” grumbled Keith, “it’s the nice way to say I hit people.”

“So you lash out a lot when you’re struggling with big emotions?”

“You a shrink or sumthin’?”

Shiro chuckled. “Nope. Still a pilot. At least the last I checked.” Then his tone settled back into serious mode. “Keith, do your eyes have anything to do with this?”

“They don’t make me do it, if that’s what you mean… I’m not a monster that changes or nuthin’. They just… turn when I’m…”

“So say you get scared and they turn then you worry someone will see so you start swinging fists?”

“No… not every time.”

“No?”

Keith smirked. “Naw. Sometimes they deserve it…”

Shiro laughed, loud and open and natural. Keith couldn’t remember ever laughing like that.

“Back to what I was saying, about the Garrison and your future there.”

Keith’s head snapped up. “I don’t have a future,” snapped Keith. This man was off his rocker if that’s where this conversation was heading.

“What makes you think that?” asked Shiro and his tone was so concerned that Keith almost wanted to reassure him that he’d misheard and everything was okay.

“You talked to my teacher and you talked to Diane,” Keith’s tone was getting angrier as he went. “I’m not good for nuthin’ but hittin’ and hidin’ and runnin’ away.”

“I disagree.” Wow. This guy disagrees. Like it was a debate whether or not Keith was in fact garbage. “Everyone has a future. Whether your days are numbered by sickness or you’re a kid just at the starting line, like you. Every single person has one.”

“I’m not a person,” argued Keith, because now he was angry. There were no less than six police cars outside waiting to haul Keith’s ass to juvi for the umpteenth time and this guy was going full motivational speaker.

“You don’t have to look like a human to be treated like a human being. Keith, you are as unique and special as any soul on this planet and you have talents like everybody else. What’s keeping you down is you think your flaw is your weakness, but it is your strength.”

“What are you talkin’ about?”

“Your eyes, Keith. Your scores in the simulator were amazing and you can navigate a road like a Nascar driver. That takes incredible attention to your surroundings combined with a complete trust in your instincts. I have never seen raw talent like you. You belong at the Garrison, in our school. That’s where we’ll start and where we’ll plan the path of your future.”

“You sound like a pamphlet.” Sarcasm was the only response to that, right? Then why was Keith’s heart speeding in his chest?
Shiro laughed again. “You’re funny, kid. Kinda mean, but funny.”

There was a knock on Keith’s windows. He cursed and turned his head against the headrest.

Shiro held up one finger, while looking past Keith and out at whatever officer was warning them to wrap it up.

“I’m not going to tell anyone about your eyes, okay Keith?”

“’kay,” said Keith, untrusting.

“In exchange, I want you to do one thing.”

Keith had been warned about private “talks” with strange adults and his fight or flight instincts flipped into standby mode.

“I want to be the first person you stop hiding from.” Shiro held out his hand to shake. “Okay?”

“Okay,” said Keith, still hesitant. “Are you just going to accept this… that my eyes,” Keith stole a look at himself in the rearview mirror then looked back away, “sometimes look like a cat’s?”

“Well, that and I noticed you got the fangs to match…”

Keith instinctively ran the tip of his tongue over the one causing Shiro to laugh again. Was this guy permanently in a good mood?

“So you’re just not curious or…?”

Shiro shrugged. “Is what it is, right? I’m more concerned with you becoming who you want to be than what you worry you might be. I hope we can get you thinking the same.”

“This is so weird,” hissed Keith.

Another knock. Shiro ignored and held out that hand again. This time Keith shook it, still unsteady and unsure.

“I’m glad to meet you, Keith. Even if you had to steal my car first.” Shiro released Keith’s hand and waved over his shoulder. The police weren’t going to wait anymore. “C’mon.”

“Wait,” said Keith, anxiety gripping him. “I’m still… I gotta just calm…”


Keith opened his eyes to the full spectrum of colours. Bright red and blue lights dancing across the car’s interior. Him and Shiro climbed out of the car. Shiro walked with him right up to the Police Chief Platero.

“You know the drill, Kogane,” he said, sounding tired. Another officer opened the back of the squad car for Keith. “I’ve called a tow,” he said, looking at Shiro now. “If you want a ride back –“

“I’ll wait,” answered Shiro. “Then I’ll meet you at the detention centre.”

“We took your statement already.”
“I know, but Keith’s in a group home right now, is that right?” said Shiro, including him in the adult conversation. Keith gave a nod of confirmation. “But he’ll need a guardian to sign him out?”

“It’ll be a minimum one night stay,” said Platero, “Then he’ll be there until he gets signed out, yes.”

Keith sighed. Last time it was a week before his guardian showed to take him back to the home. Likely he was relieved to not have Keith to deal with.

“I’ll see you in the morning then, Keith. I think I’ll drive your caregiver to the centre myself… provided I have a working car.” Then he smiled, said goodbye to him and the police chief and walked back to his car. Keith fully expected to never see this man again.

******

“First your dad, now Shiro… It’s almost like they’re dying just to get away from you…” James’s words were echoing in Keith’s head. He’d said them sly like a whisper, but when they echoed back it was a scream.

That is why Keith broke his promise to Shiro to control this anger. That is why Keith snapped and lashed out. Why he’d hit James over and over until he was down and then followed him to the floor and just kept hitting him. His voice was so loud in his head and it wouldn’t stop until Keith stopped him.

By the time security pulled Keith off James, he couldn’t see how bad he’d hurt him. He’d shut his eyes the moment the colours had muted and he realized the change had happened. Didn’t slow him down though. Didn’t mean wouldn’t fight just as hard against hands that sought to restrain him. Even with his eyes squeezed shut he kept fighting like a caged animal.

“STOP CADET OR IT’S EXPULSION!” Iverson’s voice. Words, meaningless in the moment.

“That’s not fair! You didn’t hear what James said to him!” Lance, high pitched. He’d been doing that lately, defending Keith. His loyalties had switched from irritated onlooker to defender of Keith’s rights. He knew the catalyst… when Shiro had been declared dead.

“Get off me! Get off me!” cried out Keith, the fight finally leaving him. Exhaustion dropping him down into a ball on the floor. Knees and forehead on cold tile.

He could sense bodies moving in, ready to pull him back up. Keith squeezed his eyes tighter, prepping to start swinging again.

“Stand down,” ordered Iverson. Keith sensed the bodies move off. “Everyone, out!”

Keith listened to the shuffle and murmur of classmates filing out. James must’ve been removed already from the room, taken to the infirmary to get treated for one more Keith beating. Keith swallowed heavy, fearing briefly how badly he may have hurt him with his eyes squeezed shut, with his full fury raging.

“Kogane, stand up.”

Eyes still yellow… teeth still sharp…

“I said, ‘stand up!’ That’s an order, Cadet!”
Can’t… can’t move…

Keith was aware he was trembling, the aftershocks of losing control pulsing through his body, racking with energy and exhaustion all at once.

“Last chance, Kogane, or you’re out.”

“Griffin goaded him into it!” Of course Lance didn’t leave when he was told to. He was about as good at thinking the rules applied to him as Keith was.

“Words are one thing, McClain, but violence is not acceptable. This behaviour poses a safety risk to all my students.”

“He’s not violent he’s just – he’s… he’s hurting… Keith…” Suddenly Lance’s voice was so close like he was kneeling right beside him. “C’mon man, stand up. Griffin isn’t worth getting expelled over.”

Keith didn’t need to test his vision to know his eyes were still wrong. He could just feel it, feel it so strong. It had been years since his eyes and fangs had come out... hundreds of hours of training and meditation with Shiro had taught him to control himself, but...

Shiro...

Keith’s hands clenched by his sides. Another shiver racked through him.

Can’t get up… can’t even think...

“Keith, please…” Keith felt Lance’s hand on his shoulder and just reacted. Eyes squeezed shut, fist swinging. The feeling of Lance jolting away from his touch. Moving back, back, away from where Keith could sense.

“That’s enough, Kogane!” yelled Iverson. “McClain, get out of here!”

“I’m fine! It’s fine.”

“Out!”

Nothing was fine. Nothing would ever be fine.

Keith heard the door slide shut as Lance finally left the scene of Keith’s undoing.

“Keith,” said Iverson’s, exhausted, but human, disregarding formality. “You are out of strikes. I am doing everything I can to stretch the rules, but I need you to meet me halfway.”

Ungrip. Release. Keith could see all the colours again. Slowly, he picked himself back off the floor.

“You need to give me a reason to believe in you like Shiro did,” said Iverson as Keith raised his eye line enough to look at the medals on this chest. “Shiro wouldn’t have wanted you to end up back in foster care. I have sympathy for the grief you’re feeling, but out of respect for Shiro’s memory—”

“He’s not dead!” snapped Keith, the rage returning in a fiery hot wave. “I don’t believe you! I know you’re hiding something! Shiro wouldn’t crash! He wouldn’t!”

Iverson’s face went from shocked to resigned.
“Let’s talk about this in my office.”

Keith’s body was tense, ready to spring as he followed Iverson to his office. They passed Lance on their way out of the training room, his eyes big saucers of concern. Keith refused to acknowledged he was there.

He felt that same gaze a lot, burrowing into him only to look up throughout his day to catch Lance staring. Keith had grown accustomed to Lance’s attention. It would be one thing if that attention had a certain motivation behind it. Keith would seize the opportunity to pull that boy into the nearest supply closet and wrap those long legs around his waist. Had thought this scenario through more times than he could count (often wondering if his hormones were as alien as his eyes because he should not be this attracted to someone so annoying,) but Lance always eyed Keith with suspicion. Like he knew Keith was up to something. Or worse… Keith wasn’t fully human. So Keith had begun to play the ‘Who the fuck is Lance McClain?’ game, in which he pretended at every opportunity to not know who the fuck he was because it was hilarious to see Lance meltdown every time Keith said to him, “Who are you?”

Iverson spoke to his secretary as they walked into the administrative wing on the way to his office. “Call Professor Wright down here and get Diane Lieberwitz on the phone.”

“Yes, sir.”

The defeeto guardian and the caseworker… Soon they would gather to make the decision Iverson had already resigned himself to. Keith paused in Iverson’s doorway as the Commander sat and motioned for him to sit as well.

This… this was a trap.

This is where Keith agreed to go back into the home one more, but the thing was, he wasn’t a kid anymore and he wasn’t falling for it.

“Kogane,” said Iverson, gesturing again. Keith watched the slow realization dawn over Iverson face, reading the resolve on Keith’s own. “Wa –”

Keith was already running, sprinting his way past offices and into the hall. He knocked into Lance (because of course he was hovering, of course, of course) then blew past him without another thought because he had to get the fuck out now.

“KEITH!” yelled Lance, his voice echoing through the hallway.

As if Lance’s invocation of Keith’s name meant he’d slow in the slightest.

“WAIT!” Pounding steps behind him. Lance gaining on him. Damn, those long legs! And then Lance was beside him, matching Keith’s strides, running neck and neck.

“Keith, stop!”

Okay, he was fast, but that didn’t make him smart. Keith darted to the side, dipping into the cafeteria. He had to lose Lance. Keeping him with him was like carrying around a siren screaming, ‘This is where Keith is!’

“KEITH!” cried Lance, once again drawing everyone’s attention to his location. Lance had failed to stop and turn immediately, but was soon back through the door and chasing him as Keith sprinted between long tables.
Keith felt something hit him square on the back. He slid to a halt and looked behind at what was on the floor.

“Did you just throw a dinner roll at me?” demanded Keith, stepping towards a surprised looking Lance, his shock making him forget about the urgency of his escape.

“Maybe,” said Lance, tucking a hand holding a second roll behind his back. “In my defense I assumed I’d miss. Turns out my aim is better than I thought…” Keith stepped to Lance, making him lean back with fear.

“What the hell is your problem?!”

“I – uh – don’t –“

Keith was already spinning to resume running.

“DON’T GIVE UP!” bellowed Lance, way too loud for their proximity.

Keith snapped back around. “Give up? It’s already over!”

“That – that’s not certain. You didn’t even try apologizing. There’s another chance waiting for you if you go for it. You can’t just let it end like this.”

“It’s over. I’m out,” said Keith, his tone bitter, turning away.

“What is wrong with you?” demanded Lance, Keith’s bitterness reflected back. “I would kill for you what you have.”

Lance would kill for what Keith had? Lance with the golden glow? Lance who was always surrounded by people? Lance who would handle disappointment with childish tantrums only to bounce back to laughing and joking minutes later?

“What I have?” cried Keith, rounding back on Lance. “I have nothing!” He envied Keith? Poor, orphaned, homeless Keith? Gay, Asian, lonely Keith? Discipline problems, hot-headed, can’t control his anger Keith? Probably not even human Keith?

The front of Lance’s uniform was gathered in Keith’s left fist, the right drawn back, ready to punch.

After all the times he’d imagined grabbing Lance by the shirt, this was never the context. Yet here he was, about to deck him because Keith was so fucking angry and He couldn’t stop. But…

Lance flinched.

Flinched like someone who had never been in a scrap in his life. Flinched like someone terrified to get hit because he didn’t know what it would feel like.

Of course no one would ever dare to hit Lance. He might not be the best student, but he was friendly and open. He was the guy everyone liked. The one with the golden light emanating.

He’d killed for what Keith had… what a joke...

Lance was clever and charming and beautiful and he might not be white (he’d heard him once speaking in Spanish with his sister,) but his blue eyes made him pass and that was good enough for most people. And he’d never been hit.
Keith could change that. Right now. Give Lance his first taste of hardship and squash that bit of optimism that believed Keith still had choices.

Kill for what Keith had…

Lance had family and a life and he had the Garrison. Keith did not.

“I have nothing,” repeated Keith, loosening his grip. For Keith, Shiro was the Garrison and without him there… what was the point?

Keith lingered enough to see relief wash over Lance’s face as he dropped his fist. And then he ran. Ran alone. No footsteps behind him this time. No one calling his name and begging him to stop.

Keith’s vision changed as he went. The colours muted, his distance vision narrowed as his peripheral vision widened. When he hit the dark of the evening outside the world brightened up as everything sharpened. This is what these eyes were built for. For the night. For the escape.

The next few minutes were a blur of activity Keith barely registered. He just… allowed his instincts to take over. It wasn’t until he was flying off Garrison property on a stolen Garrison bike that he really processed the guards he’d knocked out to get it.

Was this who he was when he had nothing left to lose?

He remembered it then, when he hit the open land and sky of the desert. He remembered being that kid and feeling the joy danger brought him. Remembered his plan for freedom. Those sirens behind him certainly were familiar…

He could drive as far as this bike would take him and he wouldn’t get caught this time.

He twisted the accelerator faster, confident he’d lose the police. Because this time, when that cliff appeared, he didn’t have to turn and stop. He jumped. Just like he’d seen Shiro do. He jumped the ledge, trusting his instinct to pull up at the exact right moment…

And then he was flying along the desert again.

Keith spared a quick glance back at muted lights of the squad cars that were stopped on the ledge of the cliff he’d just flown off of. He couldn’t even see the red and blue anymore in the dark with his changed eyes. They couldn’t touch him. Not anymore.

He was free and… he would see Shiro again. Somehow. Because some thing had always called to him out in the desert. Some promise of answers. And whatever tug he felt calling him back to the Garrison… that would fade like the blue and red of the police lights… wouldn’t it? And if he ever did return, he’d have really forgotten the name Lance McClain.

Chapter End Notes

OCTOBER FIRST!! New really long chapter!!

xoxoxBBBK
Chapter Eight

Chapter Summary

Lisa 'bout to hop on the bar, put it all on Luis card tonight, yeah.
Might be mad in the morning but you know Lance goin' hard tonight
Rachel's getting coyote ugly up in here, no tyra
Marco's gettin' high from here, no downward spiral
Roni's got apples on and she feelin' hella cool tonight, yeah
Everybody's vibin' so don't Keith start a fight, yeah... Fuck you, Jason!

Chapter Notes

Summary reference is Cheers (Drink to that) by Rihanna, but I put the Walk off the Earth cover on the Spotify Playlist because it country.

The Spotify Playlist has been updated! Most song cues are obvious because of lyrics (since when am I writing a song fic?) But the three that aren't are Family by Mother Mother which fits where everyone stands up at once. Walk Me Home by P!nk is when they're (shocker) walking home. You and Me by You+Me is for the very last scene. Full song credits in the end notes.

Quick note on the last names of Lance and his siblings. Lance's mom kept her own last name when she married his dad and when they had kids they alternated passing on their last names (this is how it's done in my own family.) Their full names are: Luis McClain, Marco Sanchez, Veronica McClain, Rachel Sanchez, and Lance McClain.

I just want to say that when I started this fic (you know, the fun story about the blowjob...) I did plan for some light angst, but as I started writing this situation for our boys and letting them lead I found they were hurting a lot more than I realized. I want to warn of the angst in this chapter. Official order: HUMOUR - SMUT - ANGST ANGST ANGST - FLUFF - MILD ANGST - FLUFF It gets heavy, but it's important to remember that even if you find yourself with the perfect person, it doesn't mean all your baggage goes away and actually it's a positive thing that when Keith and Lance can show vulnerabilities to each other even if it can be uncomfortable for the reader. As You+Me would put it "You can be flawed enough, but perfect for a person."

TW: an OC uses transphobic, homophobic, and racist language. If you are sensitive to this and want to skip that part when an character name Donaldson starts talking, just skip forward to the next "******" with six stars.

I never intend to leave a chapter in a place where Keith and Lance aren't solid. You can trust me that no matter what is said, it'll get better.

Reminder: This chapter is long (way, way too long) so give yourself time to read along with water and snacks OR break it up into parts.

THANKS SO MUCH FOR READING!!
This was in poor taste, right? Making out with Lance in the middle of a dance floor at a scummy country bar? Especially since the only other people on the dance floor were Lance’s family. But then again… history would prove Keith never gave a fuck about being decent. Not with Lance’s hands gripping his hips tight, pulling him against him as his tongue rolled in his mouth.

Okay but… having sex with Lance right here on the dance floor, that was crossing a line right? That was something even Keith and his slutty as fuck track record wouldn’t steep to.

However… if Lance wasn’t having the same impulse then why was he cupping both his ass cheeks? … While also gripping his hips… Wait what?

Keith finally found the motivation to whip his head away from Lance’s lips and look behind him to find Lisa and Rachel right behind him, each with a hand on his ass.

“What the fuck?”

“Lise! Rach!” screeched Lance. “What are you doing?”

“Well, I thought that was self-explanatory…,” mumbled Lisa, neither of them moving.

“Get your hands off my boyfriend’s ass!” snapped Lance, possessively gripping Keith’s hips and trying to steer him away. They just followed along, keeping their hands in place. Keith was too confused to do anything about it.

“I told you he’s the family’s collective boyfriend now!” snapped Rachel.

“Yeah,” agreed Marco who appeared to be waiting patiently in line, one hand in a prepared cupping position, the other holding his apple friend.

“Ah! Bah-bah-bah-bah!” spat Lance, flapping his fingers like a mouth towards his siblings. “Keith is with me and we are very happy together! Very happy!”

“Okay, but technically these are my jeans he’s wearing,” argued Rachel, “and all I’m doing is touching my own property. Can’t fault that.”

“Da fuck I can!” said Lance, walking backwards and attempting to tug Keith away from his sister and sister in law.

“Lance, it’s fine,” said Keith because the Blades had some way less comfortable bonding exercises than just touching butts.

“It is not fine!” said Lance, pointedly.

“Well, I wanna see what the ass that lured Lance out of the closet feels like, but if you’re that jealous…” Lisa reached around with her free hand and grabbed Lance’s ass too.

This made Keith laugh.

“Lise, you heathen! Luis, control your wife!”
“If only I could,” said Luis who was holding up his phone. Actually so was Veronica and they both had them pointed at their group that had a lot of hands in a lot of spots.

“Are you two taking photos?” asked Keith.

“You’re supposed to be the sober ones!” snapped Lance.

Veronica and Luis just laughed.

“I wanna see photos!” said Rachel, releasing Keith’s butt and skipping over.

“Me too please!” said Lisa, skittering after Rachel.

Keith assumed that was the end of that nonsense when he felt another hand press to his ass and looked over to see Marco right in his personal space, but then… what had Keith been expecting really?

“Huh,” said Marco, raising an eyebrow then he shook his head. “I don’t get it.”

“Yeah, neither,” agreed Keith, confused.

“Get off, Marco!” said Lance, releasing Keith’s hips so he could swat his brother’s hand until he released. “Mine!” growled Lance possessively, clutching Keith’s ass and ducking down to peer over Keith’s shoulder like he was a human shield.

Keith would maybe be upset that no one asked his opinion on who his ass belonged to, but then it was all so ridiculous and Lance riled up was so damn cute (plus he certainly enjoyed that butt clutch) so he just laughed and rolled with it.

Marco had abandoned his butt touch for the jukebox anyway. The other siblings were all on their phones now and Keith could hear the unmistakable swoosh of multiple messages being sent over and over.

“Hey! Who are you forwarding those photos to?” demanded Lance. He flipped Keith around so he could hang onto his back (thereby sheltering the booty) and walked them forwards.

In response to his questions, the siblings all just grinned and kept typing on their phones.

“Are those making out photos or the butt photos?” asked Lance, still pressing for answers and only getting wider grins in response.

Keith looked at Veronica who looked especially thrilled. “You better not be sending those to Acxa,” snapped Keith, realization dawning on him.

“Why would she be talking to Acxa?” asked Lance innocently, but Veronica’s face confirmed Keith’s suspicion.

“Lemme see!” demanded Keith grabbing for Veronica’s phone. She immediately held it out of reach. Damn McClains and their long limbs!

“Sorry lil bro,” teased Veronica, waving it above Keith’s head. “You wanted the big sister experience, you’re getting it.”

Luckily Keith had a great vertical jump. Unfortunately, Lance was still holding onto his waist and he had to push him back to jump up and get the phone from Veronica (after an embarrassing amount of tries.)
“I knew it,” seethed Keith, scrolling through Veronica’s chat with Acxa. There was the kissing on the dance floor photo plus the butt touching photo and when he scrolled up he found their three corners photo and their ready to go out photo, their selfie from this morning... Photos Veronica hadn’t even been there for, but apparently had forwarded to her! Worse yet... “What is this? A photo of me sleeping? How did you get that? How does this even exist?”

“Oh, uh yeah…,” said Lance, suddenly nervous. “You kinda fell asleep first last night and you were so cute sleeping that I maaaaaybe sorta took a few photos.”

Keith kept scrolling and scrolling up. “There are so many of them!”

He cleared his throat. “Hundred photos.”

“And sent them to your sister?” Keith was aware his voice was doing that high pitched thing, but this was... just so many photos of him sleeping that Acxa had seen and – “Oh shit,” swore Keith, slapping a hand over the screen. He had scrolled way further than he should’ve and seen a photo of Veronica he did not need inside his brain.

“What?” asked Lance, curious and leaning in.

Keith instinctively held up the phone above his head.

“Now you’re gettin’ it,” said Veronica, snatching the phone back with her superior in length limbs. “I’ve seen too much,” whined Keith.

“That’s what you get for scrolling up,” scolded Veronica, completely unashamed.

“I’m confused,” admitted Lance, “What did you see?”

Veronica gave Keith a simple shake of her head like he best not say a word.

“Nothing,” lied Keith.

Looked like Lance was about to press, but then a new song came on the jukebox.

MmMmMmmmm

MmMmMmmmm

The girls eyes went wide and they immediately starting hollering in excitement.

“Yes Marco!” cheered Rachel then they all of them started singing.

“Shawty had them Apple Bottom Jeans
Jeans!
Boots with the fur
With the fur!
She hit the floor
She hit the floor!
Next thing you know
Shawty got low low low low low low low low”

As the sang the low part, they all twisted their hips, getting down low.

“This song isn’t country!” complained Jason loudly.
Which got a whole bunch’a variations of “Nobody fuckin’ asked you, Jason!”

“You’re not even listenin’ to the words,” yelled Veronica. “Shawty had them boots with the fur AND the Rebox with the straps. Conclusion, she is a quadruped.”

“Shawty is a horse,” said Rached, proudly.

“A horse of course,” agreed Lisa, “And any song featuring a horse is automatically a country song.”

“Y’all are full’a shit!” yelled Jason.

“Hey, Rach, remind me why we hate Jason again,” whispered Veronica, turning her back to the subject of conversation.

“Because he cheated on her!” announced Lisa.


“I dunno! You told me that!”

“No, that was Michael,” countered Rachel, crossing her arms over her chest. “Jason is just literally always wrong and I hate his dumb face.”

“Michael,” growled Lisa, clenching her fist. “Hey Marco, you seen Mikey around tonight?”

“I was smokin’ with him outside earlier,” said Marco.

“Great,” said Lisa, starting to move towards the bar, “Annie, I need a knife!”

“Here,” said Keith, pulling his blade out of his boot and offering it, handle side out.

Lisa grabbed it and was halfway to the door before Lance managed to sputtered out, “Don’t give her that!”

“What?” shrugged Keith, watching Lisa kick open the exit. “It’s not like she can activate it.”

“Even in it’s fun size version, it’s still a fucking knife, Keith!”

“And?”

“And she’s probably going to slit Mikey’s throat.”

Keith shrugged again. “If you cheat, you get your jugular sliced open. That’s the Galra way.”

“Hey, Luis!” called out Veronica. The eldest brother who was once again sitting at Jason’s table. “Your wife is about to commit a felony with an alien blade. You might wanna scurry out and stop her.”

“God dammit!” swore Luis, jumping up to storm outside. “This is our wedding night all over again.”

“On Earth we don’t just murder the people we’re mad at,” said Lance, continuing to argue with Keith.

“The Galra don’t do that either, we just have different social rules.”
“Oh my God, like for real question,” said Rachel, scurrying up to Keith. “When you’re with the Blade are you all like 00-alien-7 with license to kill like –?” She grabbed a butter knife off the nearest table and began swinging it around going “- Swish! Swish! Stab! Ahhh!” She jabbed the knife into Marco’s apple’s eye then yanked it back out, ready to strike again.

“Heeeey,” whined Marco, pulling back his apple and cupping it gingerly in the crook of his elbow. “Okay, he is nothing like that,” said Lance, stepping up defensively and pulling the knife out of Rachel’s hands like a parent removing something dangerous from child. “He’s far more like –“ Lance swung the knife around in a graceful figure eight motion while going – “Slash! Slash! Slash! And then…” Lance stuck the blade of the butter knife into Keith’s armpit. “The stab. End scene.” Lance bowed.

“Okay, you two are acting so immature,” scolded Veronica, cocking out her hip. “Besides –“ she leaned way over and snatched a spoon off the table. “We all know Keith is less about showmanship and more about kill count like –“ She began thrusting her spoon forward like a jouster. “Stab! Stab! Stab! Get that body count up!”

Lance grabbed back the knife from Keith as Rachel picked up a fork and they all did their impressions at once.

“-Swish! Swish-“

“-Slash! Slash –“

“-Stab! Stab –“

“Vrummmmummmm!” And then there was Marco who was making lightsaber noises while holding his apple like the hilt of a sword and miming swinging it around. “Vrummmmmm!”

“Actually!” said Keith, making his voice loud enough to rise above all the sound effects, “The new Blade of Marmora takes a page from the Alteans and ultimately seeks to preserve life. Daibazaal has implemented a proper justice system so we normally immobilize and capture those committing war crimes and transport them back to the planet’s new mega prison where they await a trial with a jury of their peers. It’s rare I actually kill anyone.”

The McClain-Sanchez siblings looked at Keith like he was the biggest buzz kill ever. Why did Keith suddenly feel so uncool?

He cleared his throat and said, “And if I’m being honest when we do kill someone, we do so by exploding them. Like…” Keith snatched Marco’s apple then lobbed it across the bar going – “Phwoooooooo – BOOM!” as it arced in the air then landed in Jason's beer pitcher, splattering him once again.

“Yes!” cheered Rachel, tackling Keith in a side hug. “I love my new gay brother!”

“This has got to stop!” said Jason, standing up.

“Or what, you gonna go home and cry to your mommy?” asked Rachel.

“Rachel Sanchez, you are a cruel person,” sputtered Jason.

“What did you say?!” said Rachel, surging forward in his direction. Veronica grabbed Rachel around the waist, holding her back. “¡Dímelo a mi cara, imbécil! ¡No te sientes ahí hablando basura como si tú opinión importa! ¡Nadie te pregunta!”
At the same moment Luis entered the bar carrying Lisa over his shoulder. “Timeout,” he said, placing her back at their table.

“Same for you,” said Veronica, attempting to drag Rachel back.

“C’mon, Rach,” said Lance, reaching out to help Veronica. Rachel just started kicking out at him and delivered several blows before Lance just grabbed her feet mid-air.

* *

Between them, Veronica and Lance carried Rachel over to the table where Annie was setting down several bottles of liquor.

“Oh!” said Rachel, suddenly cooperating in sitting down.

“Whiskey, rum, tequila. Y’all need any mixers?” asked Annie.

“You mean weakling juice?” asked Lisa, still clutching Keith’s blade to her chest. “No thanks.”

Lance actually would’ve preferred some ‘weakling juice’ especially literal juice, tropical in nature… maybe some fruit chucks or crushed ice… sugar on the rim and a twisty straw and a little umbrella to make the drink pretty. However, he didn’t want to look “weak” so he said nothing. Plus the odds this bar had anything beyond orange juice from concentrate…

“I’ll grab ya some cups,” said Annie then she pointed at each of them in turn and said, “You puke, you stop.” She walked one step then added, “Stop before you puke preferably.”

Keith slide down onto the bench and Lance was right behind him, making sure to press their legs, hips, and sides together. Keith responded by wrapping his arm around Lance’s shoulders and pressing a kiss to his cheekbone. PDA Keith was Lance’s new favourite version of Keith.

“Time to give Keith back his pointy thing,” said Luis.

“No,” said Lisa, clutching it tighter. “I like it. It makes me feel powerful.”

“She can hold onto it for awhile,” said Keith.

“That’s a bad idea,” said Luis, “she might hurt someone.”

“I would’ve hurt Mikey, but somebody stopped me,” she said, glaring at her husband.

“Hun, we got kids, you can’t afford to go to jail.”

“Oh yeah, then you might have to pack their lunches and we can’t have that,” grumbled Lisa with an eye roll. “I just wanna feel Galra for a little longer.” She rubbed the hilt against her cheek like it was a blankie.

“Yo Marco,” called out Veronica, sliding onto the bench beside Keith. “We’re sitting down now!”

“Hold on,” said Marco from beside the juxbox, “I’m just making a playlist.” Marco turned to walk back across the bar. Lance noticed he’d at some point fished the soggy apple out of Jason’s pitcher and was holding onto it again. “I panicked and chose all Tay Swi songs. Hope that’s okay.”

“Hell yeah it’s okay!” cheered Rachel, bouncing in the seat beside Lance.

“Taylor Swift isn’t country!” yelled Jason.
You, with your words like knives  
And swords and weapons that you use against me

“Her earlier albums were!” yelled Rachel.

“Her roots are country,” agreed Lance.

You, have knocked me off my feet again,  
Got me feeling like a nothing

“You know what, Jace,” said Marco, stopping to address Jason, “normally I’m open to constructive criticism, but in this case I feel as if you’re being harsh and I don’t appreciate that.”

You, with your voice like nails  
On a chalk board, calling me out when I’m wounded  
You, picking on the weaker man

Jason shrugged and mumbled, “Sorry.”

Marco went and sat between Veronica and Lisa then said quietly, “I don’t know if you’ve noticed this, but Jason…”

“Yeah?” said Rachel, leaning in.

“He’s kinda negative.”

You can take me down  
With just one single blow  
But you don’t know what you don’t know

“Ohhhhh,” hummed Lisa, grabbing Marco in a side hug with her non-knife arm. “Marco, you are too pure for this ugly world.”

“Uh, thanks, Lise, but when you say that while pointing a knife at me it kinda seems like you’re gonna kill me to shelter me from it.”

Lisa laughed uproariously, but didn’t change her positioning. “Should I do it?” she asked the group.

“No!” snapped the whole table.

“Okay, knife time over,” said Luis, pulling the blade out of her hand and sliding it across the table back to Keith.

“C’mon!” whined Lisa, releasing her hold on Marco. “I wasn’t gonna do it!” Then she looked Keith in the eye. “I wasn’t gonna do it.”

“I believe you,” said Keith, tucking his blade back into Lance’s dad’s cowboy boot. “I’ll teach you how to handle it properly when you’re sober.”

“Awww Keef! I love you!” squealed Lisa, launching to standing and grabbing both Keith’s hands across the table. Keith looked thrown, but didn’t withdraw his hands. “It is so nice to have another In-Law in the bunch. I’ve been waiting forever for another to join the group, but the rest of these lot are commitment-phobes.” Lisa sat and looked accusingly at Marco, Veronica, and then Rachel. Rachel crossed her arms, turned up her nose, and made an offended sound.

“Which segway’s perfectly into the game we’re going to play,” said Veronica, tenting her fingers.
Annie arrived and set a tray of empty shot glasses on the table.

“We’re playing drinking games?” asked Lance.

“Yeah, of course,” said Veronica, handing out shot glasses to everyone. “The name of the game is Never Have I Ever. I assume everyone knows how to play except our resident alien.” Veronica turned and looked at Keith.

“I actually do know how to play. We play it in the Blade, but instead of taking a drink we need carve a notch into the soles of our feet. Guiltiest party at the end can be identified by the worse limp.”

“I wanna play the Blade version,” said Lisa, dead serious.

“No,” said Luis, simply.

“Wait… so we drink when we haven’t done the thing?” asked Lance.

“No, when you have,” corrected Rachel. “So I’ll say something like… Never have a I ever fucked my boyfriend so hard my leg went through the ceiling and then you and Keith drink because you did that earlier today.”

Everyone but Lance and Keith burst out laughing.

“Wait what?!?” gasped Veronica, “How did no one text me immediately?”

Lance felt his face turn bright red. “We weren’t fucking when that happened!” snapped Lance. “I was untying Keith and then –” Lance stopped as soon as he saw everyone’s eyes go wide. Oh no…

This time the laughter was twice as loud. Lance buried his face in his hands. He needed to move and change his name…

Keith squeezed Lance’s shoulders tighter. How was he also not dying of embarrassment? That wasn’t far.

“Keith’s afraid of spiders!” said Lance, sitting up and pointing a finger at his boyfriend.

This made everyone laugh hard and finally Lance saw Keith get flustered and embarrassed. “I am not afraid of spiders! I just have this thing where if one touches me, I have to kill it. That’s the opposite of a fear! I’m so not afraid that I murder them!”

“Aw, keep telling yourself that, sweetie,” said Veronica, rubbing Keith’s arm.

Luis was laughing while he poured out the shots so everything was a bit spilly.

“Give Keith tequila,” instructed Veronica.

“I like whiskey,” said Keith.

“Your system is used to whiskey. You need to shock it with something new. Same with Lance.”

Lance frowned at the golden liquid in the tiny cup in front of him. He hated the taste of most liquor, but tequila was especially disgusting. “Hey Annie,” he called out, spotting her by the bar. “Can we get some lime slices?”

“Sure, I’ll just pop out to the farmer’s market. Anything else you want while I’m gone? Kale?
“Quinoa?”

“Oh, well if you mix those with the lime juice and some olive oil it makes a pretty good sal –”

“She’s fucking with you,” said Rachel, cutting Lance off. “Just drink it straight.”

“How dare you,” said Lisa, “Nothing Lance does is straight.” This got everything laughing again.

Veronica clapped her hands to get everyone’s attention. “Listen, all of us are taking sips, not full shots, got it? Otherwise we won’t last more than a few rounds. Only Keith is drinking full shots.”

“Why?” was echoed around the table.

“Because,” said Veronica, laying her hands on Keith’s shoulders, “this dumbass mistakenly told me that he’s never been drunk before and now I’m on a mission to change that.”


Lance whipped his head and stared at Keith. “That’s not true.” Keith shrugged. Great. He was being ‘man of few words’ Keith. “Keith?”

“I think I just have a high tolerance because of the Galra thing,” he said, looking down at the table.

“But you’ve been drunk with me. You were drunk when you first….” Lance watched everyone at the table lean in. “The first you offered to, uh…” Everyone leaned in further. How could Lance communicate this without giving away another embarrassing secret. “Ya know…” Oh, please Keith. Don’t be oblivious just this one time.

“I wasn’t drunk then,” said Keith, seeming to get it.

“But then why would you…?”

“Because I wanted to and it took me years to work up the courage.” Keith delivered most of this confession to the table, but at the end he shifted his gaze to meet Lance’s eye.

Lance felt that blush return again. “Keith…” he said softly, leaning his head against Keith’s shoulder because there was no amount of contact that was too much contact.

“So many confessions and we haven’t even started playing yet,” said Veronica, pleased.

“But… what did Keith do this ‘first time?’” asked Lisa, looking around confused. “I missed what he meant.”

“Hey, Luis can’t drink!” snapped Rachel, snatching away his shot and placing it in front of Keith instead.

“Then how can I play?” asked Luis.

Rachel got a wicked grin on her face then held up a finger. She got up and pranced over to the bar, keeping her back hunched like she was sneaking (while being totally obvious.) Quietly she slipped behind the bar.

“Rachel!” snapped Tommy.

“I just need one thing!” said Rachel, snatching something from under the bar and rushing away before Tommy could reach her.
“First warning, Rachel!” he called out.

Rachel was giggling when she returned with a bottle of Tabasco sauce. “Luis is going to do spicy shots,” said Rachel, twisting off the cap then picking at the inner plastic bit with her nails.

“Yessss,” hissed Lisa.

“I don’t see why you’d be excited by this,” said Luis, watching Rachel pour Tabasco into an empty shot glass. “You’re the one that has to sleep with me and my digestive issues.”

“You’ll sleep on the couch.”

“Um, no that’ll be me,” said Veronica.

“Oh, you’ll sleep with me, darlin’,” said Lisa, winking at Veronica.

“Oh, yes please,” said Veronica with a shoulder shimmy.

“Might get hot under the covers tonight,” said Lisa, clicking on the ‘t’ in hot.

“I don’t know what’s a worse idea,” sighed Luis, “you two flirting on the Tabasco shot.”

“You afraid?” asked Rachel, pushing the shot in front of Luis.

Luis set his face. “A Cuban afraid of spice? Bring it on.”

“Last rule,” said Veronica, demanding attention again. She picked up a pile of paper coasters they definitely weren’t actually using for drinks. “These are your ‘Pass’ coasters. If you want to pass on a question, just throw it into the middle. Choose wisely because we each only get one.”

“But if someone refuses to answer a question, can’t we just assume they’re guilty?” asked Rachel.

Veronica just shrugged. “Who wants to start?”

“Shouldn’t we go in a circle?” asked Lance.

“Naw. This is chaos addition. Whoever speaks first goes first.”

“Never have I ever,” said Marco, being surprisingly on the ball for once, “used restraints during sex.”

Lance sighed, knowing he’d inspired that one. He braced himself as he sipped the disgusting liquid in his glass and was surprised to see everyone at the table except Marco drink. Wait…

“You’re only supposed to drink if you’ve done the thing, right?” clarified Lance. He looked at Veronica who was pouring Keith another shot. She nodded.

“We all did the thing,” confirmed Lisa.

“It would be concerning if one of us did and the other didn’t,” said Luis, wincing from the hot sauce he’d just drank.

“Hey, we broke up for all of senior year,” said Lisa, “I had a life.”

“So I’m the only one who hasn’t done the thing,” said Marco slowly. “Huh…”

“Never have I ever had sex in the hayloft!” said Rachel, quickly. Prompting most everyone to drink
“Like you haven’t,” shot Veronica.

“Y’all didn’t let me finish,” said Rachel. “Never have I ever had sex in the hayloft while Luis and Marco were below.”

“Ohhh,” echoed around the table.

Keith casually took his shot, but Lance felt himself turning red once again. “You knew about that?” he asked once again burying his face in his hands.

“You two are never subtle,” snickered Rachel. “Hence the foot through my ceiling.”

“You’re the one who stayed in the room beneath us while we were having sex!” snapped Lance, pointing a finger in Rachel’s face.

“Hey!” she snapped back. “If I left every time you two were fucking near me, I’d have to leave the farm! Probably the state! Probably the planet!”

“Hey, chill,” said Luis, loudly. “This is supposed to be fun.”

“This feels like an excuse to humiliate me,” said Lance.

“Naw, it’s an excuse to get me to drink as much as possible,” said Keith, “you just happen to be my accomplice so you’re getting dragged too.”

“Just drink your shot, hun,” said Veronica, reaching over and tapping Lance’s elbow. “The alcohol kills the guilt and then you feel okay again.”

“I think it’s good to get it all out there,” said Lisa, “I have no secrets.”

“Anyone who declares they have no secrets,” said Rachel, “is definitely guilty of something.”

“Never have I ever used the showerhead as a ‘personal massager,” said Luis looking at his wife.

“I’m not ashamed,” said Lisa, downing her shot.

“You’re supposed to sip,” said Veronica, sipping her shot. So did Rachel. “Marco?”

Marco was holding his shot in one hand and his coaster in the other. Finally he dropped the coaster in the middle.

“Ha! That just means you did it!” said Rachel pointing at her brother.

“We don’t know what it means,” said Veronica, diplomatically.

“You gave up your Pass really quickly,” said Lance.

“I may regret that…” groaned Marco.

“Speaking of bathroom orgasms,” said Rachel with a grin, “never have I ever had sex in the bathtub.” She looked directly at Lance.

“Do you have a camera watching us?!” growled Lance, standing up.

“You’re loud!” said Rachel, standing up and leaning so close to Lance they were yelling in each
other’s faces. “So fucking loud!”

“Maybe you should move out!”

“Maybe you should move out!”

“You’re a year older than me!”

“Wrong! I’m four years older than you because of your dumb time skip!”

“Exactly why you should move out first!”

“Well, I was gonna go to college but the world got fucking destroyed!” yelled Rachel. That sucked the fight right outta Lance. Rachel’s voice calmed. “And I know you guys like saved it and stuff and maybe I didn’t say thank you, but like… It was cool how you did.” Then she looked at the table and said, “Never have I ever saved the whole fucking universe.”

“Thanks Rach,” said Lance.

“Just drink,” she snorted, sitting down.

Lance sat and cheered Keith and Veronica. Veronica sipped hers then said, “Not like I was the biggest help in the last battle after the Atlas merged with Voltron all I did was herd the remaining crew together and wait.”

“I forgot the crew was inside,” said Keith.

“Most people did,” nodded Veronica.

“Never have I ever got my dick sucked on the porch!” said Rachel, quickly.

“Goddammit, Rachel!” bellowed Lance.

“Hey! Rule violation,” said Luis. “Rachel does not have the anatomy to do that anyway.”

“Fine. I shall reword,” said Rachel, laying dainty fingers on her chest. “Never hast I ever received oral stimulation on our porch.”

Lance needn’t have been embarrassed since Veronica, Lisa, and Luis all drank too. Luis scowled at the hot sauce bottle as Rachel poured more into his shot glass.

Lisa, noticing Keith hadn’t drank said, “Lance, what the fuck? You didn’t pay him back?”

Oh, there’s the embarrassment again. “I just wasn’t ready,” sputtered Lance. “I’m gonna make it up to him. I have been. Why am I telling you all this?”

“Power of the game,” said Veronica.

“You know you don’t owe me anything, right?” said Keith, turning those pretty eyes on him. Lance felt his heart flutter.

“Never have I ever turned down unlimited blowjobs,” said Luis, “Drink up Keith.”

Keith rolled his eyes and took another shot. Veronica was always quick to refill. Lance was losing track of how many shots Keith had taken… and how much he’d drank himself.
“Feel anything yet?” asked Marco, looking at Keith, curiously.

“Not yet,” said Keith, “But keep going. This is fun.”

“Keith publically admitted to having fun,” gasped Lance, “He’s drunk.”

“Shut up,” said Keith, knocking the side of his head against Lance’s.

“Make me,” said Lance. Which got exactly what he wanted was another kiss from Keith. He heard photos snapping. “Y’all are like the paparazzi,” scolded Lance, looking around the table at his siblings with their phones.

“You’re just so cute,” said Lisa in a baby voice.

“Never have I ever,” began Luis, looking at Lance, “kissed someone of the same gender.”

Now that was one Lance didn’t mind admitting too. So him and Keith drank and to his surprise so did Veronica… and Rachel… and Lisa. Marco lifted up his shot then said, “I regret using my Pass so quickly” then sipped.

“Whooa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait!” said Lance while Luis said pretty much the exact same thing in time with him.

“I need explanations from everyone,” said Luis.

“Yes, explain yourselves!” agreed Lance.

“Starting with my wife,” said Luis, glaring at her.

“Senior year,” said Lisa loudly and clearly. “I had a life apart from you! ‘nough said!”

“Veronica?” said Lance, leaning to look at his oldest sister.

“Well, that one was obvious,” said Luis, dismissively.

“Is it?” asked Lance, but Veronica just shrugged.

“Rachel, explain,” said Luis, looking at the youngest sister.

“Don’t talk to me like mom,” she said, crossing her arms. “I don’t need to explain myself. Girls kiss other girls whenever we want. Unlike men we don’t worry it makes us gay.”

“But…,” said Luis, gesturing to Lance.

“Is bisexual,” said Lance. “It’s different than gay. Keith didn’t turn me gay.”

“Marco,” said Rachel, looking across the table at her brother, “You wanna share something with us?”

Marco took a deep breath then blew it out. “So I like really wanted to believe that love is genderless and I wanted to be free of labels so I kissed this guy…” The whole table leaned in, curious. “But then I was like ‘ew facial stubble’ and I yeeted myself away.”

Lisa slapped the table. “You can’t let this love go, Marco,” she said.

“I never said it was love…”
“That guy might be your Keith,” she illustrated this by pointing at Keith. “So you need to call this guy up and I will get a razor and we will shave him baby smooth and you will try again!”

“I… don’t have his number or his name… this was at a party years ago.”

“We will find him!” said Lisa, slapping the table again. “Who’s with me?”

“Or,” said Veronica, stepping in, “We don’t do that because it’s perfectly fine for Marco to question his sexuality and come to the realization he’s straight after all. There are no wrong answers.”

“Well, I know I’m straight without testing it,” said Luis, proudly. “I’m as straight as they come.”

Lisa patted her husband’s arm and said, “When you word it that way, love, you just sound insecure.”

“Never have I ever,” said Keith, suddenly, “kissed anyone of a different gender.”

“Oh, good one,” said Veronica, joining everyone in drinking.

“Now that one surprises me,” said Luis, pointing at Veronica.

“What’s that mean?” she laughed.

“No offense, Roni, but you’ve got Big Lesbian Energy.”

“Offense? I take that as a compliment. But not technically accurate.”

“Veronica…,” said Lance, starring at his sister, wide eyed.

“Lance?”

“Veronica, are you… also bi?”

“Well,” said Veronica, leaning back. “My actual labels are pansexual homoromantic polyamorous.”

“Oh shit, you’re poly?” said Rachel.

“In theory I am, but I can’t even get one woman to commit to me…” she said, bitterly.

“I can’t believe we’ve never talked about this before,” said Lance, looking at his sister in awe.

“Honestly, I didn’t know half of this shit about myself until recent years, but this is why the game is magical,” said Veronica, “We can learn a lot about each other and grow closer as siblings.” Then she looked around and said, “Never have I ever been in love with a different gender.”

“Good for you,” said Rachel before downing the last of her shot.

Lance drank, feeling self-conscious. Luis and Lisa cheered before they drank. Marco sipped at his.

“Counter point,” said Rachel, looking at Keith and Lance with a sly grin, “never have I ever been in love with the same gender.”

Veronica and Keith confidently downed their drinks while Lance… faltered.

*
Keith finished his shot and blinked, wondering why things were a bit blurry all of a sudden. He glanced over at Lance and recognized the signs of him internally combusting. His face was red once again and his fingers were quivering as they hovered near his shot.

Keith had just assumed Lance wouldn’t drink. They’d only be officially dating for twenty-four hours. Was Lance trying to decide in the moment if he loved Keith?

“Which one will it be?” sing-songed Rachel, licking her lips as she delighted in Lance’s struggle. “Love or no love?”

“He’s not answering that one,” said Keith, grabbing Lance’s ‘Pass’ coaster and tossing it in the centre.

“Aw!” whined Rachel.

“Keith, I -,” began Lance looking worried.

“Don’t worry about it,” said Keith with a shrug. He was used to his feelings being one-sided and he’d never wanted to push Lance and scare him off.

“Hey, guys, pay attention to this,” said Lisa, thankfully taking the focus off Keith and Lance. She had her shot in her hand and she was wagging it in front of Luis’s face. “Are you gonna freak out when I take this?” asked Lisa, teasing her husband.

“Just drink it,” he said with a shake of his head.

“Everyone, get ready to restrain the giant jealousy monster.” Then she held up her drink and said, “This one is for senior year and Susan Carol.” She drank the whole shot then looked at her husband, waiting for his reaction.

Keith was ready for this to be a problem, but instead Luis scooped his hand behind Lisa’s head and kissed her.

“What?” gasped Lisa, pulling back. “You’re not going to freak out? You’ve been freaking out over everything!”

“Only because I’m the only sober person at this table and y’all are dropping a lot of bombs. Plus I never realized you dated anyone who wasn’t me because you never told me.”

“Well, you weren’t s’posed’a talk about this stuff back in the day.”

“Lisa,” said Lance, “Are you bi?”

“Or pan?” said Veronica.

“Well… I dunno. In a small town high school in those days you only ever called it ‘experimenting.’ I’d feel silly labeling it now.”

“Why?”

“Because,” said Lisa, shrinking down a little, “I’ve been married to a man for sixteen years. I – I’m just a mom. I don’t feel like it would matter.”

Rachel stood up so fast her chair fell over. “You take that back, Lisa Marie! You are not just a mom! You are a fucking badass rockstar and my best friend in this entire universe!” She scurried around the table and dropped herself into Lisa’s lap and hugged her with her full body. “Everything
about you matters! You should be open and proud like anybody else!"

“Aw Rach,” said Lisa, tears pooling in her eyes. “I dunno… Luis… I don’t wanna make things weird.”

“Lise, love, you’re my soulmate,” said Luis, “I want you to be yourself and do whatever makes you happy. Nothing changes how I feel about you.”

“Okay,” squeaked out Lisa, “I guess I’ll research some labels…”

“Proud of you.” Luis wrapped himself around Lisa (and also Rachel because she wasn’t budging.)

“You guys,” said Veronica, wiping her eyes. “You know I cry when I drink.”

“We all cry when we drink,” said Marco, sniffling as he leaned over and joined the hug pile. Veronica got up and went around to hug from behind as Lance, obviously much drunker now, stood up and put one knee up on the table – knocking over bottles- so he could reach across and join the group hug.

“I love my big gay family,” announced Rachel.

“Keith,” said Veronica, looking at him. “Get in here.”

“Keith! Keith!” echoed everyone else.

He was aware at this point he was probably a little drunk. Not that drunk however… So instead he just kinda hugged Lance around the waist.

“No, get in here,” protested Lance. “Group hug.”

“Hug chain,” said Keith with a shrug, which surprisingly got everyone laughing.

“Is someone puking over there?” called out Annie, saving Keith.

“Just crying,” called back Veronica.

“’kay…”

That was enough to get everyone back in their seats.

“Never have I ever,” said Luis, seamlessly restarting the game, “been in love more than once in my life.”

That was an easy ‘no drink’ for Keith, but he realized this put Lance right back on the spot.

“That’s just the same question,” shot Veronica.

“It’s a completely different question and I expect the guilty parties to drink,” said Luis. Damn him. Keith thought it was the reasonable one.

“Fine,” said Veronica, picking up her coaster and tossing it in the middle. “This is for Lance. He’s passing again.” Then she sipped at her shot while glaring at Luis.

“Isn’t the whole point of the game to put Lance on the spot?” asked Rachel. Lance turned and shoved her then got a shove back.
“The point is to get Keith drunk,” said Veronica wagging her finger in an exaggerated way. “And he doesn’t seem it yet so let’s keep going. Never have I ever…” Veronica blinked hard then snorted. “Oh fuck, I don’t know what I’ve not done. Someone else go.”

“I’ve never had sex with anyone,” said Marco.

“Uhhh,” was the collective response around the table.

“Never have you… ever…,” said Rachel, slowly.

“I know I worded that wrong,” said Marco, looking down at his apple. “I wasn’t playing the game. Just getting that out there before everyone figured it out. I used my Pass too soon like an idiot…”

Lisa gasped. “Marco, I didn’t know you were a virgin!”

Veronica made a sour face. “Ugh. Hate that word. Let’s say Marco hasn’t made his sexual debut… if he wants to. He doesn’t ever have to want to.”

Marco picked at the skin of his apple. “I just always liked the idea of waiting until marriage.” Then he shrugged.

Lisa tackled him in a side hug again. “You’re so damn pure and perfect.”

“So that’s… cool?” asked Marco, looking at his brothers for confirmation.

“Yeah, of course man,” said Lance, leaning forward and fist bumping his brother.

“Don’t need my permission,” said Luis, leaning back, “but yeah, cool. You don’t need to feel embarrassed.”

“Okay, good,” said Marco, exhaling a breath.

“I mean, I couldn’t wait for marriage because I’m so –” Lisa slapped a hand over her husband’s mouth.

“You’re sounding insecure again.”

“Never have I ever had sex against the tree by the Juniberry field,” blurted out Rachel.

“I knew you were spying on me!” roared Lance, standing up again.

“I told you! I don’t need to spy because you’re so fucking loud!” Rachel yelled back. “The whole damn state can hear you fucking your boyfriend!”

Keith grabbed Lance’s arm and pulled him down. “Just drink,” he insisted, putting Lance’s shot glass in his hand. “If you fight over it, it makes it worse.”

“I’m not cool like you, Keith!” whined Lance. “I can’t not give a fuck all the time.”

“I obviously give fucks,” said Keith.

“Yeah you do,” said Lisa in a suggestive voice.

Luis shushed her.

“I gave so many fucks about not ruining our friendship I kept my feelings hidden for seven years!”
Keith could hear his voice getting all squeaky like it does when he’s upset and it was annoying. “It was easier for me to offer you sex than just say ‘hey, Lance, I like you.’ That’s how insecure I am!”

“Oh…,” said Lance, startled.

“Never have I ever secretly harboured feelings for someone for five plus years woo!” said Lisa so rapidly her words blended together.

“God fucking dammit,” swore Rachel, drawing everyone’s attention. With a pout she violently threw her ‘Pass’ coaster into the center.

“That means she has,” said Lisa, pointing excitedly.

“We all know what it fucking means,” grumbled Rachel.

“Okay… but who?”

“No one! None of your business! I’m already over it!” Rachel stood up abruptly. “I thought I told you to ‘git’ so why are you still here?”

“I need a smoke break,” said Marco also getting up.

“Lisa too please!” Lisa popped to standing.

“Wait,” said Veronica trying to grab at Marco’s wrists. “The game isn’t done until Keith’s sauced.” Veronica stood up then paused. “Oh… wait… Maybe I have to pee. Okay, two minute break, everyone! I’m setting a timer!”

“Don’t break the seal,” said Luis getting up too.

“That only works for men. When women gotta go, we gotta go and there better not be a line or I’m going in the men’s room.”

And then there was Lance and Keith. “I think I’m having fun,” said Lance slowly, “But I’m not sure.”

“It’s intense,” said Keith, “but it’s fun.”

“Yeah?” said Lance, spinning to face Keith. “And like… none of my answers are freaking you out?”

“Why would they freak me out?” asked Keith.

“I dunno. I just feel like my history with love and sex isn’t typical.”

“If you were paying attention to everyone’s answers, there’s no typical history to have… particularly not in your family. Or my family ‘cause my dad had sex with an alien that crash landed in the desert.”

“I guess I just don’t want to be too little for you… or too much for you.”

“Lance, you’re not. You’re just right.” Keith really didn’t know how to go beyond telling Lance he’d wanted him for seven years (and maybe back at the Garrison too, but that was just physical lust) in an articulate way so he said, “Those things that Luis said to Lisa. That’s how I feel.”
“Wait,” said Lance, slowly, “All the things?”

“Yeah.”

“But you’re not going to say them yourself?”

“He already said it. I don’t remember the exact wording, but I felt what he was saying and it fits with you,” Keith slowed his speech as he went finding that self-doubt curl in his stomach. Was this too much?

Lance chuckled. “You told me you didn’t know how to be romantic…”

“Well, I kinda cheated but—” Keith was cut off by Lance kissing him. It was a bit sloppy – see: lot sloppy – from all the tequila they’d ingested, but just like on the dance floor it was sweet and emotional and oh so good. It wasn’t until a good minute in to makeout that a thought jolted into Keith’s brain that Luis had called Lisa his soulmate and he’d just told Lance that’s how he felt about him. But… Lance had accepted that and kissed him none of the same. Maybe it’d feel different when they were sober… maybe.

“Times up, motherfuckers!” bellowed Veronica, skipping back to the table. “I want all the famjam butts in the seats. If your last name is McClain, Sanchez, Dubois, or Kogane then you are part of our clan and you should be back here right now! You two, stop sucking face.”

Veronica plopped back down beside Keith and yanked him off of Lance by the arm.

“Hey, I wasn’t finished with that,” whined Lance.

“You weren’t finished with Keith?”

“No, give him back.”

“Maybe wait until you’re home in your room for once, okay? I have heard some disturbing things about ‘round the farm sexcapades plus I was home when that tree thing happened.”

This was enough to work Lance back up again. “I understand that you overheard us, but how did you know it was against the tree if you weren’t looking?”

“We have our ways,” said Rachel, dropping down into the seat beside Lance with a big smile on her face. She was back in a good mood.

“Anyone seen my wife?” asked Luis.

“Yonder,” said Rachel, pointing to two tables down where Marco and Lisa were in their exact chairs, but not the right table.

“Lise, Marco,” said Luis, throwing out his arms.

“You guys are at the wrong table,” Marco called back.

“No, you are!”

“I don’t think so,” said Lisa. “Y’all sat down wrong.”

“Keith and Lance never left.”

“S’not my problem,” said Lisa then she burst out laughing.
“What problem? Just come – ugh!” Luis marched over and picked up Lisa who went limp. When he got her back to the table he said to Veronica, “We gotta switch her to water.” Then he went back to fetch Marco.

“I ate him,” said Marco, as Luis led him back into his seat.

“What?”

“My apple friend,” said Marco, cradling an apple core in his hands, “I got the munchies and I ate him… It happened so fast.”

“It’s the food chain,” said Lisa, “It’s vicious.” Of course she was laughing while she said this.

“I never got to make him into a bong…”

“Oh no…,” said Lisa, switching to pouting. “Fuuuuuuuck.”

“Never have I ever,” began Veronica. This got everyone’s attention.

“What?”

“I dunno. I’ve done everything. Someone else go.”

“You haven’t done everything,” said Keith, raising an eyebrow.

“Never have I ever had sex with an alien,” said Lisa quickly.

“Haha,” said Veronica, raising her shot and turning to Lance and Keith, “cheers bitches.”

Keith downed his shot, enjoying the haze in his brain and how calm he felt. He liked tequila. Tequila made him feel good.

“I guess that wasn’t really a surprise,” said Lance, looking at Veronica and Keith.

“Aliens are so hot,” said Veronica. “Like so hot. I am not going to back to human. Uh uh. Humans are stupid. ‘specially human men.”

“Gee Roni, tell us how you really think,” said Luis.

“I will!” said Veronica with an enthusiastic nod. “’Cause alien woman are my favourite or like the genderless ones ’cause like not every species separates gender. It’s like… anything goes, right Keith? It’s wild, but it works.”

Keith shook his head. “Human or alien is fine as long as there’s a dick.”

Lisa laughed so hard she spit out the rum she was currently drinking even though she wasn’t supposed to be drinking.

“So I guess that answers the question over who’s the bottom,” snickered Rachel, “unless you switch.”

“Never have I ever bottomed,” said Lance, contributing to the game.

“Dammit, Lance,” said Keith with a laugh and then he took his shot. Rachel and Lisa drank to ‘cause equipment…
“Veronica?” squeaked Lance. “Aren’t you supposed to drink?”

“Nope. Never bottomed.”

“But you’re the chick,” said Luis, slowly… “And you’ve had sex with men…”

“And yet…” said Veronica with a shrug.

“See,” said Lisa, turning to her husband. “Veronica does it!”

“I told you,” said Luis in a harsh whisper, “I’m not into it.”

“So I bought strap-on for nothing? Is that what you’re saying?” demanded Lisa, loud enough for the whole bar to hear.

“Oh my god woman,” swore Luis, sinking down in his seat.

“It is cool to bottom,” argued Lisa, “Keith does it and he’s the coolest guy in the universe!”

“Yeah, but that’s not just a preference, it’s a necessity,” said Keith, deciding that sharing this information was a super good idea. “Cause if it’s an alien, you can visually inspect their cock and be like ‘okay that’s a good size’ I will have sex with that or be like ‘that one is spikey, no fucking way,’ but you can’t visually inspect what’s inside an alien ass or whatever they have in place of an ass. I do not want to stick it anywhere that might have teeth or something else crazy. Maybe I’m stuck up, but that’s me.”

“I would not call that stuck up,” said Lance who was the only one not shaking with laughter.

“I want…,” said Lisa, talking through laughter, “to talk to you… forever… just I need all your sex stories…. Please! Please Keith! More weird alien sex stuff!”

“Wait…,” said Marco, turning to Lisa, “You said you’ve never had sex with an alien, but that’s not true.”

“Oh my god,” gasped Lisa, “Susan was an alien the whole time! That’s why she moved away. Away to the stars…”

“To Scotland,” said Rachel.

“I heard she was in prison,” said Veronica.

“Yeah, that’s what they call the prison near Scotsdale.”

“No no no, listen! Lisa has had sex with an alien ‘cause like we’re the aliens,” said Marco gesturing to the table.

“You are so fucking high,” laughed Rachel.

“No, think about it,” said Marco, pointing at Lance. “He got the mark things, right? And that probably means Lance’s at least part Altean.” Keith saw Lance shrink down a little “and he’s our full brother –”

“Unless mom has some explaining to do,” sang Rachel.

“So then we’re all part Altean too,” said Marco firmly.
Rachel slapped the table. “Where the fuck are my marks, huh? Why didn’t we all get them?”

“I want purple,” said Veronica.

“I was gonna get purple!” whined Rachel.

“You don’t get to choose,” said Luis.

“How do you know?” asked Rachel, sounding accusatory.

“Because if Lance could’ve chosen, he wouldn’t have chosen that shade of blue. He would’ve matched his eyes.”

“Oh, you’re right,” said Veronica.

“I’m so jealous,” said Lisa, “I wanna be an alien.”

“Your kids are part Altean,” said Veronica, as if this were helpful.

“Yeah I guess,” mumbled Lisa with a visible pout.

Lance had shrunk half way down in his seat. Talking about Altea or the possibility of being Altean was the one trigger Keith knew Lance had and here his siblings were freely talking about it around him. Keith had to change this…”

“Never have I ever had sex drunk,” said Keith, quickly.

“Oh, right,” said Veronica, “I guess you couldn’t have.”

Most people drank to this. Lance lifted his drink up and said, “I guess I was kinda drunk…”

Luis tapped his chest.

“Heartburn getting to you?” asked Rachel.

“No,” he said, defensively. “Never have I ever had sex while high.”

Lisa laughed and drank along with Veronica, Rachel, and Keith.

“You can’t get drunk, but you can get high?” asked Lance.

“Not on Earth pot,” said Keith, “but the Galra have some interesting drugs… It’s just about matching my DNA to what fits.”

“Never have I ever had sex with two people at once,” said Luis, keeping the ball rolling.

“Yeah, neither… But I’m not against it,” said Lisa, twisting up her lips.

“Lise!” gasped Luis.

“Welp,” said Veronica, scooping up her drink. Keith felt Lance’s eyes on him as lifted and took his whole shot.

“Rach,” said Luis, shaking his head at his sister who was putting her drink down after having sipped it.

“Why am I being called out?” she asked. “You don’t care that Veronica’s done it!” Then she
cleared her throat and said, “Never have I ever had sex with three or more people at one time.”

“Oops, that’s me too,” said Veronica as she sloppily refilled her and Keith’s drinks. “Are you cheering this one, Keith?”

“Cheers,” said Keith, lifting his drinks.

“Oh my god, are we the same person? Cheers,” said Veronica. She seemed to forget her own sipping rule since she took her whole shot.

“Aw, you’re just as slutty as each other,” said Lisa, fluttering her eyelashes.

“Maybe you two should date instead,” said Marco and by his tone he seemed serious.

“That would be good, Marco,” said Veronica, patting his arm, “if it weren’t for all our raging gayness.”

“Right, right… forgot that was a thing. Never have I ever,” said Marco, “had sex outside.”

“This one has been established,” said Lance, confidently picking up his drink as the rest of the table has did the same. “Plus you’ve never had any sex so…”

Keith looked down and saw there were two drinks in front of him and yet his hand could only feel one. Oh, he understood now. Being drunk was what having a concussion felt like, but actually fun. “I think the game can stop,” admitted Keith. “I’m drunk.”

“Yay!” said Veronica, hugging Keith. “I knew your sluttiness would serve you well.”

“How did you know I’m so slutty?” asked Keith. There were two of Veronica. “Did Acxa tell you?”

“Oh yeah, I know lots of stuff ‘bout you,” giggled Veronica.

“C’mon,” whined Rachel. “We didn’t even finish exposing them. What’s left? Never have I ever had sex in the bed of the pickup.”

Keith blinked. “I don’t think we did that… Unless I’m forgetting…”

“Oh, that one wasn’t for you,” said Rachel cheerily, looking directly at Lance.

Lance was thoughtful for a second then said, “Define… sex…”

“Oh honey, now I’m worried,” said Rachel with a cackle.

“No, I just meant when I was little I thought it was penis in a vagina,” said Lance, looking embarrassed. “But obviously that’s not the only way so I’m wondering what exactly we define sex as.”

“Any activity between at least two people that can result in an orgasm,” said Veronica automatically, like she had that definition locked and loaded. Off of everyone’s looks she said, “When you fuck aliens things get abstract.”

“Okay,” said Lance, taking a drink.

“Whaaaaaat?” said Keith, confused. “But I thought…”
“I told you there was no chance I had an STI,” said Lance, looking down with a little smile. “I never said I’d never done anything and by that definition, yeah, you weren’t my first.”

“Ohhhhh,” was the reaction from the table.

“And if you get jealous,” said Lance, “That’s pretty hypocritical.”

“I’m not jealous,” said Keith, with a head shake, “just curious about the details…”

“I don’t kiss and tell,” said Lance, slyly.

“Oh wait, shit,” said Lisa, smacking her husband. “We did do that.”

Luis sighed, “I was hoping to be done drinking Tabasco.”

“Oh boohoo,” said Rachel. “The only one who drank less than you was Marco. You got off easy.”

“No, wait!” said Lisa, after finishing her shot. She pointed at Rachel. “You’ve had sex in the truck bed. You told me!”

“No I… oh, shit yes I did,” laughed Rachel.

“That’s a rule violation,” said Veronica, waving a hand above her head. “Punishment time.”

“Finish this,” said Lance, placing the rum bottle (that was the least touched of the bottles) in front of her.

Rachel looked down at the bottle then back up at Lance. “Do you want me to die?”

“Sometimes.”

“You asshole,” said Rachel, smacking him. Then she moved from the chair to the bench and squashed Lance in a hug. “You love me. I’m your favourite sister and you would be lost without me.”

Drew looks at me,
I fake a smile so he won’t see,
What I want, what I need,

“Oh my god, Luis, it’s our wedding song!” She stood up, nearly falling over then pulled at her husband’s arm. “We gotta dance!”

“Veronica, is that allowed?” asked Luis.

“Do whatever you want,” said Veronica, or rather mumbled into her hand since she looked like she was trying not to puke. “I’m rapidly losing the will to live.”

Luis and Lisa went to dance. Marco went outside to smoke and Veronica followed so she could “puke and rally” without Annie finding out. Rachel immediately went missing and then it was just Lance and Keith again.

She better hold him tight,
Give him all her love,
Look in those beautiful eyes,
And know she's lucky 'cause,

Lance was unsure if there was stuff they needed to talk about, but Keith just kissed him as soon as they were alone at the table and he did not let up. In fact he was super handsy, probably 'cause he was drunk and that was not classy, but then… Lance was very drunk and was trying to convince himself that the bar was dark enough for this to be okay.

“You gotta stop kissing me,” said Keith, before immediately kissing Lance again.

“I think you’re kissing me,” laughed Lance.

“No,” said Keith, but then he kissed Lance again. “Is not safe.”

“Why babe?”

“Homophobes,” said Keith.

“Huh?”

“Homophobes. Table. Over there.” Keith was pointing at the jukebox that was still cranking out the Tay Swi. “Ders twelve of dem buh I gots two visions so prolly just six buh dey vibin’ me.”

“Okay, maybe we get you some coffee and you sober up a bit.”

“Noooo,” whined Keith, “I likes bein’ drunk…mfds… cuddles.” Keith leaned his head against Lance’s chest and closed his eyes.

“I’m on to you, Keith,” said Lance, smiling fondly down at the boy smushing his face against his pecs.

“Huh?”

“You act cool, but you actually love affection and romance, don’t you?”

“Surprise,” said Keith, doing the razzle dazzle fingers.

“I like being surprised by you,” said Lance, holding Keith tighter and kissing his head. “My favourite alien.”

“Ders na aaliens here.”

“Huh?”

“Earth is fulla’liens, but none are in dis bar.”

“I don’t think there’s any in this town.”

“ Weird…”

“Yeah, but if you moved to Earth and had the choice between New York or Hagler, Nebraska, you’re probably picking New York.”

“They dun kno New York ain’t so great.”

“Yeah, it’s just bigger.”

Keith giggled. “You’re bigger.”
“I know. Let’s get you on your feet before you fall asleep.”

“No, sleeping,” said Lisa, appearing out of nowhere and making them both jump. “The night is young!”

Ten minutes later Lisa was asleep and snoring at the table while Luis sat beside her, rubbing her back. “She’s like a firework this one. Burns bright, goes out like a light.”

Keith at least had drank some coffee (and it seemed to crank up his Galra DNA like nothing else when combined with tequila) because he was suddenly hyper and talkative (yeah, Keith, talkative!) Also, drunk and caffeinated Keith took over Lisa’s roll of randomly climbing up on furniture. At least that would explain why he was standing on the table to talk to Marco and Rachel while Lance stood at the bar and cancelled that second cup of coffee for Keith because he wasn’t going to need it.

“Look at him,” said Veronica, sliding up beside Lance, and scooping her arm behind his back. “He is seriously cute.” Lance wrapped his arm behind her back and nodded his agreement. “No, you have to say it. Say it out loud.”

“You’re bossy when you’re drunk,” laughed Lance.

“I’m always bossy. I’m just usually so nice people don’t notice they’re doing everything I say. Now, tell me how cute Keith is.”

“He’s…,” said Lance, feeling embarrassed again and covering his mouth, “he’s the cutest. Ever. He’s so cute sometimes I can’t look directly at him.”

“That’s the answer I wanted,” said Veronica, her speech just a bit slurred. “And he’s perfect for us.”

“Us?” gasped Lance. “We are not collectively dating Keith!”

“Nooooo, not for dating,” said Veronica, she was kinda swaying when she spoke… or maybe Lance was swaying… or maybe they were both swaying. “I meant just for the family. To join us, officially. You know we love him, right?”

“Yeah, I feel like it’s been mentioned,” said Lance, feeling shy.

“Officially, we would love anyone you bring home, but we seriously adore Keith. Not just because he’s like if a doll were deadly… wait does that make sense?”

“No, that fits,” laughed Lance.

“Beautiful and rough at the same time. I don’t know how he does it. But anyway we love him because of how he makes you feel.”

“And you know that because you’ve been spying on us.”

“It’s close quarters at the farm, Lance. No one has to intentionally spy to spy. Anyway, this is big.”

“Lance,” called out Keith, looking at him suddenly. “You gotta show them that chant that you do.”

“Chant?”

“That trippy one about Voltron. It’s like ‘When I say ‘vol’ you say ‘tron.’ Vol-’”
“Tron,” said Rachel, Marco, and Luis in unison.

“You know it already?” gasped Keith, looking like his mind was blown.

“No. The chant included the instructions,” said Rachel.

“No, no, no, I didn’t explain it,” protested Keith, shaking his head.

“My god,” said Veronica, wrapping herself around Lance’s side. “Soooooo cute!”

“He really is,” chuckled Lance. “I keep wondering how I got so lucky.”

“Oh Lance,” she cooed, sticking a finger in his cheek dimple and twisting it. “After all these years, do you still think Keith is better than you?”

“Well… yeah. Even more so lately.”

Veronica frowned then looked over at Keith who appeared to be re-enacting a fight he’d been in, to his siblings’ delight. “I bet if I asked him he’d tell me you’re too good for him.”

“That’s… not possible.”

“Something held him back from making a move on you for so long. And it wasn’t because he didn’t want you or because he thought you were straight.”

Lance looked down at the ground. “What if I don’t live up to his expectations?”

“His expectation is you not wanting him. He got that wrong. All the rest of this,” Veronica waved her free arm around, “This is just gravy.”

This made Lance think of last week when Keith was heading back to the Blades after they’d first had sex. Lance had asked Keith if he needed anything from him. ‘Exist. Just exist. That’s all.’

Veronica looked at Lance. “My favourite thing about Keith is how he sees the real you. Just like we do and that’s what makes him fit in with the family more than anything.”

“Thanks for saying that,” said Lance, softly.

“Now do me and Keith a favour and believe you’re worthy already.” Veronica waved an arm in the air and called out, “Hey Keith! Come do a body shot off Lance!”

“What?” squeaked Lance.

“Okay!” said Keith, jumping off the table.

“Wait. You are too drunk already.”

“And the very fact that you’re hesitating means you sobered up too much,” said Veronica. She swirled her finger about her head. “Switch it up! Keith, Lance is going to do a body shot off you.”

Keith laughed and used one hand planted to launch himself to sit up on the bar. “I knew you’d get me on my back at some point tonight.”

Rachel clapped with delight as she laughed at this. “You gotta let me pour the shot. I wanna drip all over those abs.”
“Be my guest,” said Keith, laying down and lifting up his shirt. Lance blushed at the sight of his gorgeous boyfriend splayed before him… and his sisters.

“They don’t have limes, but they have lemon slices,” said Veronica from behind the bar (when did she duck back there?) “And I got the salt.”

“Why are you back here?” cried Annie, storming up to Roni and swatting her with a tea towel. “Git!”

“That’s two strikes for the family,” warned Tommy. Veronica sniggered and she made a hasty retreat back to the customer side of the bar. “Kiss here,” she instructed, pointing at Keith’s Galra mark. Rachel leaned in and Veronica pushed her back. “Not you! Lance!”

“You can kiss me, Rach!” came a voice from across the bar.

“In your fucking dreams, Jace!” she snapped back.

“C’mon Lance,” said Keith, tapping his cheek. Lance rolled his eyes and leaned into kiss there, but Keith turned his head at the last second and captured Lance’s lips.

“Not like that,” said Veronica, pulling Lance back. He really wanted to keep that kiss going though…

“Fine,” muttered Keith, turning his face back up to the ceiling.

Lance planted a wet kiss on his cheek and Veronica then salted the wet spot. “Mouth,” she said, holding the lemon slice in front of Keith. He opened his mouth and she fit the slice between his teeth, juicy part out.

“My turn,” said Rachel, skipping up with the bottle of tequila (amazing it had any left.) “Ready?” Lance was going to say yes, but Veronica spoke first. “Ready and rolling?” He looked and saw her filming with her phone. Why did this continue to surprise him?

“Send me that, okay?” said Rachel with a grin. “Always do.”

“Lick and I start pouring,” instructed Rachel, tipping the bottle from way higher than Lance thought it should be.

Lance bent and licked up along Keith’s mark, collecting the salt on his tongue. He turned back in time to see Rachel making Keith’s belly button overflow with tequila. He dove down and licked up as much of the excess as he could before sucking the pool of tequila out of Keith’s belly button. Okay… why was this so hot?

“Lemon lemon lemon!” said Rachel urgently, as if the bitterness in Lance’s mouth weren’t calling for any other favour right now.

Lance moved back to Keith’s face to grab that lemon from his mouth, but Keith must’ve spit it out a split second before Lance connected because suddenly it was just Keith’s lips with only the barest taste of citrus. Keith’s arms were wrapped firmly around Lance’s neck, pulling his tight against him for a rough kiss.
Lance’s throat convulsed from the flavour of the liquor, but his lips were warm and happy getting sucked and nipped at by Keith. He was fully aware of his sisters laughing beside him and that this was being captured on video, but oh, how he didn’t want this to stop. A nice buzz took over his brain and he started thinking how much he’d like to climb up on that bar with Keith. How badly he wanted to lie on top of him and hike his legs around his waist as he sucked on that hot kiss. How badly he wanted to whisper in Keith’s ear that he wanted to fuck him right now…

“Okay, well you have to dance to this song,” said Veronica, yanking Lance up by the arm. Song? What song?

Loving him is like driving a new Maserati down a dead-end street
Faster than the wind, passionate as sin ending so suddenly

“I don’t think Keith actually likes dancing,” said Lance, talking like Keith wasn’t directly in front of him, still laid out and looking like the tastiest snack.

“I think he’ll be a lot more open to it now,” snickered Veronica.

Keith swung himself to sitting then jumped off the bar. All Lance had to do was offer his hand and Keith took it and let himself be led onto the dance floor. Drunk Keith was so easy going.

Loving him is like trying to change your mind once you’re already flying through the free fall
Like the colors in autumn, so bright just before they lose it all

The reason Keith didn’t like dancing (beyond not knowing what to do with his hands) was the feeling that everyone was watching and judging him. But right now it felt like his focus had been narrowed to just Lance. Plus this gave him something to do with his hands as he draped his arms over Lance’s shoulders and pressed himself against him.

Losing him was blue like I’d never known
Missing him was dark grey all alone

Lance pulled Keith’s hips tight against his, not wanting any space between them. Not anymore.

Forgetting him was like trying to know somebody you never met
But loving him was red
Loving him was red

Keith must’ve been drunk enough to be seeing things because it looked like Rachel was sitting in Jason’s lap and making out with him heavily, but then again… that actually tracked.

His momentary distraction was corrected as Lance shifted his positioning against Keith. Lance’s leg pressed between Keith’s own and when he rocked just a little the friction felt nice.

Touching him was like realizing all you ever wanted was right there in front of you
Memorizing him was as easy as knowing all the words to your old favourite song

“I didn’t know dancing could feel like this.”

“This…,” began Lance, rolling his hips against Keith’s leg, “is dirty dancing.”

Fighting with him was like trying to solve a crossword and realizing there's no right answer
Regretting him was like wishing you never found out that love could be that strong

Keith laughed, tucking his chin against Lance’s neck. His warm breath against his skin a stark
contrast to his hardness against Lance’s leg.

“What?” asked Lance, gentle curiosity in his tone.

“So like… if could come like this, does this count as having sex?” Keith laughed again and squeezed Lance tighter. “Are we having sex on the dance floor?” Then he erupted into giggles.

Losing him was blue like I’d never known
Missing him was dark gray all alone

Lance laughed then stepped back. Keith’s whole body tried to follow like ‘don’t go,’ but Lance grabbed Keith’s hand, hooking him at the elbow so their forearms were pressed together.

Forgetting him was like trying to know somebody you never met
But loving him was red

“C’mon,” said Lance, tugging Keith along off of the dance floor.

“What’re we doing?” asked Keith as Lance led him towards the exit.

“Turning one of your never-have-I-ever’s into I-have-ever.”

“Oh, I don’ wanna try hetero sex…”

Lance burst out laughing as he led Keith out the door and into the dark parking lot.

Oh red
Burning red

*****

The family pickup had a blanket tucked away in the cab. “For star-gazing” is how Lance had explained it’s existence and Keith had laughed at his sweet naivety. Keith knew a sex blanket when he saw one and apparently the McClain-Sanchez’s had them stashed all over the place. Whether or not Lance was still in denial over its purpose, it was clear what his intents were as he laid it out in the bed of truck.

Keith ignored the stars. The streetlights nearby dimmed their impressiveness. They were brighter on the farm anyway. Years ago star-gazing used to mean something to him. It used to be the invitation from infinite worlds he could journey to. Now the night sky reminded him of what he didn’t want to think about like the planet the Blade rescue mission was unfurling on without him… All places that were other… All places that didn’t have Lance...

So Keith shunned the stars in favour of his blue boy and the magic he was making with his tongue.

They’d never really just made out before. Usually they jumped into sex pretty quick -Heck, Keith had sucked Lance’s cock dozens of times before their first kiss - so laying in the back of the truck, making out fully clothed was a different experience for them.

Keith kept trying to ramp up the activity to the next base, but every time he went for Lance’s big, ugly belt buckle Lance would laugh and shift their position, throwing Keith off. Lance laughed a lot drunk, loud and carefree. It did something nice to Keith’s chest to hear him so genuinely happy after all those times he’d watched Lance smile without his eyes.

“Laaaance,” whined Keith, the fifth time Lance thwarted his attempts to undo his pants. “Let me
Lance’s reaction to this was a spurting laugh that rumbled against Keith’s chest.

“You’re so hard and I can feel it and I want it in my mouth and then my ass. In that order sp-specifically. ‘Cause the other order is bad.”

Lance seemed to want to respond but he was laughing too hard. What was so damn funny? Ignoring whatever fit Lance was having, Keith rolled to his back so he could pat himself down.

“What are you doing?” squeaked out Lance.

“Looking for my lube,” groaned Keith. “Help me search.” Keith spread out his limbs for easy accessibility, but when Lance rolled over all he could do was drop his face down against Keith’s stomach and resume laughing. “Whaaaaat?”

“You won’t find it,” said Lance through stutters of laughter, “Those aren’t your clothes.”

Keith squinted down, but between the blurred vision and the lowlight, he couldn’t really tell what he was wearing. This would be a great time for his Galra eyes with the night vision to kick in, but… then Lance might see…

“What am I wearing?” asked Keith, giving up. Then the memory of getting dressed for the evening finally popped back into his tequila soaked head. “I’m in your sister’s pants,” said Keith, Lance’s laugh becoming contagious.

“You got into my sister’s pants,” said Lance, shaking with laughter.

“But I want in your pants,” moaned Keith, rolling to press himself against Lance and forcing him to readjust his position. Keith wiggled his hand between them and stroked against Lance’s bulge, the back of his hand rubbing against himself for an extra benefit.

Lance stopped laughing as he inhaled from the sensation. “We can’t undress here,” said Lance, his voice breathy.

“Then why are you getting me worked up?” grumbled Keith.

“Pretty sure you’re the one trying to give me a dry rub special right now.”

“I wanna have you,” whined Keith, “this isn’t fair.”

“Aw, Keith, you waited for me for seven years, but can’t wait now?” teased Lance.

“Seven or ten years, something like that…”

“Right, we’re counting the time skip, now?”

“Noooo,” protested Keith. “Garrison.”

Now Lance was pushing Keith back by the shoulders so he could look at his face… with his two faces. Dammit Lance, focus your face!

“You didn’t even remember me from the Garrison.”

Now it was Keith’s turn to laugh and roll to his back. “Who the fuck is Lance McClain?” he mumbled to himself.
“What?” demanded Lance.

“Is the game I played in school where I pretended to never remember who you are.”

“What?!” cried Lance, sitting himself up. “Why would you do that?”

“Because every time I said, ‘Who are you?’ you would get so flustered,” confessed Keith, snickering at the memory. “And you were cute when you were all worked up... kinda like you are now...”

“Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait... You liked me back at the Garrison?”

“No,” said Keith in his most offended tone. “Wanted to fuck you at the Garrison. Other than that you were annoying.”

“I’m so confused,” said Lance, rubbing his face.

“Yeah, ‘cause you Lance. You get confused. That your thing.”

“But you told me you knew you wanted me the first time you saw me in my Paladin suit.”

“No, no, that’s wrong timeline,” said Keith, rolling back to his side. “I wanted you from puberty. When I saw you in your Paladin suit that’s when I figured it out.” Keith tapped the side of his head with his index finger.

“Figured what out?”

“That you were beautiful and if we’d been chosen together to save the universe by like destiny or whatever that I was definitely going to fall in love with you.” Oof. Was that a card Keith just dropped or did he drop that one before? “And like, I wasn’t happy with that at the same time ’cause like, you were still annoying to me, but... I mean... wasn’t a bad thing in the long run.”

“Keith...,” said Lance, softly. He reached down and stroked his hair.

Keith felt a wave of embarrassment and rolled onto his stomach, pressing his face into the stargazing blanket (that was totally a sex blanket, but not at the moment.) “I gotta stop confessing to you,” he moaned.

“Why?” asked Lance.

“Because I’mma scare you off.”

“You’re not,” said Lance, reassuringly. “I wish you’d told me all of this years ago.”

“Weren’t ready,” mumbled Keith.

“You or me?”

“Both.”

Lance laughed. “Yeah, we’re disasters. Kinda why we fit though.” Keith’s hand crept over to Lance’s crotch, going for the belt buckle. “Okay,” laughed Lance, grabbing Keith’s hand. “You’re the worst.”

“Just let me suck you off,” whined Keith. “It’ll be so quick. No one will see. Galra stealth mode.”
“Okay, we’re not getting undressed, but we’re still gonna get off,” said Lance, taking Keith’s wrists and using them to roll Keith to his back. Keith immediately rolled back to his side. “Okay, can you not be a power bottom for three seconds and let me be in control.”

“I’ll try,” said Keith, letting Lance roll him to his back. Lance rolled on top of Keith and went to kiss his neck while Keith went to put his hands below Lance’s waistband. “Hands, Keith! Geez, do I have to tie you up to get you to let me lead.”

“You can tie me up right now,” purred Keith, pushing up to roll himself against Lance. He might not be able to see Lance blush, but he could feel the heat radiating off his face.

“I don’t have any restraints.”

“You sure? Check the truck. Your kinky as fuck family probably has handcuffs in the glove compartment.”

“Okay, don’t make it weird,” laughed Lance. He pushed back to his knees then pushed Keith’s wrists up above his head. “Pretend you’re restrained.”

“I have no imagination. You know this about me.”

“True,” chuckled Lance. He shrugged his jean jacket off of his shoulders. Keith gulped, his throat feeling thick. Was he so horned up the mere removal of Lance’s jacket drove him wild? Lance wasn’t even showing any extra skin. Like, no skin at all and it was maddening.

“Here,” said Lance, wrapping his jacket around Keith’s wrists and hands. “Not actually tied up, but might help you pretend you are.”

“You have a belt and you use your jacket?”

“Shut up,” said Lance, but he went and undid his belt, next, sliding it off oh so slow, the sight of which caused Keith to gulp against that lump again. Lance wrapped his belt around the jacket in an extra lame attempt to secure him in a way that was not secure.

“I’m helpless,” lied Keith with a fake pout. “Just have your way with me already.”

Lance lay his weight back on top of Keith and kissed him. “I will,” he whispered. Then he moved to kiss Keith’s neck while he pushed open Keith’s legs with one leg and popped up the other knee on the other side.

Keith could feel Lance’s hard cock pressed into his hip and when Lance rolled his hips against him, his leg created that much needed friction against Keith’s own cock. Keith moaned far too obviously just from that first contact, but he was so needy.

“This,” began Lance, pausing to pepper kisses along Keith’s neck as he continued to roll his hips against Keith, “is how we do it in the country.”

“Yeah, fuck me like a good country boy,” hissed Keith.

“Keeeeeith,” whined Lance, pausing his grinding.

“What?”

“I am the one dirty talking this time. You always out do me.”

“Want me to stop?” asked Keith, pitching his hips up to grind against Lance himself, “You’ll have
to fake gag me too.”

Lance leaned in and pressed his mouth against Keith in a heavy kiss. That was… yeah, that was one way to gag Keith. Lance’s hip rolls resumed, his body weight and motion creating waves of building pleasure in Keith. He’d never been so vanilla with sex, but somehow being in this truck bed with the sounds of the loud bar drifting through the air, made it feel real dirty.

Keith tried to be good. He really tried. And Ancients know he wanted Lance to have him in any which way he wanted. For at least a minute of deep kisses and heavy grinds, he let Lance have at him, but… Keith was who he was and who he was wasn’t tied up at all.

The jean jacket and belt knocked Lance on the head when Keith gave up on the ruse and took his arms down from above his head. Lance stopped kissing long enough to toss them to the side then resumed, not bothering to scold Keith as he gripped Lance’s ass and arched his body up to get as much friction as possible.

He just wanted more touch. More grip of Lance’s ass. More slide under his shirt. More pulling of his hair…

Just more of Lance because Lance was the craving he’d never satisfy.

When Lance broke off the kiss, the brightness of his glowing Altean marks made Keith squint. Lance moved to Keith’s ear, the light no longer blinding him, and whispered something in Spanish that he had no chance of understanding, but damn it sounded sexy. Then he stuck that skillful tongue of his inside Keith’s ear causing him to shiver.

Heat unfurled below and Keith felt like he was sweating through his clothes. The cool night air couldn’t reach him especially with this hotter than a Marvonian sun Cuban boy rising and falling like the tides on top of him.

“More,” mumbled Keith, fingers gripping involuntarily with want, one had tugging roughly at Lance’s hair and the other leaving a nice scratch on his back.

“Brat,” teased Lance, but his voice was thick and his breathing shallow. He’d liked it.

So Keith kept pulling at Lance’s hair while scratching up and down his spine while Lance sucked hard on his neck.

“Fuck me,” mumbled Keith more as a reaction than an instruction. Lance interpreted it as the latter, moving harder and rougher in a manner that wouldn’t be the best for dry humping if they weren’t already a bit numb from drink.

Keith had had all his ‘sex with Lance’ at the Garrison fantasies wrong. It wouldn’t have been long legs gracefully wrapped around his waist. No, it would’ve been this. Rutting against each other in the back of a pickup because Lance was a country boy and he would’ve fucked Keith like one.

As soon as that thought sparked a moan out of Keith, Lance stopped teasing him with that suck and bit down on Keith’s neck, setting him off completely. He arched up against Lance, nails digging as deep into his skin as those teeth were into his neck.

Stars. Despite the light pollution, Keith could see stars as he came, a moan reverberating out of him.

“Keith… fuck…,” groaned Lance, refusing to let up as their bodies found a natural wave to ride this out.
Keith came so hard he thought he maybe blacked out for half a second. But then again that could be the alcohol. But he blinked through the dark to find Lance still coming, a higher pitched than usual moan in Keith’s ears before he finally stilled on top of him, heavy and uncomfortably warm.

Still, Keith didn’t mind being overheated a bit longer because it was Lance. And this was his date with Lance. And he’d just had sex the way Lance wanted to… with Lance.

“Sorry,” mumbled Keith.

“Why?” asked Lance, not even moving, just speaking into Keith’s shoulder.

“Because I couldn’t just lie there and take it.”

Lance laughed, his body rumbling on top of Keith’s. “I didn’t really think you would.” Then he finally lifted up a bit, folding his arms across Keith’s chest and looking down at him. “And once again, don’t apologize for being yourself.”

“’kay,” said Keith, lifting a heavy arm to stroke Lance’s glowing cheekbone. “That was…”

“Not bad for being dressed?” chuckled Lance.

“You give good… leg,” confessed Keith then started laughing too. “Am I country yet?”

“Almost fully initiated.”

“What’s left?” squeaked Keith.

“Skinny dipping and uh…,” Lance scrunched up his nose. “Fuck, I’m drunk. Ask me when I’m sober.”

“Skinny dipping sounds fun,” said Keith.

Lance nodded and leaned in to kiss Keith quickly. “Something to save for our second date.”

His lip stuck out in a pout. Keith didn’t want to wait for things anymore.

“Okay, enough with that face,” said Lance, moving back onto his knees, “Let’s go in and clean up. They’ll be wondering where we went.”

“I dunno. Seems like your family always knows when we’re fucking.”

Lance groaned and dropped his head. “Don’t make me think about that.”

*****

“Stop admirin’ yourself and let’s go,” said Lance, holding open the bathroom door. They had wiped up all they could and now Lance had a second wind and wanted to go rejoin his siblings.

“I’m not admiring myself,” protested Keith as he gazed into the mirror, “I’m checking out this hickey you gave me.”

“I’m pretty sure you ripped out a chunk of my hair,” said Lance with an eyeroll, “so get over your precious porcelain neck.”

“Hair grows back, Lance. I’m missing flesh.”
“Okay, you know you also made my back bleed, right?”

“That I didn’t know. Maybe if I flip my collar up…”

“No,” protested Lance. “That is not the look you’re sporting. Why does it bother you if my family sees it? They already know I do a lot more to you than imprint my teeth on your neck.”

“It’s not them. There’s just this table of men that’s been shooting us dirty looks all night. I don’t want to give them a target to stare at.”

“Oh, the ‘mophobes you mentioned? Who cares if they look?’

Keith sighed. “I’m just trying to exist as a gay man in a public space in a small country town. Been keeping a low profile since I was seventeen. It’s habit.”

“I bet one of the girls has concealer,” said Lance, “Be back in a jiff!”

“Did you just say jiff?” called out Keith at the swinging door.

Keith defiantly flipped up his collar and examined his reflection. Damn. Lance was right. This didn’t fit with the outfit. How come Keith could tell? Did having a boyfriend finally unlock his inner gay? Finally a gay thought that wasn’t dick sucking related.

He flipped the collar back down, wondering how long it would take to get concealer. Maybe awhile if Rachel had it since she’d still been necking with Jason when they walked back in. Maybe he should let them know the truck bed was free. Those two could move out there.

The sound of the toilet flushing broke Keith out of his thoughts. When had someone come in? Fuck, tequila really numbed all his instincts.

He heard the bathroom stall door open behind him, but kept his gaze on his own reflection as etiquette demanded he keep to himself in here. The guy quite rudely knocked against Keith’s shoulder, effectively side bumping him out of the way of the sink. Keith was pretty solid in mass with great balance so it was a testament to the drinking how easily he was moved out of the way.

“Excuse you,” snapped Keith, whipping his head to look the asshole who thought he owned the bathroom.

His instinct finally fired up with an uncomfortable guy clench as he realized this was the same man he first spotted shooting daggers in his direction. Here he’d been worried a about a confrontation out there in the bar when of course one had followed him into the bathroom.

Time to skedaddle. Keith went to move but the massive guy through out a beefy arm in the tiny bathroom connecting it against the stall and blocking Keith’s exit.

Great.

“We got a problem here?” asked Keith, being sure that his time conveyed annoyance and not intimidation because... c’mon.

The guy let out a huff of a chuckle. His breath smelt like beer and cigarettes. His face was red from decades of sun exposure and his arms were like tree trunks. “You really don’t remember me, do ya?”

“Sure I do,” said Keith. “Death stare. Table three.”
The man laughed again. Fake. Accented by the abrupt stop where he leaned forward and hissed, “Stay away from the McClain boy then we won’t have a problem.”

Keith smirked. Leaned in just the same as he had and said, “No.” Then he shoved that big arm with his Galra strength and easily got it out of his way.

“Boy’s a war hero,” said the man as Keith moved to the door. “He don’t need trouble from the likes of you.”

Keith repressed a wince as he walked out the bathroom door, hickey and all. It was time to gather the McClain-Sanchez-Dubois’ and split.

As soon as Keith strolled out he felt the difference in the atmosphere of the bar. Sure, there was some honky tonk singer crooning from the jukebox about his “achey breaky heart,” but there was also a tension in the air that hadn’t been there before.

Keith’s crew was back at their table, Lance hovering beside it, mission to get concealer apparently forgotten, but there was a seventh person with them. One interesting enough for Lisa to wake up and watch with a concerned expression as the man who Keith recognized as the second to arrive at the homophobe table, with his grey hair and horn-rimmed glasses, speak quietly to Luis as he listened with a tense expression on his face.

Keith’s eyes flicked back to the table these two men had occupied to see the others they’d left there, all staring over at the man speaking to the eldest of the brothers. Keith looked to the once empty table beside that one and cursed himself as he saw occupied with men wearing the same expressions on their faces. He hadn’t noticed that table filling up, but now that he was looking he did see a familiar face and it knocked him backwards in time.

His memory finally clicked into the scene many years ago where he’d met beefy arms before except then he was angry and yelling and this other guy with the slouch and hooded eyes just looked terrified. Just like he looked terrified now…

Sober. Shock knocked Keith sober and suddenly every single one of his instincts were going off like alarm bells. Ten. Ten men total including the guy talking to Luis and ol’ beefy arms strolling confidently past Keith. His plan had never been to vibe Keith into not showing affection. He’d just been biding his time until his friends arrived and they outnumbered them.

“Annie,” said Keith, taking three wide steps and grabbing her by the arm to get her attention. “Call the cops.”

“Cops?” she repeated, holding a tray of drinks in one hand. “Like pural? Obvious you ain’t from around here.”

Frustrated, Keith released her arm. He was done with this folksy small town waitress shit if it meant she couldn’t see a storm building right in front of her.

* 

Lance didn’t understand what was happening and why everyone seemed so freaked out, but it made him feel worried. He knew the man squatting down beside Luis, speaking to him a quiet tone. That was Mr. Donaldson. He was a local farmer who Lance had kinda known in passing since he was kid. So what was he saying to Luis that he didn’t want overheard? And why did Luis look so angry listening to it?

“Donaldson,” said Luis, cutting the man off, “you have your reasons, but I gotta say that in this
case your concern is not appreciated and I’d like to end this conversation right here.”

“Lance,” said Keith, appearing beside him. His voice shocked Lance’s brain into remembering he was supposed to be fetching concealer. He almost apologized to Keith for getting distracted by the scene before him. That was until Keith firmly grabbed his hand and whispered, “We need to leave. Now.”

Scrapping. The sound of many chairs being pushed back at once. Lance looked to see two tables worth of people across the bar stand up. Lance wondered what had prompted this and why they were looking in his and Keith’s direction until he looked down at their clasped hands.

Oh.

Lance could be so naïve sometimes…

He’d been warned, hadn’t he? Keith hadn’t wanted to be affectionate in public. He’d told Lance these homophobic guys were vibing him yet hadn’t listened because he hadn’t noticed it himself.

“Sorry,” mumbled Lance, squeezing Keith’s hand.

“You didn’t do anything,” said Keith. As he was saying this all his family rose up out of their seats, angry, cold faces staring down the men across the bar.

“Hold on,” said a man waving broad arms at the family as he stepped up beside Mr. Donaldson. Lance recognized him as local, but couldn’t think of his name. “Let’s not get riled up when all we wanna do is help your family out.”

“By spreading rumours, Henry,” said Luis, fury creeping into his voice, “and that ain’t helpful to no one.”

“Look,” said Henry, “We like you McClains –“

“McClain-Sanchez’s,” corrected Rachel.

“- You’re good folk. And even though none’a y’all were born here, we consider you American.”

“We are Americans,” said Marco, scowling.

“And because we respect you and the work your folks put into their farm and our community we’re willing to look over some of your more… queer tendencies.”

“Our what?” asked Veronica through gritted teeth.

“I’m saying we ain’t judging ya for it.”

“Sounds like you are,” said Lisa, clenching her fists.

“We are much more concerned with the company y’all are keeping,” said Henry and this time he looked directly at Keith.

“Whoa,” said Lance, instinctively moving to stand in front of Keith, but Keith just yanked him back to his side. “What do you have against Keith?”

“Keith, is it?” said Henry, stealing a quick glance at him. “I never caught his name the first time we met when I chased him out of my brother Digger’s bedroom.” Henry looked back at the group of men. Among them was one considerably younger than these middle aged men, probably no
older than thirty. He was also the only one not giving their family an intimidating stare. Slouching at the back of the group, looking down at the ground with hooded eyes, he looked like he’d rather be anywhere else than standing here, being outted by his brother.

“We’re not interested in your family’s dirty laundry,” said Luis. “That ain’t our business.”

“Oh, but it affects you,” said Henry, “Did Donaldson not give you the full story? See this happened maybe nine, ten years back. I don’t fault Digger for being seduced by this one. I remember him much smaller and… feminine looking. Likely in his drunken state Digger mistook him for an Asian girl, like one of those Thaiwanese ladyboys.”

Outraged noises burst from their table. Rachel’s voice rising above the others with a, “Da fuck, what did you just say?”

“The disturbing part was,” said Henry, his voice rising above the dim, “when I discovered Keith in my brother’s room, Digger was passed out in bed and I caught this one red handed taking all the cash from his wallet.” Henry paused to give everyone a chance to soak in that imagery. “I had to chase his ass out of my house. I tell you this because I don’t want a nice boy like yourself, McClain, a war vet and a hero to the children in our county, to get swindled by some lying, stealing boy-whore.”

Outrage rose up around the bar. Lance’s family yelling at the same time Henry’s people began shouting too. But he just… shrank back, trying to process this.

* 

It had never occurred to Keith to worry about the crimes of his youth. He had been in survival mode back then. It didn’t even feel like that seventeen-year-old boy just trying to scrape by had ever been him. The war felt like it had erased everything he used to be.

Believing that had been his mistake…

“You’re out of fucking line, Henry!” said Luis, hitting him in the chest with his pointer finger.

“Keith,” said Lance, looking at him with wide-eyed concern.

That look. Lance wanted confirmation that this wasn’t true, but Keith couldn’t ever lie to him. Even if it meant keeping his respect.

‘I’m going to lose him…’

Keith nodded, sadly, the energy he’d felt before, the instinct to run away from his problems, deflating as numb acceptance of the situation washed over him.

Lance set his jaw then he released Keith’s hand…

… and marched forward to stand shoulder to shoulder with Luis. “So what if he stole from your brother?” said Lance, angry voice rising above the rest of the siblings who were also telling off Henry. “Doesn’t give you the right to talk about him with that disgusting language! And Keith must’ve only been seventeen when this happened so I’d be a lot less concerned about the gender of the people your brother is sleeping with and more worried their ages!”

“It wasn’t just Digger though,” said Henry, his voice losing that cool, reasonable tone he’d been
sporting. “Happened to family members of all of these men and many others as far west as Colorado.” Like they were summoned, those men came forward to stand with Henry and Donaldson. In response the siblings moved out from behind the table so they could stand in a group supporting Lance and Luis, creating a barrier between these men and Keith. Jason stood up from his own table and came to stand beside Rachel.

“Then they should all be ashamed of themselves too!” said Lisa, loudly. “Sleeping with an underage boy. How dare you act like Keith was responsible for their choices!”

“He never told me his age,” said Digger, weakly, standing back from the rest of his brother’s group.

“That’s not gonna hold up in court,” shot Veronica. “Statutory rape is a hell of lot more serious than taking money from a wallet. You miss your change so bad, sue us in small claims court. Don’t step to us in a bar!”

Keith couldn’t believe it… they were all defending him.

“Maybe we can cover your bar tab for the night,” suggested Rachel in a singsong voice that suddenly turned vicious, “then you can fuck right off with your tired ass homophobic, transphobic, racist bullshit!”

“See him,” said Lisa, pointing at Keith, “He’s ours. You mess with him, you mess with us.”

The Paladins would step for Keith. The Blades would step for Keith. And now the McClain-Sanchez-Dubois were stepping for Keith.

That didn’t solve the pressing problem though. These men looked annoyed at the verbal abuse their clan was throwing at them, but they didn’t look deterred. Because no, backlash had been more than anticipated by them. That’s why they waited until they outnumbered them… This wasn’t a shaming. This was a revenge.

The moment the glint off the metal hit Keith’s retinas he was moving. He saw the knife as Henry slid it from his pocket to his hand. Immediately Keith was grabbing hold of Lance’s siblings and shoving them to the side because they were no longer acting like a shield, no, they were preventing him from getting to Lance.

Henry had made one grave mistake and it wasn’t trying to humiliate Keith in front of his boyfriend’s family. No, it was bringing a knife to a blade fight.

* 

It happened too quick for Lance to register it all. He felt a hand grab at the back of his jacket and suddenly he was on the ground.

Keith was in front of him.

Keith had his blade activated. Fuck. WHY??

Then Keith was in full ninja assassin mode, swinging and kicking and flipping around. Lance didn’t see Keith hit anyone with his blade because fuck that would probably kill a human, but he was using it to intimidate them and prevent them from hitting him. He was using his feet and his free fist to beat the shit out of nine men at once. They didn’t stand a chance against him.

Lance was too stunned to even stand up. The only one of his siblings who seemed unfazed enough
to move was Veronica who yanked the chair out of the hands of a guy trying to swing it at Keith’s unguarded back. She flung it at another guy, knocking him down, and when the first one tried to grab her from behind she elbowed him in the nose.

Meanwhile, Keith didn’t stop moving until everyone was either down on the ground groaning or backing away.

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Keith’s eyes had changed. Why? Fucking why? I hadn’t happened in years. Not, since his fight with Shiro’s clone and even then he’d only felt the change hit him for a second. Why now?

He didn’t want Lance to see and that just made him angrier. Made him hit harder. Made him furious that this whole damn situation was happening when all he wanted to do was go on a date!

“Keith!” came Lance’s voice bringing Keith to the realization that he was moving in on a now unarmed Henry who was backing away like he wanted to run. So why shouldn’t he just let him run?

Henry had sought revenge, but Keith was not spiteful like that. He could stop. He would stop.

Keith halted his steps, chest heaving with adrenaline and fight that still wanted to be released. But he calmed his breath, reminding himself that patience yields focus. His blade deactivated the moment his eyes switched back to human.

But Henry looked Keith in the eye before he’d switched back. Now his eyes drifted to his deactivated blade. “He’s one of those fucking alien fairies!”

Keith’s hand clutched tighter around the hilt of his blade, feeling it activate again. He willed himself not to attack him again.

“HEY!” came Annie’s voice, loud as a hurricane. “Is that blood?!”

Keith, turned, confused. He was certain he’d not cut anyone. Annie’s finger pointed at one man that Keith didn’t remember hitting who appeared to have a broken nose that was gushing blood onto the dance floor.

“I gave y’all one dang rule! No spillin’ enough blood to slip on! Out!”

“But we don’t deserve to get booted when they started it by –”

“Blood on the floor is strike for tonight and don’t think you’re not gonna charm me outta kicking y’all out. That favour you gave me once. Wasn’t as big as you built up in your head.”

“Ouch,” said Veronica, “That’s the most upsetting thing I’ve heard tonight.”

“Go on, git!” ordered Annie, pointing at the exit.

“Lance,” said Keith, seeing his boyfriend pick himself off the floor… where Keith had tossed him… but in the name of protecting him, right? Lance didn’t look back, just went for the exit. Keith, skipped over to the table and grabbed the cowboy hat off the hook on the wall, Lance having forgotten it.
“Not you,” said Annie’s sharp voice. Keith turned, thinking she was speaking to him, but she was speaking to Henry and his crew. “I don’t want y’all brawling in the parking lot. You give them a five minute buffer. Give you time to clean up your mess.” As she said this she pointed to the pool of blood on the floor. Keith still didn’t remember breaking that guy’s nose… Maybe he was out of control…

“W-wait,” Keith turned to see Digger hovering a few feet back from him, dancing nervously on his toes. He’d had the good sense to stand back in the fight so Keith had left him alone. “Sorry.”

Keith just shook his head at him and left.

******

The ride back was a very different mood from the drive there. Marco had climbed into the front. Luis stopped to give Keith’s arm a pat before he swung into the driver’s seat. The rest of them climbed into the bed of the pickup.

Keith and Lance sat with their backs against the cab. Sitting on each side of the now closed sliding part of the back window. Bodies too far apart to touch. Keith would’ve taken Lance’s hand if he weren’t crossing it tightly across his chest, knees up, head turned slightly to the side as if he were watching the scenery pass on that side. There was no scenery. It was pitch black out in the country with only the headlights to guide their path over the bumpy dirt road.

Am I too blind to see
What’s then hap'n'ing to me

The woman sat facing them, backs against the back of the truck bed. Rachel sat cross legged with her arms across her chest. She had that same expression on her face Lance gets when he’s trying to contain his frustration but he’s about to erupt. Her one leg bounced with anxious energy. Lisa sat beside her, passed out, mouth open, her head resting on Veronica’s shoulder. Veronica sat with her legs tucked to her chest, her brows furrowed with worry as she slowly looked between Keith and Lance.

Ev'ry road has a bend
Will I be sweetheart or friend

No one spoke. No one had said a word since they’d left the bar. The only sound besides the tires crunching on gravel was a quiet Crooner drifting from the radio in the cab.

Will the sweet things you do
Be for somebody new

Keith was gonna need to be the first one to say something.

Keith was terrible at talking.

He rather fight Sendak again than try to find the words to make whatever was wrong right again.

Tell me what to do
Am I losing you

Keith opened up his mouth to speak, hoping a simple ‘well that was crazy’ would at least break the ice and he could fumble along based on everyone’s reaction.

“Well that –“
“I can’t take it anymore!” yelled Rachel so loudly it startled Lisa awake. “I’m in love with Jason!”

“You’re what?” gasped Lisa.

“That’s why I made out with him!”

“You what?!” cried Lisa, “Where was I?”

“Asleep. Look, I know it’s a shock,” said Rachel dramatically.

Veronica looked at Keith with one eyebrow raised because no, it wasn’t shocking at all. It was painfully obvious.

“I’m in love with him and I hate it because his face is so stupid and everything he says is so annoying, but I can’t get past it and I can’t keep hiding my feelings.” Rachel looked Lisa, her anger vanishing and eyes growing big. “I’m so sorry for disappointing you.”

“Disappointing me?” repeated Lisa. She grabbed Rachel by the face and squashed her cheeks between her palms as she said, “You listen to me, Rach! All I have ever wanted was for you to be happy and if loving a defective chode like Jason is what does it, you take that boy and you make an honest man outta him!”

“Really?” Rachel’s voice was distorted by the squash of her face. “You think we’d be good together?”

“I think he’d make the perfect first husband for you.”

“Oh Lise…” Rachel wrapped Lisa in a tight hug that was quickly returned. Then they were both just sobbing into each other’s shoulders… for the second time that night… Keith didn’t understand how they got emotional so quickly.

“And after you divorce him,” said Lisa through broken sobs. What? She went from marrying Jason to divorcing him in two sentences… “I will throw you the biggest divorce party and we will drink tequila and dance on top of the bar Coyate Ugly style."

“You’re such a good sister,” cried Rachel as the two rocked back and forth in their hug.

Keith was less concerned over the scene in front of him than he was about Lance’s total lack of reaction to it. He hadn’t even turned his head to look. He was still just staring out into the dark.

Tell me what to do
Am I losing you

Veronica caught Keith’s eye. She moved her gaze over to Lance then back at Keith, indicating he needed to address this. That’s what Keith was afraid of…

“Lance,” said Keith, trying to be heard just over the crying, but not so much that Lisa and Rachel heard him too, “Are you okay?”

“Fine,” said Lance’s voice, deadpan with a quick up-and-down shrug to accompany it.

Okay, obviously not fine, but then if wasn’t going to tell Keith what in particular was wrong (though Keith had a few ideas) what could he do? Keith was ready to drop it for now and try again back home, but then he saw Veronica gesturing towards Lance with her hands, a firm look on her face.
“Look,” said Keith, “I’m sorry things got out of hand back there.”

“Out of hand?” repeated Lance, whipping his head back at Keith. “You started a bar fight! If you can even call it a bar fight! It was more like you beating up a dozen old men for no reason.”

“I hit one with a chair,” said Veronica.

“They were a threat to us,” said Keith, sharply.

“I had it under control, Keith! I was talking them down then you had to go all Galra and attack them!”

Keith’s stomach clenched at the word Galra. “They were goading you, Lance. They wanted to rile you up so when they attacked they’d have an excuse.”

“Even so, I can handle being punched! You don’t need to push me to the ground to protect me! Heck, I might even block a punch. Have some faith in me.”

“Henry wasn’t going to punch you Lance, he had a knife!”

“I didn’t see a knife!” yelled Lance.

“I saw a knife,” said Veronica, “also, I broke that guy’s nose. I forgot to mention it earlier.”

Lance was clearly caught now, having reacted without knowing the full story, but he set his jaw and refused to back down. “You took it too far!”

“What happened to not apologizing for being myself?” asked Keith, sarcastically. “Or is myself too Galra for you? Maybe I should’ve defended us like the Alteans do and use alchemy powers to fight then pretend it’s somehow morally better than a weapon.”

“It isn’t about your weapon,” said Lance, “You treated it like it was a battle, but this is Earth, Keith! You’ve been in the fight too long. You should’ve stopped when the war ended!”

“The war never ended!” bellowed Keith, sick of explaining this. “Allura’s sacrifice didn’t magically create universal peace, it just gave us an opportunity to wrestle the power back while our enemies were weak! Just because you don’t see the war, doesn’t mean it’s not happening! And just because you don’t see the knife, doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist! It’s not my fault you wanted to quit so badly you pretended it was over!”

Keith hadn’t meant… hadn’t meant to say any of that. And he really didn’t mean to scream it at Lance with his fists clenched tight. As his last word hung in the air, the car pulled up to a stop sign at a crossroads meaning even the sound of tire on gravel died, timing itself with the end of the song and leaving nothing but silence.

The sisters stared in tense worry while Keith and Lance held eyes, faces red from shouting.

Lance stood, breaking eye contact with Keith.

He took to large strides then stepped up onto the rim of the truck bed, between Veronica and Lisa’s shoulders then launched himself out.

“Lance!” cried the women, voices overlapping.

But he wasn’t stopping. He was sprinting back on that dirt road with only the red break lights lighting the way. But even those dimmed as the car lurched forward again, it’s driver eager to
accelerate back to max speed, clueless that he’d just lost a passenger.

“Lance!” Veronica yelled again over the back of the truck bed. Lisa and Rachel fought momentum and crawled forward to pound on the back rear window of the cab.

“Luis! Luis!” they yelled.

“Don’t worry,” said Keith, his voice fighting to stay even. He stood, bracing himself against the hood of the cab. “I’ll get him.”

With one large stride then a foot on the rim, Keith launched himself off the back of the moving vehicle (dangerous yes, but not even in the top one hundred of stupid, needless stunts Keith had pulled in his life.)

He hit the gravel and roller, able to twist himself back to his feet and just keep running towards the last spot he’d seen Lance. Lance was fast and Keith wasn’t hopeful he’d overtake him, but he figured he wouldn’t just run back to town. He was looking to be alone (while leaving in the most dramatic way possible because… Lance.)

About a mile back Keith’s eyes had fully adjusted to the dark (human eyes, mind you) and the hundreds of thousands of stars above served to light his surroundings. He spotted a wooded area off the highway, not much farther back than where they’d lost Lance. His ears detected a stream in that direction from the sound of water bubbling over rock mixed in with the sound of wind rustling leaves.

Water…

Lance would seek it out.

******

A green canopy of leaves above his head. Rough bark under his fingers. Dirt beneath his feet. Water trickling beside him.

“It’s Earth… it’s Earth… it’s Earth,” repeated Lance, squeezing his eyes shut and letting his forehead drop against the coarse bark of the tree. “I made it home… I made it home… I…” His usual mantra wasn’t working to calm him. Maybe because… this wasn’t a panic attack. This was something else.

Lance heard Keith coming before his tentative voice spoke.

“Lance?” In response Lance shuffled around the tree to put himself properly out of view. “Lance, there’s no point in hiding. I can see your marks glowing. The light led me right to you.”

“I didn’t need you to come find me,” said Lance, refusing to move to face Keith. “This is my turf. I know how to get home by myself. No protector needed.”

“I didn’t follow you because I thought you were lost,” said Keith, stepping around the tree to look at Lance in profile. “I followed because… I want to be near you and because I feel terrible for what I said and how I handled –”

“Do you think I want to be this way?” The words burst out of Lance without him registering what Keith was trying to say. “Do you think I want to be the only one who couldn’t cut it? The only one who fell apart? The only broken one?”
“Lance, you are not –” Keith stepped forward to comfort Lance, but Lance just shoved him back off because there was this deep pit of shame inside of him and now that he’d starting to draw from it he couldn’t stop.

“You a-and Hunk and Pidge, you are all still out there working to better the universe and I am here,” said Lance, every piece of frustration and pain in his voice, “living the same life I led as a ten year old and being fucking useless!”

“You are not -,” said Keith, flustered, and rapidly starting multiple sentences at once. “What you went through - Shiro -”

“Shiro was held captive in an alien concentration camp, was forced to fight for sport, got experimented on, lost his arm, DIED, came back as a clone of himself then got back to Earth to discover his fiancée, who he’d known since childhood, had been killed by Sendak while he time skipped three years! He earned his retirement! I didn’t even make it to my two month anniversary with Allura and she choose to leave! It is not the same!”

“It doesn’t have to be the same to feel the same,” said Keith, tense shoulders up to his ears. “I know you –”

“Patrick Monahan was wrong,” said Lance quickly.

“Who?”

“The lead singer of Train.”

“Again, who?”

“He sang the song, Drops of Jupiter. The one I sang to you in the bar. He’s wrong in the song.”

Lance chewed on his bottom lip. “He’s upset that his partner is improving herself and he’s trying to convince her to go back to her old ways so they still fit together. But he’s the one who should change for her. He needs to grow or he doesn’t deserve her.”

“Lance…” sighed Keith, those shoulders now dropping back down.

“I’ve regressed,” said Lance, angrily. “I moved back home before my twentieth birthday because I can’t keep fighting like you! I can’t! I wish I could but I can’t and I fucking hate myself for it!”

Lance didn’t know when his legs had given out, when he’d dropped down onto the ground to let his tears fall into the dirt.

“Lance, listen,” Keith’s voice was quiet, but close liked he’d knelt down beside him, but Lance’s eyes were far too blurry to see him. “The whole point is you don’t have to go back.” Lance heard Keith shift in the dirt, settling down properly beside him. “When we became the Paladins, we didn’t have a choice. When Sendak invaded Earth, those who were here, Adam included, didn’t have a choice. And maybe Allura didn’t grant us instant peace, but she gave us something we never had before. We got to choose what we did next. You chose to be with your family and you got to do that thanks to her.

“On the outside it looks like my choice was to keep fighting, but when you look at it closely, my family, my mother and Kolivan and the other Blades, that’s what they were doing. That’s the drive of our family. Pidge, they’re working at the Garrison, but they’re also working with their family. We didn’t make choices that much different than you. And getting to know your family, Lance, and how close knit you all are, I think they needed you to come home just as much as you needed to go home.”
Lance sniffed. “It’s been three years. I just… I feel like it’s past time for me to make a new move, but I keep feeling like I can’t.” Lance’s chest shook with another sob threatening to collapse him into tears again.

“Do you remember our last night on Earth?” asked Keith. “Before we left for our final battle with Honerva.”

Lance nodded. “We watched the sunset on top of Black.” And Lance had almost been late for his date with Allura because something inside him couldn’t leave that spot, not until the last of the light died on the horizon.

“You told me you were really going to miss this place.”

“And you told me that’s why we needed to end the war…” and Keith has said so much more that had made Lance’s chest swell in a new and frightening yet exciting way.

“What I didn’t say out loud, what I promised myself, was that I would end it for you so you could watch the sunset again.”

Lance’s breath stilled in his chest.

“I still think about that when I’m out there these days,” continued Keith, “that I never want to let any threat come anywhere near Earth because I want you to keep having sunsets. Every sunset for the rest of your life because you deserve them, Lance.” Keith’s voice became a quiet but full. “You deserve all the sunsets.”

Sometimes it doesn’t need to be the last puzzle piece for you to see what you’re building. Sometimes you find that one piece and when you click it into place, the image becomes clear. You can see the big picture long before it’s complete.

Lance found Keith’s face with the glow of his Altean marks. This time he didn’t resent their illumination as he wanted their light to guide him close to Keith. Close enough to slide his hand behind his neck and pull him into a kiss. Close enough so Keith heard him clearly when he whispered, “Keith… I love you.”

*  

“You…” Keith leaned back. He wasn’t even trying to lean back. He just leaned back. “No.”

“What?”


“Are you saying no to me saying I love you?” asked Lance, an edge entering his voice.

“You can’t just say that!” Now Keith was launching himself to standing.

“Why not?”

“You’re drunk,” said Keith. He was pacing now. “Everyone loves everyone when they’re drunk. You know who else told me they loved me tonight? Rachel! And Lisa!”

“Yeah, because they mean they adore you,” said Lance, standing up himself. “But I’m saying it to you because I’ve fallen in love with you.” The emotion behind it did one thing to Keith, but the words did something else and he chose to react to that second feeling.
“That doesn’t make any sense!”

“Keith, what are you talking about?” demanded Lance, his voice impatient and growing angrier.

“It’s me, Lance. How can you say you’re in love with me when the last person you loved was a perfect person?”

“Allura was not perfect,” snapped Lance. “And pretending she was, like she was a saint, doesn’t do any justice to her memory. It makes it sound like she was born just to die instead of a whole, flawed person who could’ve lived a full life and - Fuck! I don’t want to talk about her right now!”

Frustrated, Lance turned and walked three steps away and then turned right back and walked back up to Keith. “I am finally going for who I really want instead of who I will look best with and that’s huge for me! Can’t you see that?”

Keith certainly wasn’t going to miss the fact that Lance admitted he didn’t think dating Keith looked good. “Great. We don’t look good.”

“Oh, I meant because was scared to date a guy,” said Lance, annoyed. “I obviously think you’re amazing. This is my issue. I’m not trying to insult you. I’m trying to convince you I’m in love with you even though I don’t understand why I have to defend this!”

“Lance,” said Keith, seriously, “I did those things that guy accused me of. I slept with those guys just so I could steal from them!”

“I don’t care about that. Keith, I know you steal. You stole a Garrison bike when we were teenagers. I’m not shocked that you stole money. And I don’t care who you slept with before. You could’ve fucked the entire Blade of Marmora for all I care and it wouldn’t change how I feel about you. You are the only one who thinks our pasts should limit our future!”

What future? Keith wanted a future with Lance, but he was still struggling to figure out what they were in the moment. He didn’t know how to explain this to Lance. He kept opening his mouth then getting scared he was going to fuck things up even more so he’d close it again.

“Wow,” said Lance when it became clear Keith had nothing to say for himself. “I thought I’d already gotten the worst possible response to ‘I love you’ which was silence. But apparently the actual worst response is being told I don’t feel what I feel.”

*

Lance walked away because he hadn’t expected this fight. Hadn’t expected any of this truth be told and he was so confused and hurt by Keith’s reaction. Mostly he didn’t expect this to be the end of the fight. He fully expected Keith to follow him again, follow the glow of his marks, calling out his name. Repeat the pattern that was them, never close enough, but also never able to let the other go.

A sob rang out over the chirp of the crickets. Lance froze. Not right behind him. Back. Back where he’d left…

“Keith?”

*

Sharp fangs grazed the inside of Keith’s lip. If he looked around he knew he’d see the forest’s details as bright as daylight. Twice in one day… Keith had never had his eyes change twice in one day.
Shame and tears kept his face hidden, buried in his hands. Just like Lance before him he’d sunk to the dirt, collapsing under the weight of a grief he didn’t understand. Why had he reacted this way to Lance telling him he loved him? What was wrong with him?

“Keith? Oh, Keith, I’m so sorry,” said Lance’s voice, sinking low as he dropped down next to him. “I didn’t mean to hurt you like this. I – I don’t know what to say to fix it. I screwed up.”

Keith shook his head. “Not… you.”

“Then wh-what’s wrong?”

How could he even begin explain to Lance that what was wrong was he was in love with him too? That he’d been in love with him for so long that it felt like he’d grown up loving Lance. That loving Lance was part of who he was as an adult. But now he couldn’t accept Lance’s love in return and that made him furious.

Keith had been so cautious. So damn cautious because he was convinced that Lance needed to build things slowly, but the moment Keith had told him he was his, Lance had opened up his heart to him yet here Keith was hesitating in the doorway. Worse, arguing that the door wasn’t open at all.

Keith should’ve known all along Lance was the kind of person who could love someone. He had done this before. He had walked this path. He knew all the steps. No, it was Keith who didn’t know how to do this.

His whole life, his whole fucking disaster of a life he’d been learning how to accept love. Like a scared, abused animal he trusted no one and accepted affection from even less.

He’d needed work so hard to learn to accept love from his friends and then from his mother. But this, romantic love, he didn’t know how to let someone close in this way. Deep down he was still that foster kid with weird eyes and ‘discipline issues.’

Lance wasn’t the broken one.

Keith was.

He’d broken his own heart before he’d even begun to try.

And the thought of this ringing through his head made him sob harder.

“Please Keith.” He felt Lance’s fingertips glide carefully across his shoulders before dropping into place to hold him, Lance’s head coming rest against Keith’s shoulder. “I know I just did the whole crying-in-the-dirt scene myself before, but for some reason it’s so much scarier when you do it. I’ve never seen you cry like this. Listen,” Lance paused to sniff, “this is on me, okay? If I confess love to you and you don’t believe it, that’s my fault for not demonstrating it.”

Keith shook his head because no, Lance was wrong. Keith did believe him. The problem was on Keith’s end.

“It’s my fault for trying to cram all that you meaning to me into three words,” continued Lance, “because what we are can’t fit in something that small. I should’ve asked myself what you would’ve said because you’ve always had this way with words.”

He…? No, that’s backwards. That’s crazy.
“Like what you said about the sunsets hit me so deep that I wanted to return the feeling right back and I took a shortcut when I know I can express it better if I try. I’ve known you almost half my life, but I’m the first to admit there’s stuff I still don’t know about you, but I’m okay with that. I know you have walls up, that’s part of who you are. But when you do lower those walls and I get to meet a new side of you, it instantly becomes my favourite thing about you.” Keith felt Lance’s breath on his neck. “I know I’m closed off too. Sometimes I find I’m protecting parts of me I didn’t even know I had, but you’ve been helping me with finding my blindspots. I love the pieces of me you’ve helped me discover. And when I look at who you are and who I am and who we are compared to where we started, I’m so proud of us. Our strength is our bond and it is so strong, Keith, and you mean so much to me.

“Maybe I don’t know every side of you yet and probably I don’t know all of myself yet, but we have time to discover those things. Even if it takes another decade, we have that time, don’t you think?”

Time. Another decade with Lance, only growing closer. “Yeah,” said Keith, his voice coming out like a croak. “We have time.” He decided something in that moment. He’d stay. Keith could do that. Take a hiatus from the Blades and just stay here and figure this out with Lance.

“I’m so glad to hear you say that,” said Lance, his voice tight. “I just… I wanna keep being with you.”

Keith shifted and Lance reacted by leaning back and allowing Keith space to look up at him. Keith saw Lance’s cheeks as a blown out white, the rest of the world as bright as day. His eyes still weren’t human, but that would be… okay, wouldn’t it?

Lance let a little surprised huff then crossed his arms and turned up his nose. “Okay, that isn’t fair! How come your alien trait makes you look even sexier and I got stuck with the worst highlighter job ever?” Lance gestured to his cheekbones. “Light blue, with my complexion, please! I am a summer and this is a winter colour. It’s like makeup no-no’s one-oh-one.”

“You… are seriously going to react to my eyes looking Galra like that?” demanded Keith, his voice both outraged and relieved.

“Whoa, do you have fangs to match? Hotness apparently has a higher level.”

“Don’t flirt with me over this! I’ve been keeping this secret from you since the Garrison!”

Lance blinked. “I knew your eyes go Galra sometimes.”

“You saw?!” gasped Keith, trying to figure out when exactly Lance discovered this. Fuck, was it the Garrison?

“No, Shiro told me.”

Now Keith was leaping to standing. “That’s even worse! How could he tell my secret like that?”

“Oh, you know what?” said Lance, tapping his chin. “Might have been when he was a clone being controlled by Haggar. Yeah, he was super secret spilly at that time. Told everyone I pluck my eyebrows, but that was like one time!”

Keith laughed. He didn’t even think he could laugh after crying that hard, but suddenly he was laughing.

“Lots of men groom their eyebrows, Keith!” barked Lance, assuming Keith was mocking him.
“It’s not that,” said Keith, trying to stifle his laugh, “It’s just… would you have been this cool about it if I’d shown you back at the Garrison?”

Lance thought about this for a second. “Honestly, probably not. I was a bit of an asshole back then.”

“You’re thinking of me,” said Keith.

This made Lance laugh as he stood up and brushed off his jeans. “Yeah, if you had let me in on some alien conspiracy shit back in school, I would be all over that… Also, if I’d seen those fangs I would’ve been all over you. I don’t think my bisexuality could’ve stayed dormant if you looked part vampire. I would’ve climbed you like a tree.”

Keith shook his head. “Why are you like this?”

“Dunno.” Lance stepped forward and draped his arms around Keith’s shoulders. “I’m glad you cried in front of me. It sounds weird but… you being vulnerable with me, it means a lot. And I would say drunk-cry Keith is my favourite Keith, but now there’s this cat-eye-and-fangs Keith that’s competing for attention… also, dirty-dancing Keith… all the Keiths.”

“Lance?”

“Yeah?”

Keith pressed his forward to Lance then dipped long enough to give him a peck on the lips. “Let’s go home already.”

*****

“Are you sure you know where we’re going?” asked Keith, his voice still raw from crying (or maybe from drinking.) Lance had never seen Keith fall apart like that. You would’ve thought Shiro had died again. But truthfully he felt like Keith really needed to let go and have that cry. It was almost a relief to see him breakdown after all the times Lance had fallen apart in front of him. It made him feel like they were finally on equal ground.

“I know these parts like the back of your hand,” said Lance, pulling their clasped hands up so he could kiss Keith just there.

“I usually wear gloves. How well can you know my hands?”

“I know the back part,” said Lance, “at least this little bit that peaks through the window.” Lance traced a square right where the glove window would normally be. “Right here where the skin is slightly darker because you gave yourself a glove tan.

Keith tried to yank his hand back in annoyance. Lance wouldn’t let go though. No, this was his hand to keep from now on. Keith’s eyes had shifted back to human (Lance missed the fangs) and his own marks had stopped glowing. Now they were back to looking like a couple humans with bad face tattoos.

“I feel like you’re admitting you only kinda know where you’re going,” said Keith.

“I completely know where we’re going,” protested Lance. “We just need to follow this stream in the direction of the flow. And it’ll lead us within a ten minute walk of the farm.”

“Wouldn’t it make sense to follow the road we took back?”
“No no no, this is shorter and more scenic.”

“Scenic routes are usually longer.”

“Oh my god, backseat drive, can you have a little faith in me please?” snapped Lance.

“I just hope we’re not walking in circles because you’re too drunk to tell the difference!”

That fight at the bar had completely sobered Lance up and he would’ve informed Keith of that if there wasn’t a more pressing matter. “Do you think that it’s possible for a stream to go in a circle?”

“Yeah, maybe!”

“That’s not how physics works.”

“At this point I’ve been on so many worlds, I can’t remember how Earth physics works.”

“It’s the same physics, right?” said Lance. “The whole thing about physics is it’s universal.”

“I don’t know about that. With magic in the mix it’s just a grab bag.”

“Right, like that Altean pool,” chuckled Lance then he thought of something. “What was with your whole thing on staying on separate sides of the pool? Were you afraid of getting a boner?”

“Or maybe I thought if I told you to stay away, you would stay stuck like glue to me and I’d get a chance to make a move?”

Lance choked on air. “WHY DIDN’T WE GET TO DO THAT?” he yelled so loud he drowned out the crickets for a moment.

“Because we got trapped in the elevator.”

“And that’s another thing, why didn’t you make a move on me in the elevator? It was the perfect romcom setting, but instead you were all like ‘I have a plan to get us out.’”

“… What’s a romcom?”

“KEITH!”

“Okay, you need to stop yelling,” said Keith, trying to cover Lance’s mouth with his free hand, but Lance kept dodging until Keith gave up. “I didn’t know if you were attracted to me back then. Sometimes I thought so, but then…”

“I’d throw a fit and deny even being friends with you?”

“Yeah… And I never thought of myself as a likeable person… or even much of a person so…”

Lance tugged Keith up against him so he could hug him. “I wanna make up for it.”

“You didn’t do anything wrong —”

“No, I just mean… all those time we were expected to be the best in the universe and didn’t even feel good about ourselves. I wanna experience all the stuff we missed or didn’t appreciate at the time. I want a do over. With you.”

“Okay,” said Keith, “I’d like that.”
“I’m glad you said that.” Lance, spun Keith out so he was holding him by the shoulder and they were both facing the stream (which was more like a river in width and depth as this point.) “Because we’re starting with swimming together.”

“Why?”

“Because I totally forgot my farm is on the other side of the stream.”

“What?” cried Keith. “Since when?”

“Since we crossed a bridge to get to the bar.”

“I don’t remember a bridge!”

“Wow. That’s really unobservant of you, Keith. Are you sure you’re a Blade General? Feels like you should be more detailed oriented.”

“Don’t try to throw the outrage back at me! If there’s a bridge, why didn’t we cross there?”

“Because I forgot what side we were walking on,” said Lance throwing out his arms.

“Let’s go cross there!” said Keith, pointing back in the direction they came.

“It’s a forty minute walk at least. Are you seriously afraid of getting wet?”

“No,” squeaked Keith, annoyed. “I just don’t want to.”

“Neither do I babe, but this is where we are right now. I think it’s not that deep. We can probably walk across.”

*****

Walking across was bullshit. The water was up to his chest and the current was faster than it looked from the bank. Fortunately, Keith was strong enough to keep from getting swept up. The part that sucked was holding the cowboy boots over his head.

“What kind of cowboy has to avoid getting his feet wet?” whined Keith. The going was slow since it was also rocky and they were in sock feet.

“The kind that doesn’t want his dad to kill him,” said Lance, pushing forward through the water just ahead of him, his own cowboy boots held above his head.

“I think you can take your dad. If not, I can take him.”

“See, that sounds like you want to have sex with him…”

“Maybe I meant take him out on a date. I’ve only taken one guy out, but I think I nailed the date,” said Keith.

“I think it was the best date ever.”

“Wait… really?” Keith didn’t detect any sarcasm, but he’d missed it before.

“Yeah,” said Lance, looking back with a grin. “I mean, I coulda done without the bar fight, but beyond that, it was with you so how could it not be?”
Keith’s heart fluttered. He’d really thought he’d royally screwed the night up between the fight and not returning the ‘I love you’ and then all the crying, but here Lance was just being adoring right when Keith needed it.

“I could’ve done without the river,” said Keith, flatly.

“You know, I don’t see what all the moaning is about,” said Lance, looking over his shoulder. “I seem to remember you being very enthused over the idea of skinny dipping with me and this is at least 5% skinny dipping.”

“You know what?” said Keith, surging forward to catch up with Lance, “Fuck off.”

“You’re splashing the boots! You’re splashing the boots,” said Lance, stretching those long McClain arms above his head.

Keith overtook him in three big strides to lead the way. He felt like the river was grower wider as they went. It didn’t seem like they’d made any progress and they were definitely losing ground and being pushed downstream. They’d saved all the Universes in all of the Realities once, how was this so fucking hard?

“Stop going so fast,” whined Lance, “We have a buddy system. You are abandoning your buddy.”

“Walk faster,” said Keith, “I’m pretty sure reality is expanding and the shoreline is receding and we need to adjust.”

“Says the guy who is not wearing soaking wet denim.”

“You can ditch the jean jacket.”

“Oh, sure, I’ll just slip it right off and oh wait, I don’t have my arms free!”

“Do you need me to carry you across?”

“Hmmm…”

“Are you actually considering that?”

“Was that not a serious offer?” They were literally ten feet from the shore and Lance wanted Keith to stop so he could climb on his back? No way! Not without a sexual context!

“No, Lance! No one is going to carrying your soaking wet a—“

ZAP! Suddenly Kosmo was in the river having teleported between them. As if that wasn’t startling enough, he displaced the water he suddenly existed in and the force of it rushing at Keith knocked him off his footing.

“Keith, the boots!” was all he heard before his head was underwater.

*

Lance watched his father’s cowboy boots fly out of Keith’s hands towards the water. It was a split second decision. He dropped his own boots in the drink knowing it was way more important to save his dad’s. He took a step and body surfed on the wave Kosmo had created sending him in a trajectory to catch those boots before they hit the surface of the water. Success! He caught them! And as he saw the water mere inches from his face, he realized what a stupid plan this was because he was about to bring his dad’s boots underwater with him.
ZAP!

Lance hit the ground, hard.

Wait… ground? Lance looked up to see where the cosmic wolf had teleported them (please don’t be an alien world,) but the motion of it made him so sick he had to drop his head back down.

“Now, you come save us?” yelled Keith, “Now? We were ten minutes from home and my hair was still dry!”

Kosmo made a grumbly throat noise.

“And you,” continued Keith, “I saw you dive for the boots instead of me! I could’ve drowned, but it’s nice to know where your priorities lie!”

Lance looked up at Keith to see there were actually two of him and they were blurry. Suddenly he felt the most powerful wave of nausea he’d ever felt and then he just… He turned and he retched.

*  

Oh no… Keith had forgotten that Lance and teleporting was like Hunk and any moving vehicle. It gave Lance the worst kind of motion sickness.

“Lance, are you okay?”

“Yeah, yeah,” said he, waving Keith off. “Lucky I din’t get any on mah clothes…”

“Only because… the left one…” said Keith, pointing at what Lance was holding.

Lance looked down at the boots like he didn’t understand what he was looking at. “Oh fuck, did I jus -?” and then he didn’t finish the sentence because he was throwing up into his dad’s boots again.

“Yes. Now you hit the right one.” Keith hung his head. Poor guy.

At least Kosmo had teleported them back to the farm so when Lance was done puking (and he puked so, so much with all that tequila coming right back up again) they could go inside.

“Mud room,” said Lance, gesturing vaguely towards the back of the house. He was leaning on Keith for support, eyes half closed.

Keith wasn’t sure if Lance was just that motion sick or the teleportation had made him circle back to being drunk. All he knew is that when Lance had finished puking, he’d started scooping up handfuls of dirt and dumping it on the boots claiming he needed to “hide the evidence” and then he’d thrown up on that pile of dirt.

“Not you,” scolded Keith when Kosmo tried to push himself ahead so he’d be first through the door. “And don’t just teleport inside. You will wake everyone up. You can go sleep in the barn.”

Kosmo pushed all his disappointment and annoyance into Keith’s brain. When Keith held firm Kosmo gave a shake of his wet fur, pelting them with water again then then let out a huff and trotted away from the house.

“Here, kitty kitty,” said Lance, watching Kosmo run away. “Come back!” When Kosmo didn’t respond to Lance calling him ‘kitty’ nor the kissy sounds made, Lance pouted and said, “He hates me. He tries to drowns me.”
“I think that was an accident,” said Keith, opening the mudroom door with one hand. Lance was definitely very off and he was eager to get him to bed (not for sex for once) so he could sleep it off.

They moved slowly through the mudroom, creeping so as not to wake anyone. The kitchen light turned on, causing Keith to freeze in his tracks.

“No, nonononono!” said Mrs. McClain appearing in the kitchen and rushing towards them, wagging her finger. “Do not take one step inside this house wearing those damp clothes!” Where the hell did she come from?

“We’re going to go straight to the bathroom,” said Keith, letting Lance go to stand under his own power.

“Like hell you are. Strip!”

“I’m not gonna strip,” squeaked Keith. Lance, however, was beside him and already pulling off his clothing with the kind of compliance that made Keith realize this was a frequent request. He groaned and started to unbutton his shirt buttons.

“I will get you some fresh clothing,” said Mrs. McClain with a sweet smile. She left and returned a minute later with t-shirts and sweats. She retrieved the wet clothing from the floor, leaving an embarrassed Keith and a nonchalant Lance to get dressed.

“Sit,” she said when she came back again, pointing at the kitchen table.

“I think I better take Lance up to bed,” said Keith.

“He needs to eat first,” said Mrs. McClain, opening up the fridge door and pulling out plates wrapped in tinfoil, “or he will feel worse in the morning. Trust me.”

So Lance’s mom nuked them plates of leftovers and they sat at the table with her to eat and drink big glasses of water. Lance made it a quarter of the way through his plate before he began falling asleep in his chair, his face dipping into the rice and beans.

“I’m sorry about this,” said Keith, gently moving Lance’s face so it was turned sideways and he wasn’t inhaling rice grains through his nose. “Bringing him home like this. You were obviously up late and worried.”

Mrs. McClain waved her hand dismissively and leaned back in the chair opposite Keith. “Luis is thirty-six years old. I have had kids sneaking in drunk for over twenty years.” She looked at Lance and a smile tugged at the corners of her mouth. “This is the first time for Lance though. Strangely, I’m happy for him. Sometimes I worry about him having missed out on some of his childhood.”

Keith gave a small nod of understanding. He’d missed so much himself. Mostly he’d never thought to be sore about it, but tonight he was realizing a lot of what he’d been missing.

“Here,” said Mrs. McClain, pulling an object out of her housecoat pocket and sliding it across the table towards Keith. He caught it and lifted it, realizing it was his communicator. “I went into my junk drawer looking for batteries and found it there.”

“Right… sorry.”

“You’re a popular guy. It’s been going off every minute or so. They must really want you back out there.”
The communicator felt heavy in his hands. Keith set it down on the table and sighed. "The Blade of Marmora is an ever expanding organization made up of millions of members with new ones being trained every day. They can go on without me." Keith rested his hand on the back of Lance’s head and pet his hair, feeling Lance move, even in sleep, to meet his hand. "I can’t keep going without him."

"Okay," said Mrs. McClain with an enthusiastic nod. "You’ll take Lance with you then."

"What?" gasped Keith. "No, I – I wasn’t trying to imply…" Keith blew out a nervous sigh, calming his voice. "Spending more time with your family made me realize how awful it must’ve been for you all those years he was missing. Even after all that you had to let him go again so he could fight the end of the war. You must’ve been so worried he wouldn’t come back. I… I couldn’t do that to your family."

"Keith…," said Mrs. McClain. She moved aside Keith’s plate then took his hand and held it. "Let me tell you about my children. Luis, was my first born, and he was my Responsible one. He was going to take over the farm one day ‘just you wait and see, mamá,’ he’d say to me as young as five, ‘I’ll grow all the best crops and I will take care of you and papi until you croak.’ Then there was Marco, my Creative child. He never really existed on the same wave length as the rest of us and that was before he starting getting high.

Keith laughed though he didn’t understand where she was going with this.

"Then there was Veronica. She was my Go-Getter. She was always going to conquer the world and when she took it over she would make it better. Then there was Rachel… Rachel has always been my Wildcard. She’s an angel one minute then a devil the next. Same way she’s been since she was a baby and she’s always kept our lives interesting.

"Then there was mijo,” she said, nodding at the sleeping Lance. She sighed, gazing down at her son. “He was my Dreamer. He used to lie in the fields and look up at the Garrison jets flying overhead, running drills, and he’d make up stories about the pilots and where they would be flying to next. He was going to be one of them one day. ‘I’ll fly you anywhere you want, mama. Anywhere in the whole wide world.’"

Keith felt a deep ache in his chest, thinking of Lance as a child, dreaming of being a pilot. At the Garrison he’d had no idea what it meant to Lance and how he must’ve felt to get passed over for Keith.

But the Blue Lion chose Lance to pilot… not Keith… That must’ve been incredible for him.

"Let me be clear,” said Mrs. McClain, drawing Keith back out of his own head. “I have worried and cried so much over the years for mijo, but the most pain I’ve felt was not over him missing or worrying he wouldn’t come back from the way. No, the most pain I’ve ever felt was when his dreaming stopped. He’s not my Dreamer anymore and he hasn’t been for a long time.”

A lump caught in Keith’s throat and he felt tears threatening to overtake him again.

“I love all my children, Keith, and I never want them to be anything but who they were born to be. Having mijo safe at home is one thing, but not at the expense of his dreams. So, it might not be tonight or tomorrow or even months from now, but you will take him back to space because you make him dream again.”

Mrs. McClain squeezed Keith’s hand tightly as he released a shuddering breath. It was overwhelming to know someone who loved Lance so purely trusted Keith with not just his heart,
but his future. “I- I don’t know what to say.”

“Say nothing. Just agree and eat up,” Mrs. McClain said, completely shifting the mood. “Your food is getting cold.”

Keith picked up his fork as his communicator started to buzz. He rolled his eyes wishing he could make it through the night without checking it once, but then he saw it was Krolia’s name on the screen. More than that, when he picked it up it lit up with his missed notifications. Not just text, but missed calls. She, along with others, had called him over a hundred times. Something had to be seriously wrong.

* 

“…you’ll take him back to space…”

Lance was fazing between awake and a sleep. Every time he tried to fully wake up, sleep would pull him under again. He was aware of his mom and Keith talking but he was losing bits of sentences and couldn’t follow. It seemed important and yet… sleep was so appealing. Lance dropped again, but what felt like a blink of an eye later Keith’s voice, sounding serious and urgent, startled him awake.

Lance rose his face off his plate, bits of bean and rice dropping off his cheek. He was disoriented, but the familiar sight of the kitchen helped him place where he was and why he was there. They’d come back from the bar… something, something… food.

What was unfamiliar was the tone of Keith’s voice and for a panicked moment Lance thought it was directed at him. As his eyes focused more he saw his mother sitting across from him, frowning and looking to the side. He turned his head to follow her gaze and saw Keith with his communicator pressed to his ear.

Keith hung-up and turned, looking a different kind of dazed.

“Keith?” said Lance, worry gripping him in the gut and scaring him both awake and sober. “What’s wrong?”

“They took Daibazaal. Maybe Altea. We don’t know. The first thing they did was block all comm signals so all we know is Altea isn’t responding to calls.”

“Wait, who did?” asked Lance, rising up from his chair.

“All of them,” said Keith, moving through the kitchen and heading for the stairs.

“All of who?” asked Lance, following behind Keith who was now taking the steps two at a time.

“Everyone in the Mega Prison. Every single Galra Warlord and Pirate and Criminal…” Keith paused, one foot on the top, the other two steps down. He knocked his head with his palm and just stood like that for a moment. “Maybe they wanted to get caught. They must’ve. They worked together. It was all organized. The prison break. The overthrow of the Palace. It happened within vargas and I had no idea.”

Keith was moving again, going into Lance’s room. He stopped, looking around, lost, like he forgot what he came in there for.

“Over here,” said Lance, pulling out the bottom drawer of his dresser and pulling out Keith’s Blade suit. His mother had obviously been through and cleaned and she had a tendency to fold the suit
and put it away. “Is there anything I can do while I’m changing?”

“No,” then Keith shook his head. “Wait, yes. Do you have your Paladin suit still?” Lance felt a shock of horror thinking Keith was demanding he come with him. “Or just your helmet?” Wait…

“It’s in a display case at the Garrison, along with my Bayard,” said Lance.

“Dammit,” swore Keith. “Okay, call Pidge. Keep trying until you wake them. There’s a small chance the frequency we used for the Paladins comms hasn’t been blocked because it’s outside the common range. Also, hoping Coran will still have a communicator. If we can get in touch with him on Altea and at least assess what’s happening over there, it’ll help the Blade formulate a rescue plan. All we know now is ships were stolen and taken in that direction and that’s not much to go on.”

Lanced nodded. “You change, I’ll call.”

There was a knock on Lance’s bedroom door. Veronica opened it without waiting for a response. “Keith, the Garrison called me. I’m just making sure you’re in the loop.”

“I spoke with Krolia,” said Keith. “What’s happening with the Garrison?”

“We’re mobilizing. It’ll take a few vargas to launch the Earth fleets and we need to arrange to wormhole the Atlas from Dracoli Six.”

“Keith had an idea about using the Paladin helmet communicators to contact Coran,” said Lance.

“Great. I’m heading there right away. You heading out in your ship?” asked Veronica. “We’ve got wormholes opening within half an hour. Maybe sooner.”

“That’ll save me a call. Thanks,” said Keith.

“Good luck,” said Veronica, ducking out.

Keith looked at Lance. Normally a mission was met with his cool confident matter, but Keith looked shaken.

“Change,” directed Lance. “I’m calling Pidge.”

Less than five minutes later they were both shuffling down the stairs. Lance’s mom was waiting in the foyer along with his dad. Lance heard more footsteps and discovered Marco following him down. Luis and Lisa, appeared from the living room, having come from the granny suite at the back of the house.

“What’s happening?” asked Marco.

“Space emergency,” said Lance, which did nothing to stop the follow up questions. To his side he saw Veronica on her communicator in the living room, speaking in a low and serious voice. “I’ll explain better when Keith’s gone, but I gotta say goodbye first.”

“Keith,” said Lance’s dad, stepping forward and laying two hands on Keith’s shoulders. “You be careful out there.”

“Thank you, Mr. Sanchez.”

Lance’s dad shook his head. “It is far past time you called me Pop Pop. Come back soon, okay?”
“I will… Pop-pop,” said Keith, looking sheepish.

“And it’s time you call me mom,” said Lance’s mom, pulling Keith into a hug like he had no choice.

“I don’t even call Krolia mom,” said Keith, awkwardness creeping into his own voice.

“I know. I heard you on the phone. It was very rude.”

“But… she outranks me.”

“Starting now, you call us both mom.”

Lance’s family started speaking all at once, directing goodbyes at Keith.

“What is wrong with you people?!” bellowed Rachel’s voice. They all turned to see her standing at the top of the stairs. “Why are you all up? We literally just went to bed! The noise is just —” Lance watched her eyes widen as she spotted Keith wearing his Blade suit. “Are you leaving?” she asked, her voice filling with concern.

Without waiting for confirmation, Rachel bolted down the stairs and tackled Keith in a hug, full on wrapping her legs around him.

Lance was about to make a sarcastic comment about letting Keith breathe, but then Lisa wrapped herself around both of them then Marco and Luis. Veronica hung up her call and came over to join the group hug. Lance’s parents hugged from the outside, his entire family crushing Keith in the middle. He checked Keith’s face, expecting discomfort at the attention, but instead he just looked touched and that feeling echoed back into Lance as he stepped in and knocked shoulders aside so he could get in on hugging Keith too.

“Hey Jason,” said Keith, which completely confused Lance until he followed Keith’s gaze and looked back over his shoulder to see Jason at the top of the stairs in his boxers.

“Uh hey…,” said Jason, shifting uncomfortably.

“I told you to stay in my room!” scolded Rachel as the hug disbanded.

“When did you sneak him in?” asked Marco.

Lance tugged Keith’s arm and they walked out the front door together as his family waved Keith off. They were striding across the field when Kosmo came trotting up.

“Daibazaal palace,” said Keith, “Go ahead of me.”

ZAP! Kosmo was gone again. (Lance swore he heard Lisa’s voice go, “aw man” from back at the house.)

They reached Keith’s ship and stopped. Keith faced Lance, shifting on his feet and strangely silent. Lance knew he needed to initiate a goodbye, but he couldn’t think of how to even start.

“So?” said Keith, “Ten minutes. What will it be?”

“Ten minutes?” repeated Lance.

“That’s our deal. When I’m leaving you get to request ten more minutes and we do whatever you want.”
Lance looked down at the ground then back up at Keith’s honest and worried face. “I think I’d be a real asshole if I kept you another ten minutes this time.”

Keith shut his eyes, the corners of his mouth turning down and Lance suddenly understood Keith hadn’t been worried Lance would keep him too long.

“I, uh, I thought I had ten more minutes with you,” admitted Keith. “I don’t feel ready to leave you yet.”

“Keith,” said Lance, his name an exhale as he stepped forward. Keith jutted forward at the same time and they met in a tight hug, wrapping solidly around each other. Lance wished he could keep holding him like his and never let go. He could feel Keith’s tears on his cheek.

“Hey,” said Lance, stepping back just bit. He took Keith’s hand and placed it on his chest over his heart then he placed his own hand over Keith’s heart. “Same place now, right? No matter how long it took for us to arrive here. We’re in the same place from now on even when we’re galaxies apart.”

Keith nodded, emotion squeezing off his voice as the tears slipped freely. He pushed himself back against Lance who held him as tight as his arm strength would allow. Were it anyone but Keith, Lance might crushed the air out of their lungs.

“I am such a weepy drunk,” complained Keith. Lance let out a tension-relieving laugh.

“Are you still drunk?”

“I don’t know,” admitted Keith. “But I have autopilot just in case.”

Lance brushed a hand over Keith’s cheeks, wiping away the tears before kissing him, tasting the salt on his lips. Lance would maybe cry too, maybe spare a thought to how unfair it was to lose Keith again so soon. He would, if he didn’t understand how much Keith was needed and how he needed Lance’s support to be able to do it.

“Weepy-Keith is just another version of you to love,” said Lance.

Keith kissed him this time, somehow both sweet and forceful. Keith had his own love language and it wasn’t direct, but it was powerful and it was always exactly what Lance needed.

“Your hair,” said Lance, suddenly.

“My hair?”

“Don’t let it dry styled like that,” he explained, looking at the wet braids along the sides. “Removed the pins then finger comb it out. Do you have any leave-in conditioner? No, of course you wouldn’t. What am I saying?”

Keith shook his head and smiled in a sad way. “Do me a favour,” he said, taking a step back, but holding tight to Lance’s hand. “Go visit Pidge and get them to make you the most powerful communicator ever invented. I want to be able to speak to you while I’m gone.”

“I’ll go right now,” said Lance, brightening equally at the prospect of having a task to perform and at the promise of being able to communicate with Keith.

“Thank you,” said Keith, leaning in for a chaste kiss before he turned to his ship.

Lance watched him take off, the lights of his ship fading off into the night sky. He got caught
looking up at space for a moment, feeling this sense of it swallowing Keith and hiding him away in its depths. Then he remembered he needed to catch Veronica before she left. So he turned his gaze away from the starry sky and took off back to the main house at a run.

Chapter End Notes

Song credits/playlist:

Cheers (Drink to That) - Walk Off the Earth
Low (feat. T-Pain) - Flo Rida
Mean - Taylor Swift
Teardrops On My Guitar - Taylor Swift
Red - Taylor Swift ((PETITION FOR JEREMY AND STEVEN TO SING A DUET OF THIS SONG!!))
Achy Breaky Heart - Billy Ray Cyrus
Family - Mother Mother
Am I Losing You - Jim Reeves
Walk Me Home - P!nk
You and Me - You+Me

Spotify Playlist

I'm going to Voltcon with Devoosha and Anime_fangirl823! Are you going to be there? Let me know in the comments or in my Klance facebook group Klance Transformative Works or in The Voltron Fanfic-ers group Please answer the membership questions!

I'm going to be cosplaying as various versions of Lance and carrying around a light up Klance ita bag XD So say hi to me if you like <3 I'm so excited!!

Thank you so much for reading and leaving kudos and bookmarking and sharing with your friends and all that great stuff because it means so so much to me!!

xoxoxBBBK

p.s. I have tumblr but I always forget to share the link!
Chapter Nine

Chapter Summary

Well the comm don't ring 'cause Lance's friends ain't home
He's tired of being all alone
Got the TV on 'cause the radio's playing songs that remind him of you
Baby when Keith's gone he realizes he's in love
Days go on and on and the nights just seem so long
Even food don't taste that good, drink ain't doing what it should
Things just feel so wrong baby when Keith's gone

Chapter Notes

Chapter summary from When You're Gone (Featuring Mel B.) by Bryan Adams (I'm Canadian so this is peak country for me lol.)

A long chapter, but not as long as the last (shout out to @Devoosha who read the 27,000 word chapter in only 1 hour and 3 minutes!) I just want to state again that no matter what angst comes up in this chapter, I will not leave Keith and Lance in a bad place. They will always be solid at chapter's end. chapter order: angst-fluff-smut-angst-fluff

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I told Keith I love him,” said Lance.

“Aw that’s sweet,” said Veronica, rolling and then stopping the car again. They were in line to get through the second Garrison checkpoint. Veronica had her credentials ready and waiting on the dash. Lance had been concerned about her driving after all she’d drank, but she’d told him that scary call she got from the Garrison sobered her up completely.

“I think I said it too soon,” admitted Lance, looking at his hands folded in his lap.

Veronica reacted with a laugh so loud he had to snap his head and look at her. “Too soon… Good one.” Lance just stared at her in confusion. “Oh shit. You’re serious,” she gasped. “Well, how did Keith take it?”

“He disagreed.”

“Wait… you mean he disagreed that you -?”

“Love him, yes.”

Veronica slammed her fist against the steering wheel. “For fuck’s sake, Keith! Next time I see him I’m going to strangle him.” She turned and stuck a finger in Lance’s face. “You two are not allowed to have these conversations about feelings without me present to run interference. You
both need a translator, I swear.”

“We talked it out though,” said Lance, “We managed okay alone.”

“Oh, good. Well then I’m proud of you. How do you feel now?”

Lance sighed and dropped his head against the passenger window. “I just miss him…”

******

The florescent lights inside the Garrison were blindingly white in comparison to the dark outside. Lance found himself squinting as he walked briskly down the halls on Veronica’s heels, vaguely remembering this was the way to Pidge’s lab though, truth be told, he had not visited in quite awhile.

Lance slowed a bit, noticing the display case featuring the Paladin armor and their Bayards. He noted the Green Paladin’s helmet was missing. Obviously, Pidge had already gotten their mitts on it. He had to speed walk to try to catch back up with Veronica.

“Hey, hey, Roni! What’s good, girl?” Lance heard the obnoxious voice before he noticed the source.

“Knock it off, James,” said Veronica to Griffin. He was heading down the hall towards them, suited up for a mission with the other original MFE’s with him.

“Whoa hey,” he said, noticing Lance. “McClain, it’s been awhile.”

“Oh my god, Lance!” squealed Nadia, running up and hugging him. Behind her Ina and Ryan were much more reserved in their greetings by each nodding to him. “This is so crazy!” said Nadia, leaning back, but still holding onto Lance’s shoulders. “We were just talking about you! What are you doing here? Did they convince you to come back? Are you going to fly with us?”

Coming here was officially a mistake.

“Flying? Please,” said Veronica, gently pulling Nadia off of Lance. “Us McClains are not fodder for the cannons. We are far too integral to the safety of the universe to leave the ground. Have fun risking your lives though.”

“Well… flying is fun,” said Griffin, shifting on his feet. He gaze fell on Lance’s sweatpants, which were way too casual for the Garrison. Especially with Griffin and the others in their pristine flight suits. Lance hadn’t even thought to change before he left the house. He just kept on what he’d already been wearing (though he didn’t even remember changing into sweats.)

“I’m sure whatever you two are doing is fun too,” said Nadia, staying positive.

Ina and Ryan seemed to be having their own conversation. “Someone should ask him for confirmation.”

“Not me,” said Ryan, crossing his arms.

“Very well then.” Ina took out her phone then held it out for Lance to look at. “Is this you?”

Lance watched in horror as a video played on her phone of himself doing a body shot off Keith, which turned into them straight making out.

“How did you get that?!” demanded Lance, his cheeks bright red.
Veronica was bent beside him, laughing, and watching. “Holy shit you were so wasted! How did I miss this when it happened?”

“Missed it?!” shrieked Lance. “You made us do it and took the video?”

“I don’t remember that…”

“You forwarded it to all of us,” said Nadia, pulling out her phone to show the exact same video. Ryan and James did the same.

“That’s definitely your laughter in the background,” added Griffin.

“Veronica!” cried Lance.

“Fuck, that was super mean of me.” Veronica stood up. “Am I a mean person when I drink?”

“Yes!”

“To confirm,” said Ina, “That is you and Keith Kogane?”

“We can neither confirm nor deny that at this time,” said Veronica, stepping between Lance and the MFE’s, “But all yes, that’s them.”

“What is wrong with you?” grumbled Lance, feeling that heat burning in his cheeks.

“WORMHOLE PLEDUM-REE-JOODUM ACTIVE IN T MINUS TEN,” came a voice over the PA. “ALL MFE’S TO HANGER EXUS.”

“That’s us,” said Griffin. Another dozen pilots in the same uniform came jogging down the hall in the direction of the hanger. The four of them went to join them.

“Next time invite us out!” called Nadia, jogging backwards. “We’re fun at bars! Not just me!” Then she turned around and said probably too loudly, “So who won the bet?”

“No one, we all guessed way less than three years,” said Griffin.

“Even Ina calculated less of a hold out,” said Ryan.

The rest of the conversation was lost as they rounded the corner. That was all confusing as fuck, but Lance was on a mission and he would not spiral over that… yet.

“Hey, I gotta hop into my office and change before this meeting,” said Veronica. “You remember how to find Pidge’s lab?”

“Pfft of course I do.”

******

No, Lance did not and that became apparent when he got lost. Would it kill them to install a map in one of these corridors? The place was a flurry of activity with every single employee rushing about, working on the seizing of Daibazaal and Altea crisis. Even in a rush people kept staring at Lance prompting him to keep moving rather than linger anywhere. Was it his sweatpants and t-shirt making him look out of place or was he that memorable as a former Paladin of Voltron?

Lance suspected it was mostly the latter since every time he reached a door guarded by security, the guard would just give him a nod and open the door for him. No credentials needed. Finally by
the third door, Lance had had enough.

“How do you know I’m allowed through there? I’m dressed like a gym teacher, I smell like booze and creek, and I have no security pass.”

“Well…” said the guard, tapping his cheekbone with his finger. Lance was about to demand what that meant when he realized what was giving him away. “Anyone with marks like those is here to power the wormholes.”

He’d been mistaken as Altean… how many people who had stared at him thought he was Altean come to play battery?

“Generator is down the hall and to the left…uh…” Security gestured to the left. “This direction.”

Lance stepped back. “Yeah, that’s not where I need to go.” Then he turned away, wishing that conversation hadn’t just happened.

“Lance!” Oh, thank god it was Pidge’s voice. Lance turned to see them running towards him down the hall. “It’s so good to see you!” they said, slamming into Lance and hugging him.

“You too,” said Lance, his mood finally brightening. “You’re taller,” he commented, realizing they were hugging him higher than usual. “Yet somehow still short.”

“Fuck off,” said Pidge, punching Lance on the arm as they stepped back. “Good news. Keith’s hunch panned out and I touched base with Coran. The Galra Insurgents seized the palace just like on Daibazaal, but he’s holed up and okay.” Pidge twisted up their mouth, thoughtful for a moment. “That might’ve been classified information, but fuck it. Anyway, I’ve got my team mass-producing Altean communicators. I got the text you sent and whipped one up special for you.” Pidge pulled a comm out of their lab coat. “It’s a Booty Comm.”

“That’s a terrible name.”

“I know! And it’s fun to say. I sent Matt off to deliver one to Keith and this one is yours.”

“Whoa. You made these so fast,” said Lance, accepting the comm.

“Pfft. Like it was hard,” said Pidge with a shrug. “See that red light at the top? It’ll turn blue when Keith’s signal is reachable and flash if he’s calling you. Connect you direct to the booty.”

“Thank you,” said Lance, cradling the comm like it was precious. He frowned at the red light at the top.

“Be patient,” said Pidge, seeming to read his mind. “Keith doesn’t even have his comm yet.”

“Right. Thanks again for this,” said Lance.

“Call it by it’s proper name,” urged Pidge.

“Fine. Thank you for the… Booty Comm.”

“You’re welcome.”

Lance stuck it in his pocket with his phone (while ignoring his instinct to watch that light like a hawk in case it changed before it was probable it would.)

“Lance, hi!”
Lance turned to see Pidge’s parents heading from the same direction Pidge had come from (Oh, so that was where the labs were!) Colleen was waving at him. Sam was typing on his comm. They were both dressed in these matching jumpsuits that were white with orange and blue.

“Hey Colleen, Sam,” said Lance.

“It’s been so long,” said Colleen, pausing to talk. Sam stopped too, but he was still typing on his comm and Pidge was doing the same, having checked out of the conversation. “How’s your mother doing?”

“Good. She’s been meaning to invite you all over for dinner.”

“We would love that. I’ll call her when I’m back on Earth. Just yesterday she sent me the most lovely photo of you and Keith. You both looked so handsome.” Lance blushed as he had not been aware that his mom was also sending out photos of them to everyone she knows. “Sam, didn’t they look handsome?”

“Hmm sorry?” said Sam, only glancing up from his comm.

“Keith and Lance. What I showed you.”

“The video?” asked Sam.

Okay, now Lance was fucking humiliated.

“No,” said Colleen through gritted teeth. “The photo. With the cowboy boots.”

“Oh, oh, right,” said Sam, finally looking up at Lance. “Was that an anniversary or something?”

“No,” said Colleen, face palming. “They just started dated.”

“Just?” repeated Sam, confused.

“WORMHOLE YOUKUS-PLAY-KAY-AFUS IN T MINUS FIFTEEN. ALL SUPPORT TEAM REPORT TO HANGER PLEXIS.”

“Saved by the wormhole,” said Colleen with an eye roll. “Congrats, Lance. We’re both happy for you and Keith.”

“So long youngest child,” said Sam, hugging Pidge, who was still just looking at their comm.

“Don’t die,” replied Pidge.

Colleen hugged Pidge and kissed them on the top of them head.

“Watch the hair, woman!”

“Now Katie, what if we do die and that’s the last thing you said to me?”

“That’ll be my burden,” said Pidge, back to typing on their comm.

Lance watched the Holts walk off then asked, “Are they going to space?”

“Yep,” said Pidge, “They plan to figure out how the Galra Insurgents are blocking comm signals.”

“Are you going to space?”
Pidge was distracted, typing. “Huh? Oh, I dunno. I go where they tell me, but so far it seems like a ‘all hands on deck’ situation.” Pidge tucked their comm away then said, “I gotta duck into this meeting.” They pointed a thumb towards what Lance suddenly recognized as the doors to the War Room. “I’ll talk to you after if you’re still around.” Pidge smacked Lance on the arm then followed along with the stream of highly decorated uniforms heading into the War Room.

“Okay,” said Lance, waving as they went. They weren’t turning back.

“You got it?” asked Veronica, walking up in full uniform.

“Uh yeah,” said Lance, grabbing the Keith Comm out of his pocket (he would NOT think of it as a Booty Comm!) and holding it out to show her.

“Nice,” said Veronica, not pausing. “I need to get in there so, you good?”

“Yeah, uh, good,” said Lance, not that it mattered since she was already going inside. Lance turned and saw the wormhole guard ready to let him through the door again ugh. He turned and spotted someone else familiar coming down the hall. (Real “Lance McClain, this is your life” vibe going on here.) “Shiro!”

Lance kicked up his legs and full out ran to greet him. “Hey!” said Shiro, pulling him into a hug. “Didn’t expect to see you here.”

“Same with you. Whoa.” Lance noticed Shiro’s hug was different than usual. “Elbow?” He stepped back to inspect the brand new arm Shiro was sporting.

“Yeah, someone made me switch,” said Shiro with an eye roll.

“Oh, I wonder what someone you’re referring too,” said Curtis, sarcastically as he shook his head at his husband.

“It freaked him out.”

“It did not freak me out! My beef was solely on how it allowed you to cheat at tennis.” Curtis looked at Lance. “Seriously, I would be running all over the court and he would just stand there and let his arm do all the work.”

“Right. I solely changed my arm so our tennis matches would be more equal,” said Shiro, sarcastically.

“Anyway,” said Curtis, ignoring his husband’s annoyed looks. “Is Keith here with you?”

“No, he went ahead to Daibazaal,” said Lance.

“Too bad,” said Shiro, “Would’ve been nice to have seen him for once. Every time he’s on planet, he visits you instead of me.”

“Well, we know why,” said Curtis, directing this at Shiro.

“Curtis,” he groaned.

“What? We saw the video, we’re free to talk about this now.”

Cheeks burning red for the tenth time tonight at least… “What are you doing here?” asked Lance, suddenly noticing that Shiro was in a Garrison uniform. “Oh, are you going to space?” Lance had this weird sense of dread brewing inside of him even though Shiro’s choices had nothing to do with
“No,” said Curtis, grabbing Shiro’s mechanical arm. “He is staying on planet.”

“They asked me to assist with the tactical side of the mission,” said Shiro then with a weak Al Pacino impersonation he said, “Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in!”

Curtis winced and shook his head. “No…”

“What? The Godfather…”

“Oh, I got that. It was just bad.”

Shiro shook his head then said, “What about you, Lance?” His eyes drifted down to his sweatpants then back up. “What are you -?”

“Tactical as well,” said Lance quickly. What? Why? Why was he lying to Shiro?

“Oh,” said Shiro, sounding somewhat surprised. “So are you jumping in on this meeting?” He nodded towards the War Room.

“Uh, no, ‘cause uh,” sputtered Lance, backing da fuck up literally and figuratively, “I think, uh, my meeting is in a different wing.” While walking backwards he knocked into someone. He turned and found himself face to face with an actual Altean. The guy looked at Lance’s marks then his ears then quickly looked away and walked on into the War Room.

“Okay,” said Shiro, heading towards the War Room door himself. “It was nice catching up with you, Lance.”

“Tell Keith we say hi,” said Curtis, following him. “I’m sure you’ll see him before we do,” he said with a chuckle before disappearing into the room behind Shiro.

A couple more uniforms headed towards it and when Lance spotted Slav and Iverson coming down the hall he decided to vamoose before he had yet another awkward conversation about the video Veronica had apparently forwarded to everyone on her contacts list and it being weird that Lance was even here.

Lance remembered his way to the bathroom. When he walked in, an alien with twelve hands was taking his time watching all dozen of them in the sink, one pair at a time. Lance went into a stall and sat down on the toilet lid, pants still on. He pulled out the Keith Comm. Light still red.

He dropped his hand to his side. What would he even say to Keith if he could talk to him right now?

Lance drew his knees up to his chin and rested his feet on the toilet too. The alien was still washing… He dug his phone out and went into his contacts. He rested his cheek against his knees as he listened to the call connect.

“Hola?”

“Mom…,” said Lance, his voice a quiet croak that echoed against the tile, “Can you pick me up?”

******

“There will be no communication between base and ground so every unit must operate independently. Stick to your quadrant, stay on mission, improvise only if need be.” Krolia’s words
were still fresh in Keith’s head as his unit surged forward.

Blade units had been formed out of two squads that could separate and work independently if need be. It also meant they would be able to take sleeping shifts if this mission lasted longer than the maximum threshold for denying themselves sleep. “And it will,” said Krolia, “this is the greatest threat we’ve faced since the return of Daibazaal. The Insurgents released a manifesto it’s… mostly garbage stating their reasons as a desire to return to the era of Zarkon’s reign and choose a leader through a kral zera rather than democratically. They’ve seized the Palace as their base symbolically. Units Exus through Mai-ox will hit the palace defense straight on. Keith, Acxa, your unit will be sneaking in the back way.”

Keith had been certain that their unit was in stealth mode -even Ezor wasn’t talking - so when he detected movement behind, he assumed they’d found their first Insurgent. Keith signaled to his Blades that he’d handle this one.

He snuck up on the darkness cloaked Galra and was swinging the hilt of his blade down to knock the person out when through out their hands when they suddenly said, “Keith, it’s me!”

Keith didn’t recognize the helmet muffled voice, but he froze as the person de-cloaked their suit so it looked like the new Garrison design, white with blue and orange trim. They took of their helmet and shook on their shoulder length locks and recognition finally clicked in.

“Matt? Why are you in this quadrant? I thought Garrison teams were meant to support Ceedus and Flee units when landed.”

“I’m on special ops with my team and we’re delivering new comms,” explained Matt, pulling a very Holt-tech looking comm out of his satchel and handing it to Keith. “They use Paladin frequencies that are outside of the communication blackout. Garrison, Blade, and Alliance officials are all getting a matching set. And this nifty button here which is unique to your comm,” said Matt, pointing to a button with a red light above it, “It is your superluminal direct line to Lance. When it’s blue, the signal is clear and you’re able to call. If it blinks blue that means he’s calling you.”

“So it’s a Lance Comm?” asked Keith, cradling the communicator in his arms.

Matt shrugged. “I mean… Pidge told me to tell you it’s a Booty Comm, but you can call it whatever you –”

Matt was cut off my Keith pouncing on him and hugging him. “Thank you!”

“Oh, well it was the sibling’s hard work. I’m just the messenger,” said Matt, hugging Keith back. “But you are welcome and I will pass on the gratitude.”

Keith released Matt from his bone-crushing hug, realizing he’d probably overreacted a bit, but he was so excited to have a chance to talk to Lance.

“Matching earpieces and a non-Lance comm for Acxa,” said Matt, pulling out the other equipment and handing it to Keith. “Now I’ve gotta play Santa Claus with the rest of these bad boys.” He patted his satchel.

“Good luck,” said Keith.

“You too,” said Matt stepping back.

Keith looked down at the red light on his comm and frowned.
“Hey, don’t stress,” said Matt, reassuringly. “It’s Pidge’s tech so it’ll work eventually.” Then he thought about it. “Or it’ll explode, but hey, that’s the fun of it. Life is a mystery.”

“Wait… explode?” Pidge had nearly exploded Keith once already…

Matt was already hop-stepping away and singing, “Life is a mystery. Everyone must stand alone…”

“I wouldn’t sing if you don’t want to get detected,” warned Keith.

“You’ll hear Lance call you name,” said Matt, stopping to sing this directly at Keith. “And it feels… like… home…” Matt put his hand on his chest then bowed and exited stage left.

Yep. He was a Holt… Still less strange than the McClain-Sanchez-Dubois’ though.

*****

It’s a challenge to battle opponents when they have blasters and the Blades have, well, blades. This is why Keith kept advocating to Kolivan that each squad should include a sharpshooter. This was frequently requested because taking someone out with a head shot from five hundred feet away wasn’t “the way of the Blades,” but it sure would be nice if when people are shooting at them, they could shoot right back.

Keith was so done with this, he launched himself off the wall and came down to slice through the blaster the Galra Insurgent was using to try too put a hole in him. It was priceless, the look on the guy’s face when he pointed his stump of a blaster at Keith and pulled the trigger anyway, suddenly realizing he was defenceless.

A smirk and swing later and Keith had him knocked out. The rest of Insurgents in this group were far better trained in hand-to-hand combat. Evidenced by Keith being pinned against a wall by a larger female Galra.

“Hey boss,” said Ezor, swinging her blade at the two smaller Galra she was fighting, “your thingy is doing a blue blinky.”

“Huh?”

“Isn’t that what you wanted it to do?”

Keith followed her gaze to his belt where he’d clipped his new comm and saw the blue light flashing at him.

“Lance!” Lance was calling him!

Keith shoved the woman back so he had a hand free to hit the special button on the comm.

“Hello?”

“Keith?” Came Lances voice in his ear, sounding like the most beautiful thing he’d ever heard in life.

“Lance! I’m so glad this things works,” gushed Keith before hurtling forward to tackle the Galra by the waist.

“I miss you so much,” said Lance, lighting up Keith’s heart.
“I miss you too – whoa- so mu – ah – much – whoa – babe.” It was hard to talk when Keith was dodging large fists.

“Are you, um, busy?”

“No, I can talk,” said Keith, back-flipping onto the Galra’s back. “Or... listen. I’m mid-battle so my responses might be kinda – wah!” Keith got tossed off her back and hit the wall, hard.

“Keith?” said Lance, his voice alarmed.

“Here,” said Keith, picking himself back up.

“What the bitch are you doing, Keith?” roared Zethrid. “Watch your six!”

Keith spun in time to watch Zethrid knock out a Galra that was ready to shoot him in the back.

“Okay, you sound real busy... maybe I should call back later.”

“No!” snapped Keith.

“Yes,” countered Zethrid. “You should watch your six.”

“Can you not right now?” said Keith, directing this at Zethrid.

“Fine, bye,” muttered Lance.

“Wait, Lance, wait,” said Keith, and then he was just walking away from a battle so he could clear things up with his now pissy boyfriend. “I’m having more than one conversation at once.”

“Yeah, I understand. I don’t wanna distract you,” sighed Lance.

“But I just... I really need to hear your voice right now.” Do not cry on mission, Kogane! You are not even drunk. You do not have an excuse. “It sucks for you because I can’t give you my full attention, but if you would be willing to just ramble in my ear so I can selfishly feel your presence and you get nothing out of it?”

“... well I don’t ramble...”

“You ramble, Lance. You ramble hardcore.”

“Fine. You’re sweet so I will attempt to tell you a rambling story about Rachel trying to sneak Jason out before breakfast even though the concept of rambling is completely foreign to me.”

“Sneak him out? But we all knew he was there.”

“Exactly!” said Lance, excitedly. “Okay!...”

So Keith jumped back into the fight while Lance told a long story that involved Rachel calling in a bomb threat to distract the family. “…a bomb threat, Keith... to the farm...” the battle was wrapped before Lance’s (rambling) story did so Keith continued to half listen as he sent Kosmo on trips to deliver prisoner’s back to Krolia’s ship and Acxa debriefed their Blades.

He’d missed parts of the story, but he got the gist that Rachel was bending over backwards to keep the family from interacting with Jason for even a minute. Why were the Sanchez-McClains so set against acknowledging they were fucking the person they were fucking? Maybe because the family would shower them with enough attention to make them want to run away... which Keith
almost had. Imagine if Lance hadn’t stopped him…

Lance had finished his Rachel story and was asking Keith’s opinion on highlighting his hair (which Keith had no opinion on,) when the call dropped and the light flipped to red.

“What the hell?” swore Keith.

“Communications are down,” said Acxa. “My call just dropped too.”

“What does that mean?” asked Zethrid.

“That they likely realized we were using a frequency outside their blackout range and readjusted.”

“What happens next?” asked Keith. “Are they going to get communications back?”

“Not sure,” said Acxa, “I’ll ask them.” She stood still, arms crossed then said deadpan. “Oh wait…”

“What’d they say?” asked Ezor.

*****

Lance woke up to blue light on his face. He was surprised he’d slept, having been so wound up with worry over Keith’s call dropping so suddenly. He’d put the Keith Comm on his pillow so he could stare at that red light, willing it to turn blue. But a watched pot never boils and it seemed the key to turning that light blue was falling asleep. When Lance opened his eyes to see the blue it jolted him fully awake as he bashed that call button.

“Lance?” said Keith, his voice emitting from the comm.

“Keith! Goodbye!”

“Oh, okay… goodbye…”

“No, we didn’t get to say goodbye before because the call dropped,” said Lance adjusting himself to sitting. “So I’m saying it now just in case.”

“Right. I’m sorry. I’m not sure why we lost the signal or why we have it back. Hold on… Acxa, comms are back online, can you check in with Krolia? Thanks.”

“How’s the mission?” asked Lance, sitting up crossed legged in bed.

“Hard. I miss you.”

“I miss you too.”

“Am I getting the time dilation confused or is it really late there?”

“No, it’s late, but I woke up to see a blue light and couldn’t not call you.”

“It’s been blue for awhile,” said Keith, “I’ve been resisting the urge to call…”

“Call! Always call!”

“You need sleep, Lance.”

“And when are you going to sleep?”
“Don’t worry about me,” said Keith, quietly.

“All I do is worry about you. How could I not?”

“Fuck. I gotta fight more. You should sleep.”

“I’ll try, but I’m going to stay on the line.”

“I’ll be loud. I’ll keep you awake.”

“Worrying how you’re doing in the battle will keep me awake anyway.”

“You never worried about me before on mission.”

“That you know of…”

“Well, it’s me. There’s nothing to worry about.”

“Oh yeah? Because I heard Zethrid yesterday and apparently you don’t watch your six.”

“I have underlings to watch it for me – ah –“ Then there were sounds of a scuffle.

“I’ll just listen and not distract you,” said Lance. He listened for at least another hour as they captured another group of Insurgents then he listened to them split up to scout the next piece of territory. Somehow Lance dropped off during this and when he woke up the light was red.

******

Lance got in two calls with Keith the next day then nothing all night. Keith hadn’t heard why signals kept coming back then dying again because whenever they worked it wasn’t an issue they needed answers for and when comms were down, there was no way to ask.

The light was red all night. Lance kept dreaming he was missing calls and kept startling himself back awake.

The next day he got a blue flashing light when he was chopping wood.

“Hey,” said Lance, sitting down and dropping his axe.

“Hey,” Keith sounded quiet.

“What’s wrong?”

“Nothing. Just taking a sleep shift finally.”

“I can’t believe you’re actually taking a break.”

“Had to get my team to rest. Our brains are legally drunk, it’s been so many days without sleep.”

“This isn’t you drunk. I’ve seen you drunk.”

Keith chuckled lightly.

“Shouldn’t you be sleeping and not calling me?”

“Had to call when I saw I could. Missed your voice.”
“Miss your face.”

“Keith, you need to shut the shit up and sleep already!” Lance recognized Zethrid’s voice in the background.

“You’re going to keep everyone awake chatting with me,” sighed Lance.

“I can switch to lookout. Relieve someone else.”

“Don’t you dare. Just get some sleep.”

“Okay… can you stay on the line until it dies again? Not talking, just… being there?”

“Of course,” said Lance, looking out at the rising sun. “I’m not going anywhere.” And he stayed quiet, listening to Keith’s breath slow to a steady pace while that sun slowly crept up. He lay down on his back, throwing an arm over his eyes to block the light and focused on Keith breathing, imagining he was snoozing beside him, just out of reach… Next thing he knew he woke up from a nap with the sun high in the sky and the light red once again.

*****

Full day gone. No call from Keith. The light had turned blue once in the afternoon. Lance had shaken his hands free of excess dishwater and dove for his comm on the counter. He’d hit the button to request a call, but Keith didn’t pick up. After a few minutes it turned red again.

Even if he was mid-battle Keith usually picked up. They wouldn’t have had the best conversation, but he’d still answer. Likely it just wasn’t practical to answer or he hadn’t seen the call or he’d tried to answer and the line had died right then. Likely it was one of those things and not that Keith was dead or too injured to pick up…

Didn’t stop Lance from fretting the entire day and into the night. He’d tried to sleep, but the day had been uncharacteristically hot for April and it had left his bedroom humid and sticky making his insomnia of late even worse. Finally he’d given up on sleep and gotten dressed, the slight coolness of the breeze from his window drawing him outside.

He walked for several minutes out into the field, enjoying the cooler air, but unable to shake the worry he was feeling. He held his comm in the palm of his hand, glancing down at it every few seconds. He knew his continual attention to it was becoming a problem. The entire point of the comm had been to alleviate his worries over how Keith was going on his mission, not cause him to obsess over a light. He would need to let go of the idea that any time there was a possibility for them to talk, they had to talk. He had to find some trust that Keith would touch base with him… eventually…

Lance’s wired brain was in contrast to his exhausted body. He found himself dropping down to lay out in the field, a habit he’d formed as a child when he’d had endless stretches of free time to simply look up at the sky and daydream. He rarely got to do so at night though so instead of blue skies decorated with white trials left from Garrison jets, he was looking up at the starry night sky, unhindered by light pollution.

The number of stars visible was so great it almost made Lance feel like he was falling into it. He used to look at the night sky and feel small and insignificant. Yeah, some things never changed…

It had been a mistake to lie down in the Juniberry field, but Lance hadn’t been thinking at the time. The flowers that he tried so hard to think of as the symbols of peace often reminded him of loss. They framed the starry sky that had swallowed up Keith and refused to give him back even for a
phone call…

The lighting changed, the petals of the juniberries being lit up with a blue glow. Lance mistook it for his marks until it disappeared then reappeared then disappeared. His comm!

Lance rolled over and frantically located the flashing light. Keith was calling Lance!

“Hello?” Lance brushed a hand over his wet cheeks as he spoke. Apparently he’d been crying without him noticing it, so was the state of his current disaster of a self.

“Hey, did I wake you?” Keith’s voice sounded cheery for once. “Sorry I know it’s late there.”

“Uh, no, I couldn’t sleep. You can call any time. You know that.”

“Your voice sounds funny. Were you jerking off?”

Was he…? That’s how Keith was going to interpret his croaky just cried voice?! Here Lance had two options, he could confess he’d been crying over missing him or…

“So what if I was? What would you say?”

“I’d ask you to describe it to me,” said Keith, his voice a mix of uplifting cheer and wickedness. Lance felt himself blush.

“Are you even alone right now?” he demanded.

“It’s just the lesbians with me,” said Keith then he chuckled. “They are giving me the dirtiest looks.”

“Well, if you’re not even alone and this isn’t a good time…,” said Lance, feeling disappointed in not being able to describe the thing he wasn’t even doing in the first place.

“This is actually a good time for me. We finally took the ground we’ve been battling for all day and now I’m waiting for a scout to come back before we can move again.”

“You sound happy.”

“Yeah, I mean… we finally accomplished something and I’m talking to you. What else could I need? Beyond comm sex.”

Yeah, that blush wasn’t going away. “You’re not alone though…”

“Give me a minute. I’m moving away.” Lance could hear the shuffle on Keith’s end. “I’ll soon be alone enough.” That last word piqued Lance’s interest.

“What do you mean by ‘enough?’ Is someone still with you?”

“Of course not. I just meant I don’t have a bedroom to retreat to, but I can be out of sight and earshot of the lesbians. Tell me what you’re wearing.”

Lance looked down at his outfit. “Jeans, a t-shirt, and a jacket.”

“… That is a lot of layers for bed.”

“I’m not in my bed. I’m out in the field… star gazing.”
Keith laughed. “Jerking off in a field, that’s my hick.”

“I never said I was jerking off! You assumed!”

“Okay, maybe you weren’t, but you’re going to now, right?”

Welp. Now Lance had a semi. It’s not like he hadn’t tried to jerk off since Keith had left it was just that he was too anxious with Keith on mission. He was back to not being able to get off by himself, which was exactly how this whole Keith thing had started with Keith offering to help, but now he wasn’t there to help.

“Tell me you have lube,” said Keith, after Lance had failed to confirm nor deny whether this was happening.

Lance automatically reached into his pocket and low and behold. “Actually I do. Probably because I’m wearing your jacket.”

Keith let out a breath that was almost a hiss. “Can you be only wearing my jacket?”

“Like… get naked in the field?”

“Don’t suddenly act like you’re too good for this, babe. Not when you fucked me in the dirt just a few nights ago.” Keith was making some very good points…

“Hold on,” said Lance, setting down the communicator in the field. He stripped quickly, kicking off boots, pulling off socks, nearly tripping over his jeans. He took off the jacket so he could pull his shirt over his head then slipped the jacket back on over his bareback. He wasn’t sure how cozy that ground would feel so he arranged his jeans and shirt so he could lay on top of them. “Still there?” asked Lance, seeing for himself the call was still connected.

“Yes, and if this call cuts out before I get you off, I will teleport with Kosmo across galaxies to personally strangle Pidge.”

“Why don’t you just teleport to see me?”

“I wish I could… it seems too far to be safe. Scared all my atoms might not make the jump. Plus…” Keith couldn’t leave his mission. Lance was lucky he was getting some of his time at all.

“What are you wearing?” asked Lance.

“My Blade suit,” said Keith as if this were sexy. Okay yes, he looked damn sexy in it but…

“How are you gonna get off in that?”

“I’ve got myself covered,” reassured Keith, but that just brought up more questions. “I wanna focus on picturing you and imagining I’m there. Though if I was, you know I’d already be sucking your cock…”

“Fuck, your voice is so hot,” confessed Lance.

“My mouth is better. Tell me you’re touching yourself.”

Lance was fully hard now. He took the lube and squeezed some into his palm then smoothed it down his length. “I am now,” he said.

“Put the comm close. I wanna be able to hear the slick of your hand pumping your cock.”
Apparently Keith wanted the ASMR experience of Lance’s jerk off session, but he was happy to oblige and move the comm to beside his hip because…

“I miss you so much,” mummured Lance, stroking himself.

**

“I miss you too, baby,” hummed Keith, he could hear the slick of the lube in his ear and it was doing wonderful things for his imagination. Now he had to work on getting himself off too.

Blade suits were a marvel of technology and were designed to take care of all the wearer’s bodily “functions.” Missions often lasted days and Blades couldn’t be expected to take the suit off every time nature called (as weird as that was) and the designers were also fully aware of the Galra higher sex drive so, in the laymen’s terms, the suit had an app for that.

Keith had never used it before, preferring the old fashioned way of getting off. As in, he liked to find someone to fuck and get naked (not always in that order.) It was surprisingly easy among the Blades to find a partner. Probably because Keith had a rep for being fun and his smooth ass, tiny frame, and fangless mouth made him a novelty. Plus he wasn’t picky. He was just going to shut his eyes and pretend it was Lance anyway. But now he’d had Lance, was having Lance, he couldn’t imagine being with anyone else (not that he had the sense Lance was anything but monogamous. He was very possessive in the most Lance-like manner.)

So with some curiosity (and a very hard dick) Keith set his controls on his wrist panel and was rewarded with a light vibration in the groin of his suit. Oh so this is what it was…

“Have you been getting off since I left?” asked Keith. The vibration had him leaning his shoulders against the wall of the empty hallway he was in. He wasn’t going to be able to stay upright as the vibration increased in power.

“Can’t…,” said Lance, his voice heavy over the comm, “…without you…”

“Sorry baby. I haven’t either… But I’ve wanted to… and you know I want you to feel good…”

“… yeah… feels good now.” Slick, slick. “Wish it was you…”

“D’you ‘member the first time I sucked you off?” asked Keith. He almost didn’t get the last of the words out as the massage function of the suit suddenly kicked in. Which… he didn’t know existed until now.

“Remember? Burned… burned into my memory,” sighed Lance.

Keith slide down the wall and onto his ass. Little rollers were massaging over his cock and it felt so good. It was like the more turned on he got, the more intense the stimulation. He looked down to see little pricks of white light dancing up and down over his suit’s crotch, adding a visual show to what was happening inside.

“I,” Keith swallowed thick, “I went to bed right after…” Fuck he needed breathing breaks. “Didn’t want you to know how hard I was for you.”

Lance moaned in Keith’s ear. “Did you touch yourself right after?”

“ Barely made it to the bedroom,” confessed Keith. Even sitting wasn’t the right angle for the vibration and massage he was getting. His hips kept sliding out lower, leaving just his shoulders touching the wall. “Still had the taste of your cum in my mouth.”
Lance laughed lightly. “Thought you were mad….mmm… didn’t warn you first.”

“No, it was so hot…” Keith wasn’t used to not having anything to do with his hands so he found himself rubbing his thighs while the suit did its work. “Came so quick after then I did it again and again… Made me so horny.”

**

Lance could picture it. Keith, a guest in their house, quietly jerking off in the middle of the night thinking about sucking Lance’s cock. “Wish you’d just… come to my room.”

Keith moaned. “Had to wait… for an invite.”

“Like a vampire.”

Keith laughed. “Stop calling me a vampire. Makes me want to bite you.”

“Mmm please,” said Lance, increasing his pace. The breeze picked up, fluttering the flowers around him, bringing the sweet smell to his nose. Lance barely felt present though. He was half here, half with Keith inside his memory. “Ever jerk off to me on visits before?”

Keith laughed. “All the time… Did it in your bed once.”

“Keith!” snapped Lance, but it also gave him a jolt of pleasure thinking about it.

“Knew it was wrong… did it anyway… just… wanted you.” Keith inhaled sharp and moaned. Lance recognized the sounds he made when he was coming.

“Want you too,” moaned Lance, his hips hiking up to thrust into his palm. Then he was coming too, lying naked in the field wearing only Keith’s jacket and coming in his hand, hoping Keith could hear his cum slicking out among his stuttered moans.

**

Keith had slid to his back by the time he came, pushing up onto his heels and arching. His hands scratched at the floor, not knowing what to do with this hands free orgasm. Lance’s pretty moans were in his ear.

Keith would’ve thought the suit would’ve stopped, but of course it was designed for Galra wear so instead it kicked up the vibration higher, prepping him to orgasm in clusters. “Oh fuck,” moaned Keith, pushing his sweaty hair off his forehead.

“Okay, babe?”

“Yeah just… can’t be done yet.”

“What if… what if I’d walked in on you?” asked Lance, but it wasn’t a real question because his tone was downright filthy. “What if I caught you with your dick in your hand just fucking yourself between my sheets?”

“What would you do?” asked Keith, running his fingers through his hair as he writhed on the ground.

“Roll you over,” said Lance and he could hear the grin his voice. “Spank you for being bad.”

“Shit,” swore Keith because that was too fucking good an answer. He rolled to his knees and his
forearms, hips swaying with the massage and vibration of the suit.

**

Lance usually needed a few minutes of refractory time after coming, but Keith’s voice moaning on the line was better than porn. Three thousand times better approximately since it was Keith who should be busy saving a planet, but was taking time out of his badass schedule to get completely fucked just from Lance’s voice. Shit. They were so into each other.

“You just gonna spank my ass and leave?” asked Keith just as Lance had begun stroking himself again. He’d stayed hard even, the first release just not going to cut it.

“No, I’d feel bad for hurting you and kiss it better.”

“Kiss where?”

“Between those red cheeks. Spread them open and lick my tongue over your asshole.”

Keith’s voice was a strangled moan. Lance’s heart was racing. Another breeze cooled the sweat on his body, the cum on his stomach growing colder.

“Then what?”

“What do you want?” asked Lance, biting his lip.

“I want your dick in my ass, that’s what I want.”

“Then I’d give it to you, baby. You know I would.”

“Fuck,” swore Keith, “Why can’t you just fuck me now?”

**

“I am fucking you,” said Lance in Keith’s ear. “Can’t you feel me?”

“Yeah,” said Keith, his body naturally rocking forward and back as if Lance were behind.

“I’m all tight in your ass. Just sitting back on my heels and watching you bounce on my cock because I know you’re taking control.”

Keith almost laughed because he was moving exactly like he was doing this. “Gotta tie me up if you wanna hold me down.”

“Don’t wanna. Happy to let you fuck yourself on me.”

**

Lance had moved up to his knees. He was mildly visible from the house (if someone had night vision goggles and binoculars,) but this felt best, bouncing on his heels and thrusting into his palm. He could imagine Keith better this way.

“You’re so big, Lance.” He felt a shiver of pleasure go through him. He loved Keith picturing it with him. Sharing this fantasy. “Fuck. I’m gonna cum again.”

“Come for me,” moaned Lance. “Come on my dick.”
“Fuck… Lan-ahh.”

**

Keith was a shuddering mess with his thighs gripping against the floor, his head collapsed against his arms. He had no clue this suit could do this, but then… it wouldn’t feel anything like this without Lance dirty talking in his ear.

He bit down hard on his inner cheeks, still flustered by the intensity of the pleasure moving through him when he physically wasn’t doing anything to cause it. When it finally released him, he slid fully onto the ground.

“Will you come again?” he murmured to Lance, spent and happy.

“So close,” came Lance’s strained voice.

“You can fuck me out until you’re finished,” whispered Keith. “Take all night. Use me up. I’m yours.”

“Oh Keith…fuck,” moaned Lance, “Ahh.” Keith listened to the moans and huffs from his boyfriend in a state of blissed out joy. It sounded like a really good one. A second later he got sad he couldn’t see Lance’s face. He wondered if his marks were glowing or if that only happened with him. “Wow…”

“Mmm that was good,” said Keith.

“Yeah,” sighed Lance. “So glad the call didn’t drop.”

Keith laughed. He’d forgotten to worry about that. “At least we know… this works.”

“Yeah. It works.”

Keith rolled to his back. He could feel the suit switching into its self-cleaning mode which he hated, but it was a necessary evil. “Guess I better go. Think you can sleep now?”

“Yeah…,” he repeated again. “Still wish you were with me.”

“I know. Me too.” There was silence on the line. Hey,” said Keith, softly, “Same place, right?”

“Same place,” repeated Lance.

******

“Long distance relationships are hard,” said Lance’s mom, hereby offering the most generic comfort ever.

“I know that. Of course they’re hard,” said Lance, leaning the heels of his hands on the counter then hopping up to sit.

“Down mijo,” she scolded him, swatting him with her apron before putting it on over her head.

“But when I talked to him last night it was like he was worried that I’m the one not sleeping.”

“You should be sleeping,” said his dad while sipping from his mug of coffee. “Especially while your boyfriend isn’t here to keep you up.”
"Dad," groaned Lance. "C’mon. My point is he’s not sleeping. He’s having to stay awake for days on end, but he’s worried about me and not himself.”

"Aw that’s sweet," said his mom. "Now get off the counter."

Lance rolled his eyes and jumped down off the counter then went back to leaning against it, fully aware he was in his mom’s way.

"Not sweet. Pathetic."

"Keith, is not pathetic!" snapped Lisa strolling into the kitchen. "How dare you!" she said pointing an accusing finger in Lance’s face before opening the cupboard behind him and whacking him on the back of the head. "Oopsie. Mom, do we have any baby aspirin?"

"Let me look," said Lance’s mom, shoving Lance out of the way. He made a big show of stumbling to the side and having to catch himself on the table. "Silvio or Nadia got a fever?"

"I wish. No, Luis has a man cold, but he’s refusing to take medicine so I need to crush up the fruit flavoured stuff and mix it into his applesauce."

"Keith isn’t pathetic," said Lance, trying to continue his very interesting conversation. "I’m pathetic."

"Agreed," said Rachel from her spot at the table. First time she’d looked up from her phone in the past hour.

"He’s in peril and I need comforting from him?"

"Aw. Is your FOMO finally back?" asked Lisa, patting Lance on the cheek, prompting him to swat her hand away.

"I thought he came out as bi," said Pop-pop.


"Oh yes, that sounds like Lance too."

"Thanks, mom," said Lisa, waving the aspirin and heading back out.

"Lance was so bad when we were kids," said Rachel. "He wanted to come to all my dance classes, all my swimming lessons, all my playdates…"

"Your first day of kindergarten," added Pop-pop.

"Yes! And what was worse was you let him come to everything! Including my entire first week of kindergarten!"

"He was tall for his age," said their mom with a shrug as she shifted flour into a bowl. "Everyone assumed you were twins."

"Plus it was easier than having just one kid at home," added Pop-pop. "No harm done."

"Harm!" cried Rachel. "Harm done! I didn’t get to have my own life!"

"Sounds like you have FOMO," said Lance, sticking out his tongue at his sister.
“I’ll phone-mo, you,” shot Rachel, pulling back her phone like it was a baseball she was gonna throw. “I’ll phone-mo your face!”

“Try it!” dared Lance, ready to dodge.

“I will take that,” said Pop-pop, pulling Rachel’s phone right out of her hand.

“Hey!”

“You break it, you buy yourself a new one.”

Rachel grumbled to herself and crossed her arms.

“I don’t have FOMO,” declared Lance. “I don’t want to be on Daibazaal, chasing Galra Insurgents out of the palace. That sounds awful.”

“Maybe it’s not about what he’s doing that you want,” said Pop-pop. “Maybe long distance is just as hard for Keith, but he’s keeping busy and he’s worried because you don’t have that kind of distraction.”

Lance sighed. If this was his dad’s way of segueing into telling him to shovel out the barn…

“Go shovel out the barn,” said Pop-pop with a big ‘gotcha’ smile. “It’ll keep your brain occupied for awhile.”

Rachel cackled with laughter. “Saw that coming.”

“Rachel will help you.”

“Aw c’mon!”

Lance groaned and slumped his shoulders, resigning himself to his least favourite chore. He walked three steps to the mudroom then remembered his comm back on the counter.

“Ah ah!” said his mom, snatching it up before he could touch it. “You both need a screen break.”

“But what if Keith -?”

“We’ll bring it to you if it turns blue, but you need a real break from staring at it.”

Lance sighed. She wasn’t wrong…

******

The evening was cold compared to the night before. Lance had forgotten Keith’s jacket inside but he was too tired to go fetch it. Tired enough that he really should go to bed, but he felt stuck watching the rain, comm pressed between his knees where he could see it. The idea of going to his bed only not to sleep was exhausting in itself.

“Hey,” said Rachel, swinging herself down on the bench beside him. She’d brought a thick flannel blanket with her from the living room. Without checking in she spread it over both their laps, Lance moving the comm to his hand before it got swallowed up. “Hear from him at all?” asked Rachel nodding to the comm in his hand.

Lance shook his head no. “Not since last night.”
“He’s okay. It’s Keith. He’s always okay.”

“Yeah… somehow still worried.”

Rachel frowned. “Have you tried calling - ?”

“I called everyone,” said Lance, interrupting her. “I called Roni. I called Shiro. They both said the communication blackouts are bad, but last they heard the ground missions were unfolding well. I called Hunk and Romelle, but the Atlas is in the blackout area so no one I know on board is getting my calls. I called Pidge and they were the only one who gave me any details.”

“What did they say?”

“The Galra Insurgents are using at least three different signal blocking towers inside the solar system, but the Holts have only located one of them. They’ve switched from manual searches to shutting down the towers with electro magnetic pulses, which gives them temporary communication windows while the towers reboot. That’s why I sometimes get a signal with Keith but mostly it’s dead air.”

“Did they say why it’s nothing today?”

“That part they didn’t know because the Garrison hasn’t been able to reach anyone either and they were waiting for scouts to travel through a wormhole and back to give more detailed reports. Visual reports said there’s an armada of rebel Galra ships surrounding Daibazaal and Altea. Garrison, Blade, and Universal Glliance ships outnumber them though. Expectation is they’ll win, but the Atlas can’t transform without Shiro so that slows things down…”

“Do you ever think about how if you had the Lions still and could form Voltron, this could be over in like ten minutes?”

“I’ve thought about it many times over the past few days,” admitted Lance though he didn’t know what that would look like would he be the Red or the Blue Paladin? Could he even cut it if he tried?

“Damn,” sighed Rachel. “But they’ll win? It just takes time, right?”

“Yeah, they’ll win. Just can’t stand waiting.”

“Sleeping passes time.”

Lance shook his head.

“Okay fine,” groaned Rachel, “you can have a sleepover in my room.”

“Really?” asked Lance. They hadn’t had a slumber party since they were kids and even then Rachel was always made to share a bed with him by their parents.

“Sure. As long as you don’t mind the boot shaped hole in my ceiling,” she shot at him.

“Of right” said Lance, sinking down. “I forgot about that. I’ll fix it tomorrow.”

“It’ll be something new to take your mind off of things” Rachel stood up, sweeping the blanket around her shoulders, leaving Lance cold again. “C’mon.” She nodded towards the door. “We can do a mask before bed and if you’re not annoying, I’ll let you braid my hair.”

******
Simple tasks. There used to be something safe in simple tasks. When the war ended and Lance was… bad… Something happened with his brain that seemed to just shut him down almost completely. His mind became so foggy he couldn’t even pick up a pen and write out his own name because he couldn’t connect the idea of the letters with the shape they’d need to make on paper.

When a muscle is injured, all the muscles around it freeze up to protect the injury as it heals. Lance’s whole brain froze up to protect himself from what had hurt him.

Simple tasks, one step at a time, keep his body moving, keep that small bit of brainpower focused and in the moment. Mindfulness, just like his therapist taught him or at least that’s what he thought it was. Lance had a hard time grasping what was expected of him in those days. But it helped, helped pass the endless hours between sunrise and sunset. Helped him move forward into the future one minute at a time.

When the fog lifted and what remained was anxiety and fear and flashbacks, Lance kept his routine. Chores every day, simple tasks. Pay close attention to the orange light glinting off the axe, the sound of the water swirling down the drain, his boots crunching across gravol. Stay in the moment. Stay, stay, stay.

Lance went back to this while he waited long stretches for Keith to call. He tried to keep his brain on simple tasks and to be mindful and pay close attention to all his senses, but that red light…

He almost felt resentful of each moment passing because it wasn’t adding up to anything. He used to want to just make it through another day. Now he just wanted to get a chance to talk to Keith, but there was no pattern for that. Days were predictable with a set length. Keith’s mission… freeing Daibazaal. That had no expiration and there was no way to know when communication would be back up.

Lance was anxious when he wasn’t low and he was getting more and more frustrated by his awareness of his terrible moods because he felt like he was backsliding.

He’d promised himself he’d never let himself get hurt to the point where he ended up depressed again. So why was worrying about his boyfriend doing this to him? It’s not like Lance had gone to space and exposed himself to triggers. Was just having someone he loved being risky somehow triggering Lance? Could he not even have this?

Lance was contemplating this on the porch a full forty-two hours since he’d last heard from Keith (yes, he was keeping track,) when that light finally turned blue and he pounced on the comm so hard and smashed that call button. He sent a quiet thank you to the Holts out in space for producing an EMP that shut down the comm blackout towers just at the moment where Lance felt like he was going to fall apart if he didn’t heard Keith’s voice.

**

The universe seemed to know how badly Keith needed to hear Lance’s voice. He was struggling in the moment. His unit had come across another that had been badly injured in an insurgent battle. They had lost one of the Blades, a young part-Galra recruit by the name of Flavaugh. Keith hadn’t known him, but recognized him as someone who had trained under Kolivan. He knew that loses in the Blade were inevitable, but it never made it easier for him.

“Hey,” said Keith. When that little blue light started flashing he eagerly accepted the call.

“Hey, babe. You sound exhausted.”
“Yeah, I…,” Keith drifted away from his unit who were tending to the injured Blades. “I’m a bit worn out.”

“What’s happening?”

Keith opened his mouth to tell Lance about the Blade member they’d lost. Part of him needed someone to confide in, but he hesitated. What if telling Lance they’d lost someone just made him worry more? “More of the same. Gaining ground bit by bit. This palace is too big and I have no clue what’s happening outside or on Altea.”

“That’s hard. If comms are up, do you need to be touching base with your mom?”

Keith glanced back at the others and saw Acxa, Rye, and Realla all on their comms. “I’m good to talk to you and I really just want to hear your voice.”

“I feel the same. I wish I could just whisk you home.”

“I wish I could whisk you here.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Lance’s reply had been whip fast and in a completely different tone.

Keith got lost for a second. He hadn’t meant anything beyond paralleling Lance’s sentiment. “Nothing just.”

“Because you know I can’t, right? I’m a mess just thinking about you there.”

“I wasn’t asking you to come here,” said Keith, plainly. “Unless you wanted to take a ship to outside the hot zone and I could, I don’t know, see you sooner.”

“Well, I doubt the Garrison is going to approve of me using a ship for a booty call,” said Lance.

“Booty call, right…” muttered Keith, bitterly. “Guess that’s all I’m good for…”

“I was being funny. I obviously want more than just sex from you. I told you I love you. You’re the one who told me I didn’t.”

“Because you said it when you were drunk!”

“Oh you don’t want to feel pressured into saying it back because that’s not how you feel.”

Keith literally felt like everything had gone crazy in the course of thirty seconds. “What are you talking about? I told you I fell in love with you on the Castleship.”

“Yeah, past tense, Keith.”

“What?”

“You’ve only talked about who I was when you fell in love with me so I get it.”

“Get what?” asked Keith because he really didn’t understand what Lance was implying.

“That you loved Paladin Lance, hero Lance, outgoing, flirty Lance. But I’m not that person anymore. I’m this weaker, scared version of myself and you don’t love this me. You just want me to come to space and be that person, but I can’t do that.”
“Lance, you could pick up a blaster and step onto a ship and be that person right now.” Whoa. Why was Keith angrily responding to the last thing Lance said when he should reassure him that he does love him as he is?! “Nothing is stopping you.”

“I’m sorry I’m such a disappointment to you,” hissed Lance. “I’m sorry I’m not who you imagined I was.”

“You know what, I was just having a really hard time here and I wanted to cheer up by talking to you, but apparently all you want to do is fight with me so I’m just going to go.”

“Fine,” snapped Lance, “Go save the universe.”

Keith felt the words, ‘fuck off,’ form on his tongue so he slammed the button to end the call before he let it slip. “Fuck!” he yelled, slamming his fist against the wall then letting his head drop against it too.

**

The light was still blue, but the static of the call died as Keith had disconnected the call. Lance clutched the comm in his fist then he drew back his arm and hucked the comm into the field, losing sight of it in the golden light of the setting sun. Another sunset on Earth courtesy of Keith’s heroism…

“Mijo!” Lance started at the sound of his mom’s voice. He looked to see her swinging open the screen door. “I do not like what I just heard!”

“Yeah, neither,” said Lance, looking down over the rail of the porch. “That’s hot-head Keith for you. He can be a real jerk sometimes…”

“I’m not talking about what Keith said,” said Lance’s mom. “I’m talking about what you said.”

“What I said?” repeated Lance, shocked that she was taking Keith’s side in this fight.

“About how Keith doesn’t love you now.”

“That’s how he feels!”

“No, that’s what you said he feels. And what’s all this mierda about how you can’t go to space and can’t be a hero?”

“You know I can’t do that,” said Lance, “I’m not capable of doing that and if the only way he’s going to be happy with me is if join him out there then I don’t see how this relationship is going to work…”

“Mijo, Keith is a good boy and he loves you. He would not intentionally pressure you to do something you’re not comfortable with.”

“But I do feel the pressure,” snapped Lance. “He doesn’t have to say it directly for me to know what he wants.”

“C’mere,” said his mom, sitting down on the bench and patting the spot beside. “I am going to tell you what I think.”

“Okay,” said Lance, the fight leaving him. He went and sat down beside his mom.

“I think you are a very bright boy who knows it is wrong to think badly of yourself. But sometimes
we make assumptions about how others feel about us. We think our partners don’t love us or that our friends are just pretending to be nice to us and without asking them if this is how they feel we look for little clues to support these assumptions and we dismiss everything that says otherwise. In this way our brains are very clever because they get to make us feel bad about ourselves while assigning the blame elsewhere.”

“That can’t be what I’m doing,” said Lance, “because I think bad thoughts about myself all the time. Like how I’m too depressed to ever be any good to anyone.” Lance’s throat felt thick and he gripped his knees as he said this. “I can’t help people anymore because I can’t even help myself half the time.”

“So one part of your brain says you have to go to space and be a hero again while the other part tells you aren’t capable? No wonder you’re in such turmoil.”

Lance’s mom wrapped her arm around Lance’s shoulders and squeezed.

“I’m not in turmoil,” said Lance, brushing a tear away. “I am backsliding into depression.”

“Recovery is not a straight line. Do you remember what your therapist told you? That trauma is not something you heal from, it is something you learn to live with. You are living with it, mijo and you are doing well. Everything you have chosen to do for yourself, enrich your relationship with your family and fall in love again, you have succeeded at. Your default is to believe you’re not handling things well, but I can see you being strong and meeting your challenges and being happy as a result.

“Those things are small,” said Lance.

“Relationships are huge! Bonding with people is the hardest thing when your head and your heart have been dealt a serious blow.”

“It’s still different than rejoining the fight.”

“But you don’t need to do that, mijo. Your brain is saying you both have to and you can’t, but neither is right. You chose. You can go and fight and it’ll be hard but you are capable of meeting that challenge. Or you can stay here and live with us and nothing will be lost. Others will defend the universe. Keith will still love you and he will still visit you whenever he can. You can do whatever you want and after you’ve done it, you can change your mind. You have a choice and will always have a choice.”

This reminded Lance of something. “Keith said… that Allura’s sacrifice meant we have choices now.”

“Because he is a smart boy.”

“It just feels ironic because I didn’t have a choice in her leaving…”

“And you still have a lot of hurt and anger towards her for that?”

“Yes, and then I feel shitty for being angry with someone who’s dead, who I once loved.”

“You know what I think?” said Pop-pop, stepping up onto the porch and leaning an arm against the rail. “I think holding on to anger for a person is one way to hold on to grief. Maybe you feel like if you let yourself forgive her for hurting you, then you would let go of her completely.”

Lance swallowed hard, drawing his arms across his chest. “Every Allura Day everyone talks about
her like she was a saint who never did anything wrong. It’s like they don’t remember her as real. Like they don’t know her anymore.”

“What was she really like?” asked Luis. Lance turned and saw him and Lisa walk out of the house.

“Allura was smart and strong,” said Lance, “but quick to judge and harsh at times. But she could re-evaluate her decisions. She’d apologize if she was wrong. She could be distant too… like she never let anyone too close, me included.”

“Maybe she was scared of losing more people she loved,” said Rachel, swinging herself onto the steps and looking over her shoulder at Lance. “I know I would be if I lost my whole planet and I was one of only two of my kind left.”

“Yeah, I think that was it,” said Lance. “But when she was warm, she was really warm and it meant something special.”

“Would people forgive her?” asked Marco, sitting down next to Rachel.

“What do you mean?”

“If she was wrong and she apologized and she was warm like you said she could be, would people forgive her?”

“Yes of course,” said Lance.

“I wonder if you’d forgive her now,” said Marco, looking up at the sky, “if she apologized and asked you to.”

“She can’t do that. She’s gone,” said Lance, bitterly.

“But wouldn’t she if she could?” said Rachel. “Could you imagine it and try forgiving her?”

“I think it’s time, mijo,” said Pop-pop, “to let go of this anger. It does not mean you’ll let go of her too.”

Lance’s gut twisted as his gaze dropped to the ground.

“It’s your choice of course,” said Lance’s mom, rubbing his shoulder, “just like you have the choice to stay here or go to space or move to the city or across the world or across the galaxy. You can do anything or nothing regardless of what your brain tells you.”

“After all you went through, how could I leave?” asked Lance. “Don’t we just want to be together now?”

“This might be a weird moment to bring this up,” said Marco, prompting Lance to look up at him. “But I’ve decided I’m moving to West Virginia.”

“Marco,” said Rachel very clearly, “Do you think you’re in West Virginia right now?”

“I haven’t smoked today, Rach, so no, I know we’re in Nebraska.”

“So state of mind West Virginia…?” asked Lisa.

“No! Like Charleston, West Virginia.”

“Wait, really?” gasped Rachel.
“The music industry is rebuilding post-war and the word on the street is that Charleston is going to be the next Nashville.” Marco looked out at the horizon and said, “I don’t know if I’m good enough to be a music producer, but even if I try and fail… all that art and culture and music rebuilding from scratch… I wanna be apart of it or at least see it happening.”

“That’s really cool, Marco,” said Lisa.

“Yeah, that’s perfect for you,” agreed Luis.

“Good for you, son,” agreed Pop-pop, leaning down to rustle Marco’s hair.

“Hey, my hold,” he groaned, leaning back out of Pop-pop’s reach.

“Okay, normally I’d get angry and say I’d miss you and how dare you leave, but…” said Rachel. She paused and pulled a folded piece paper out of her pocket. “…This came in the mail today.”

“What’s that?” asked Lance.

“It’s my acceptance letter to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. They’re finally reopening their doors after the war and I’m going to be in the first graduating class.”

“That’s wonderful,” said Lance’s mother.

“That kicks ass, Rach!” said Lisa.

“That’s amazing,” said Pop-pop trying to rustle her hair, but Rachel dodged his hand.

“What about your boyfriend, Jason?” asked Luis.

“Jason is not my boyfriend!” snapped Rachel.

“Honestly,” sighed Pop-pop, “the fact that none of you want to admit to dating the people you’re dating, makes me feel like we failed in parenting somehow.”

Lance’s mom shook her head. “Lance and Keith. Rachel and Jason. Plus Veronica and her girlfriend…”

“Veronica has a girlfriend?” asked Lance.

“Not according to her,” groaned his mom.

“Jason it not my boyfriend,” said Rachel firmly. “But he did also apply… he got waitlisted.” She cracked a smile. That dummy.”

“So you and Marco are leaving?” asked Lance, looking between his brother and sister.

“Well,” began Luis, clearing his throat.

“Not you too…” said Lance looking over to his oldest sibling.

“Now, we already told mom and dad this,” said Luis, “and it’s not as big a deal as college or West Virginia, but…”

“We bought the neighboring farm!” said Lisa.

“Lisa, I was just going to say that.”
“You were too slow,” she scolded. “And yes. It’s literally a field away, but I’m finally going to have my own household I can run however I want without my mother-in-law breathing down my neck. No offense, mom.”

“Haha,” said Lance’s mom with an eye roll.

“Wait, everyone can’t leave,” said Lance, standing up. “Who is going to help you run the farm?” He looked between both his parents.

“We’ll hire workers,” said Pop-pop.

“If the collapse of civilization had one benefit,” said Lance’s mom, “it was the demand for farms to produce sustainable food. We’ve done very well these past few years.”

“Plus if we hire workers, they won’t live here and for the first time in our lives we’ll have a house all to ourselves.”

“Assuming I leave,” said Lance, darkly.

“Stay or go,” said his dad, “but we’re having sex inside the house again.”

“Dad!” snapped Rachel.

“I can’t climb to the hayloft anymore,” groaned Lance’s mom. “My hip…”

“Mom!” screeched Rachel.

Lance felt nauseated. That sex blanket really was well used.

“I’m burning that blanket in celebration,” said Pop-pop.

“Ugh grossss,” moaned Rachel, echoing how Lance felt.

“I can’t believe everyone’s just gonna move on. Just like that,” he said, quietly. Lance stepped up to the rail and leaned his arms on it, looking out at the dying light.

“We never expected our children to live with us forever,” said Pop-pop, moving to stand next to Lance.

“It was a blessing having these few years together,” said his mom. “In a lot of ways you all got to relive some of your childhoods. When we needed our lives to be simple, they were simple. We did a lot of healing and growing together, but a grownup mind and heart needs new challenges and I think this nest is ready to empty out.”

“But this is our home…” said Lance.

“Your home is wherever you’re with your family,” said Pop-pop. “That includes your chosen family.”

“My chosen family?”

“Keith, Hunk, Pidge,” said Lance’s mom, coming to his other side. “Shiro.”

“And Coran,” added Pop-pop. “Oh, and the long-haired one who’s name I forget.”

“Romelle,” Lance looked up to see Veronica walking up to them from where she’d parked her car
“What’s going on? Porch party?”

“They were just talking about throwing me out of the nest,” said Lance.

“That’s how chicks learn to fly,” said Pop-pop as if this were obvious.

“No, we are telling Lance he has the option of flying,” clarified his mom.

“Also, I’m going to college,” said Rachel, “But why am I not shocked everyone wants to talk about Lance more?”

“What’s this?” asked Veronica, picking something up from the ground. It was Lance’s comm, red light and all. “Lance, you lose your Booty Comm?”

Lance blushed. “It’s a Keith Comm, not a Booty Comm!”

“Here,” said Veronica, stepping over to hand it to him.

“What are you doing here?” asked Pop-pop.

“Must’ve sensed a family moment,” said Veronica, looking at them all on the porch. “Actually, I have a few hours to sleep before I go back on shift and I thought I might settle better at home.”

“See,” said Pop-pop, gesturing towards Veronica. “Even if you leave, you can always come back to visit. You and Keith will need a place to take time off from the Blades…”

“You’re talking like I’m going to go join him in space,” said Lance, “I thought I got to decide.”

“Yes,” said his mom looking at Pop-pop annoyed. “And when we tell Lance to do what we’ve already guessed he’s going to do then it makes him not want to do it. You know he’s stubborn!”

“So what are you going to do?” asked Veronica.

Lance looked down at his comm with the red light then up at the sky just starting to darken, the first stars peaking out. Something ached deep in his chest. Days ago those stars seemed to swallow Keith up and hide him from him, but in this moment those stars were possibilities presenting themselves one by one.

It was scary, but that was on the surface, the real emotion was buried deep inside Lance. The feeling he’d felt when Keith had left, it was old and familiar. It reminded him of Keith staying behind on the pirate ship to help Acxa and of Keith announcing he was leaving Team Voltron to join the Blades and of Keith running out of school and never once looking back.

Every goodbye had hit and burrowed deep inside, but Lance had refused to acknowledge those feelings, had dismissed them every time he caught a glance, but that didn’t make them go away.

Lance looked at those feelings, those ancient feelings quietly storming in his heart and named what he’d thought all those times.

Wait… don’t go… take me with you…

*****

It took a long time for Keith to regret what he’d said during his fight with Lance. Upwards of two minutes passed before he was scrambling to call Lance back and apologize. Lance… didn’t pick up. And shortly after that the light went red.
The mission became as chaotic as Keith’s feelings over the next twenty vargas. Keith’s unit got separated and then those that remained got separated again leaving just him and Acxa. Two leaders, no one to lead… just perfect. There was zero communication so there was no way to rendezvous. The positive thing was they kept running into Garrison soldiers who’d all come in through the front door. Rumour was most of the Galra Insurgents had retreated and holed up in the Great Hall. Of course Keith seemed to run into the one group who wasn’t and they’d been pinned down by enemy fire for the past two vargas. Kosmo had teleported away half a quintent ago and hadn’t returned so there was no teleporting out and they couldn’t call for backup because again, comms...

“I’m just… I’m worried he’s done with me.”

“Keith, no. Why would you think that?” asked Hunk. Thank the ancients Keith had run into Hunk and Romelle right before they’d gotten pinned. He’d been unloading his Lance problems onto Hunk for the past thirty doboshes.

“Because I pushed too hard and I scared him and I said all the wrong things… and he probably came in with doubts anyway…”

“Keith, buddy, this is Lance we’re talking about. He does everything full on and when he loves, it’s with his whole heart. There’s no way he’s come into this without being 100% in,” said Hunk, reassuringly. “The other day when you were in the shower, getting ready to go out, he called me back and gushed about you. Lance, who is capable of great excitement, was more excited than I’ve ever heard him.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“Not only that, but I haven’t heard him excited about anything in years. He is so in love with you, Keith.”

Keith felt red. He wanted to believe this was all true.

Seeming to sense his doubt, Hunk said, “Look, you two have history and I know I wasn’t the person who saw that. I was the guy encouraging Lance to go for Allura. I didn’t know how that would turn out, how hurt he’d be by it. I feel some guilt from that still. But since we lost her, I’ve seen how much you’ve worked at being there for him and also, just how much you want to be there for him. Seeing that I started reflecting on what I remember of you two on the Castleship.”

“And my crush became evident?”

“You’re definitely subtle with your feelings, but I guess what I actually realized was you and Lance were good together.”

“We… what?”

“I don’t mean you were together in a committed relationship, but you were partners. At least what you grew to be and you were your best selves on the team when you worked together.”

“This isn’t working together, Hunk. It’s totally different.”

“It’s being partners though. You had a fight. You’ll get passed it.”

“That’s easy for you to say. You and Shay have the perfect relationship.”

Hunk chuckled. “You think we don’t fight with each other? Do you know the kind of culture shock that comes from two people from different planets dating? We argue all the time, but we love each
other and we work on our differences because of that.”

Hunk leaned around the corner and shot yet another useless shot at the Insurgents with his Garrison issued blaster. It was pointless. They had cover, the Insurgents had cover. No one was budging and no shots were landing.

“I don’t know. I played right into his insecurities and hurt him deep. I know he doesn’t want to leave the farm so what did I even joke about it?”

“Because you do want him to leave and you were being passive aggressive,” said Hunk.

“Well that stings…”

“Tough question. Why is it important to you to be the one who gets Lance off the farm?”

Keith frowned. “I guess I thought that if I was the one who got him out to space it would prove that I can do something for him no one else can.”

“Keith… you know you don’t have to prove you’re good enough for Lance, right? You don’t have to do anything for him besides love him. That’s all he needs.”

“I don’t want to be good enough. I want… to be the best he’s ever had.” Keith glanced over at Romelle, concerned she’d overhear and figure out what he meant, but she was having her own conversation with Acxa, the two of them seeming to have given up on trying to fire at the enemies and just sitting on the ground and chatting in low voices. Keith wasn’t used to seeing Acxa getting engaged in conversation like this.

“I see,” said Hunk, thoughtfully. “Has Lance actually given you reason to believe he’s holding you up against Allura?”

Keith thought on this. “No… and maybe he even said a thing or two about being more sure about me…”

Hunk laughed. “Okay, so the Allura thing is a Keith thing, not a Lance thing then.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means you always had this excuse not to make a move with Lance, to pull away from Lance because you thought he liked her best. Now look, she’s not around to be competition anymore and you’re still using her as a reason to not try. It was never Allura, Keith. It’s you that’s scared. It’s you that pushes Lance away.”

“So this whole time I’ve been hurting him? Great…”

“I don’t think that. You’ve been taking such good care of him.”

Keith groaned. “I hate that we fought. I hate that I said the wrong thing. I hate the way we left things.”

“I know it’s an awful feeling. When you love someone and you know their heart hurts so your heart hurts right with them, but it’s going to be okay. He’ll accept your apology.”

“Thanks, Hunk.”

“Can I ask, if this is it for Lance? If he says he’s spending his life on Earth and that’s final, is that a deal breaker for you?”
“No, of course not,” said Keith and he knew he was speaking the truth. “I don’t care where he is. I will come to him. I just wanna be with him.”

“Then that’s what you say to him.”

“Are you two finally done moaning?” asked Romelle, calling over to them. “Feels like it’s been vargas.”

“I am so done listening to your fucking,” snapped Axca, likely she meant bitching not fucking. “You think you’re the only Galra struggling to date a human? My human left her job on the Atlas to take a desk job back on Earth and she said she did it because it was better for us if one of us stayed in one place otherwise we’d never see each other.”

“That’s strange logic,” said Romelle, “I live on the Atlas and I feel I see you quite often.”

“Exactly,” said Acxa. “The Atlas crew and the Blades are working together right now and is she here? No! She’s on Earth behind a desk and I can’t call her because no one made me a special bitching comm!” She shot a dirty look at the comm attached to Keith’s belt. “She’s smart too. Brilliant. She could’ve made Admiral one day, but no she’s limiting herself. Humans… they’re just so attached to their home planet.”

“Isn’t it strange?” agreed Romelle. “I was born on the colony and you don’t see me wanting to go back and live there. Not when we have access to the whole universe.”

“Hey now,” said Hunk, “We’re two humans… mostly humans and we’re not attached to Earth. I mean… I miss my family… so much. Oh man, I miss my family.”

Before Keith could contribute anything Acxa stood up straight. “Comms are active again… Krolia?”

“I’ve got blue,” mumbled Keith looking at his Lance comm.

Hunk patted him on the shoulder. “Alright, buddy. You know what you gotta say.”

Keith was going to hit the call button, but the light immediately starting flashing blue. Lance was calling him first. He hit the button to answer instead.

“Hey…”

“Keith!”

“Lance, I gotta say something before you start. I love you. I’ve loved you since the start. I love the past, present, and future you’s. I know you think I could only love you when you were a Paladin, but who you are now is the version of you that loved me back. This is my you that belongs to me.”

Hunk was watching Keith talk with a huge grin, raising two encouraging thumbs up.

“I’m sorry if I made you feel like you need to come back to space,” continued Keith. “I don’t care if you stay on the farm. I will come home to you any time I can. We can get married there, raise kids there, retire there, die in each other’s arms there like that Notebook movie which I’ve never seen, but you’ve referenced the one scene so many times I feel like I have. I will cross galaxies to be with you, realities even. You can stay in one place as long as we’re in the same place emotionally.”

“Wow okay,” said Lance’s reluctant voice in Keith’s ear, “I really wish you’d said all this
earlier…” Panic gripped Keith. What did that mean? “Then I wouldn’t have come all the way here…”

“Wh-what does that mean? You’re here?” Keith was automatically spinning in place to look even though he knew it was just him, Acxa, Romelle, and Hunk in the corner they were pinned down in.

“I’m on Daibazaal,” said Lance as casually as if he were saying ‘I’m in town for the weekend.’ “Daibazaal palace to be exact. That was the last place you said you were so I was hoping to run into you, but this place is a freakin’ maze. I thought I caught a glimpse of you earlier, but that could’ve been any Blade really in your matchy matchy outfits. Is there like a map somewhere? Like you know how at the space mall they have a directory. I could really go for a ‘you are here’ arrow right about now.”

Keith’s heart was racing, his breathing quick. He felt like he was on the edge of passing out and here Lance was just rambling as usual like he wasn’t somewhere close by instead of thousands of light years away like literally always was.

“Where are you exactly?” asked Keith, urgently.

“Definitely trying to get across the idea that I don’t know.”

“Describe it,” he ordered.

“Okay, well you can’t use your phone sex voice when you ask that.”

“Lance!”

“Uh, black walls with purple light. Pretty much exactly like the interior of a Galra ship. Do they use the same interior decorator? The same 10,000 year old decorator…”

“Stay there, I’m coming.”

“Okay, again, sex voice, but also you know I was joking with that description, right? That gives you no information at all.”

“I’ll find you,” said Keith and he was already, moving, already activating his blade and running.

“Whoa! What about pinned down do you not understand?!” yelled Acxa after him.

“Keith, watch out!” yelled Hunk.

But Keith didn’t care about the Insurgents firing at him, he just deflected the blasts with his blade. And he didn’t care about Acxa and Romelle and Hunk’s steps pounding after, yelling out battle cries and laying down cover fire. He didn’t care about the Insurgents he knocked out cold because they were in his way. The only thing he cared about was finding Lance.

This time Keith wanted it to happen, forced the change himself. As soon as his eyes switched the whole of the hallways lit up, every details clear. Oh, so that’s why ever single Galra ship and building looked this way…

More importantly than his eyes were how his instincts sharpened. He could sense energies when he was in this form and he knew what Lance felt like. He felt very close to how the Blue Lion felt when she drew him out to the dessert. He could use that to feel Lance out now.

Keith ran for several minutes and up one flight of stairs, he knocked out three more Insurgents,
passed two of his missing Blades, busted through four doors. He could hear his friends behind him, more importantly he could sense Lance ahead of him. And then he rounded a corner and saw two people wearing Garrison battle suits. Keith didn’t need to see that the taller of the two was holding the Red Bayard in sniper form to know it was Lance. But then his step hesitated when that sniper trained on him. Did Lance not recognize Keith with his eyes from this distance?

*

PCHOO!

Lance fired the shot streaking past Keith and hitting the Insurgent behind who had his blaster trained on Keith’s back. Lance ripped off his helmet and tossed it to the ground. “Dude, watch your six!” he bellowed.

Keith didn’t even look back at his would-be killer-if-his-boyfriend-wasn’t-such-a-talented-sharpshooter. He just barreled full speed into Lance, causing him to stumble backwards against Keith’s hug.

“Hey, I was trying to do a whole fake-outrage bit there,” admitted Lance.

“I know. I don’t care,” said Keith, squeezing Lance tighter. “I just care that you’re here.”

Lance softened, returning Keith’s hug and feeling like life itself was being fed to him. “I’ll take that as, ‘welcome home.’”

Chapter End Notes

BONUS SUMMARY:
Ah this is torture, this is pain
It feels like Keith's gonna go insane
He hope Lance is coming to space real soon 'cause he don't know what to do

Spotify Playlist for Save a Lion, Ride a Cowboy

I'm going to Voltcon with Devoosha and Anime_fangirl823! Are you going to be there? Let me know in the comments or in my Klance facebook group Klance Transformative Works or in The Voltron Fanfic-ers group. Please answer the membership questions! You can also find me on tumblr

xoxoxBBBK
Chapter Ten

Chapter Summary

Well Lance started out with nothing
And his family's proud that he's a self made man
And Keith, he comes crawlin
Slap him on the ass and say
Please, please

Chapter Notes

I wrote a chapter under 10,000 words and there's no angst omg

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lance lifted Keith’s chin so he could kiss him. He felt a brush of sharp fang against his lip, but the kiss was sweet and soft. That is until he felt an arm grab his and yank him backwards.

“Quit hogging him! I wanna say hello,” said Pidge, flinging Lance back then wrapping themself around Keith’s chest.

“Lance!” screamed Hunk, running up from behind Keith and scooping Lance into a hug that lifted his feet off the floor. “It is so good to see you!”

“It is so good to be here!” said Lance.

“Ow,” cried Keith. Lance looked over to see him grabbing his arm as Pidge drew back a closed fist.

“That’s for never coming to visit me the thousands of times you’ve been on Earth!”

“Sorry,” mumbled Keith. His eyes had un-Galra’d themselves, apparently getting punched by Pidge was too un-Galra-like.

“Hello, pointy chin,” said Romelle, greeting Lance next with a hug.

“My chin is not that pointy, is it?”

“There is a sharp angle to it,” said Acxa, coming up from behind Romelle.

“Hey Acxa.”

“Lance,” said Acxa with a nod.

“Do we... hug?”

“Why?” asked Acxa.
“I uh – uh don’t have a reason… Your piercing stare just knocked all thoughts out of my brain and now I’m nervous and can’t think of any kind of explanation as to why I’d want to hug you of all people.”

“How did you get here?” asked Keith, directing this at Lance. He seemed to remember Pidge and added, “Both of you.”

“Funny story,” said Lance, “When I decided I wanted to come here I put in a request for a ship with the Garrison and when they asked for a reason I said ‘love’ and they said, ‘haha nice try. Denied’ so I put in a second request and gave the reason ‘I want to aid in the Daibazaal fight’ and they were like ‘naw, you already said for love’ and I put in a third request and said, ‘no but I was kidding and you fell for it –’”

“Long story short,” said Pidge, “they wouldn’t give him a ship because he’s an idiot and they wouldn’t give me a ship either because knew it would be for this idiot so we had to devise a plan.” Pidge did the maniacal villain finger fold as they said this.

“Ah yes, the plan,” said Lance, doing the same fingers. “It was a brilliant plan.”

“You thought of it,” said Pidge.

“But you executed it.”

“Guys!” said Keith, “Tell us the plan.”

“Pidge invented a Kosmo beacon that summoned him to us,” said Lance.

“Wait…”

“And it worked and Kosmo teleported to us!” said Pidge.

“That’s where Kosmo went?” gasped Keith. He’d had no idea where his wolf had popped off too.

“Then I got him to teleport us across the universe to Daibazaal,” said Lance, bouncing with hyper energy.

“Then Lance puked for like three full hours,” laughed Pidge.

“It’s true, I got crazy motion sick,” agreed Lance, happily.

“Then we came to find you.”

“So just you two?” asked Acxa.

Pidge and Lance looked at each other then Lance said, “Yeah.”

Acxa sighed (which almost sounded like a groan) and said, “I can tell this reunion going to take awhile. Rome, let’s go stand guard so we don’t get taken out while these two ramble.” Romelle nodded and followed her.

“That was so reckless,” said Keith, unable to stop smiling even though he was scolding them. “Are you okay? Did all your atoms make the journey?”

“Oh yeah, they re all there,” said Lance with a nod. “I checked first thing after I finished puking.”

“It’s true he did,” confirmed Pidge.
“But… everywhere?” Keith raised his eyebrows then let his gaze sink down.

“He’s asking about your penis,” said Pidge, rolling their eyes.

“Keith is not a asking that,” said Hunk, shaking his head.

“Oh yeah, I am.”

“I didn’t lose any size. If anything, it’s bigger.” Lance raised his hand for a high five.

“Nice,” said Keith, accepting that high five.

“Wow,” said Pidge, “You two really found each other.”

“I can’t believe you came here for me,” said Keith all soft and cute and perfect and Lance really wanted to kiss him more and hold him, but he had to get something off his chest first.

“I didn’t actually come here for you.” Keith looked confused, but Lance added, “I came here for me. Ever since Allura died I’ve kept a running list in my head of all the things I believed I couldn’t do anymore. I thought it was because I was broken, but really I was just protecting myself, worried I’d get hurt. But I finally took a chance on something again and that was you and there has been hard stuff, but the reward is so worth the risk. It made me realize that if I keep sheltering myself from anything bad happening, I’ll miss out on good stuff too. The next step was harder though because some part of me believed I shouldn’t get to have that good stuff because I didn’t deserve even if I was brave enough to go for it, but you convinced me I deserve sunsets and I’m starting to believe I deserve you.”

“Of course you do,” said Keith.

“Awwwww,” cooed Hunk. When everyone looked at him he quickly said, “I meant to keep that to myself. I’m just quietly observing. You two keep talking.”

Lance smiled at Hunk then turned back to Keith, “The thing is I was scared I was becoming depressed again at just the thought of coming back out here, but what I really felt was that I was missing out and that made me sad. The farm was safe when I needed it to be, but it became a crutch and as I reflected on our times together as the Paladins without focusing on the bad stuff, I remembered everything I loved like becoming a family, working hard everyday to make the universe a better place –”

“All the attention you got,” said Pidge.

“ – All the attention I got,” said Lance with a laugh. “And helping people. I realized that’s what I want to do. I wanna help people again. And I think joining the Blades could be a good step for me.”

“You wanna join the Blades?” asked Keith. He had not expected that.

“Yeah. I mean as long as it’s not still limited to Galra and you don’t mind having an Altean on the team?”

“Altean?” repeated Hunk and Keith together.

Lance blushed. “Yeah, while I was waiting to get my ship request rejected at the Garrison, I finally let Pidge take a blood sample and sequence my DNA. Turns out I’ve got some Altean way back in my ancestry.”
“You sequenced his DNA in an afternoon?” questioned Hunk, looking at Pidge with suspicion.

“Naw. That would’ve taken me several days,” said Pidge. “I got a blood sample from Veronica years ago and sequenced hers.”

“What?!” shrieked Lance. “You and Veronica both knew I was Altean this whole time?!”

“Yep, but we agreed you weren’t ready to hear it because you’d freak out and oh look… prophesy fulfilled.”

“Which side of the family?” asked Keith. “Mom or Pop-pop?” Aw, he was wording it like they were his parents too, which made Lance melt a bit. He was suddenly less furious with Veronica and Pidge.

“Both surprisingly,” said Pidge. “Apparently your ancestors on both sides loved that alien strange.”

“Runs in the family,” laughed Lance.

“With the shape shifting, they wouldn’t know,” pointed out Hunk.

“I need a larger population sample,” said Pidge, “but I suspect a significant portion of the human population has Altean ancestry. There’s a lot of crossover with our cultures. Plus it fits in neatly with my theory that the Egyptians were actually Alteans so aliens indeed built the pyramids.”

“We’ve activated Conspiracy Theory Pidge,” said Hunk.

“Fun Fact,” said Pidge, ignoring Hunk, “Shiro also has Altean ancestors. Likely why he’s capable of transforming the Atlas. I suspect Allura activated both of your Altean DNA when she gave you two those quintessence jump starts.”

“That’s a real solid scientific explanation there,” said Keith.

“I guess I could’ve worded differently it and explained that your interaction with Allura’s quintessence caused a histone modification making the Altean parts of your DNA accessible to the proteins that read your genes.”

“Uh…”

“Wait waitwaitwaitwait,” said Lance, waving his arms. “Shiro got ship to robot powers and all I got were glow in the dark cheek stickers?! No fair!”

“I like them,” said Keith, using Lance’s arm to pull him close so he could kiss him on one of his marks. The tension melted from Lance as Keith wrapped himself him. “I am so proud of you, Lance. You took so many steps at once.”

“Yeah, proud of you,” agreed Hunk.

“Eh,” shrugged Pidge. “I always knew you’d be back.”

“I’m not sure if I can handle all this,” Lance admitted, “but I won’t know unless I try. And it’s a lot easier knowing I have the three of you supporting me.”

“D’awww,” said Hunk.

“Everyone c’mere,” called out Acxa from down the hall. “We’ve got orders.”
Pidge and Hunk jogged over, but Lance was staying put with Keith still wrapped around him.

“Uh, I think we have orders.”

“Just gimme a minute,” said Keith, not budging. “I wanna be extra certain you’re not a hologram or an astral projection or a hallucination brought on by my Blade suit.”

“Wait… the suit can make you hallucinate?”

“It’s the second most unusual function. But yeah, it can make me see what I most want to see.”

“And you most want to see me?”

Keith lifted his head off Lance’s shoulder so he could look at him with those dark eyes. Lance’s heart gave a stutter. “Of course I do, but I guess you didn’t come here to see me, but to join the Blades so…”

“You just so happen to be in the Blades which means it fulfills my second purpose.”

“Which is what?”

“To be with you. Always.”

Keith scooped a hand behind Lance’s head and pulled him into a kiss. Lance felt those last few puzzle pieces click into place. He knew this didn’t mean things would be perfect from now on, but he trusted that whatever bad may come, they’d face it together.

*

Keith had never been so happy in his life. The importance of everything else just seemed to fade away. He was vaguely aware that he was being a bad leader and a bad Blade and there was a mission and blah, blah, blah, but this Garrison suit Lance was wearing was skin tight and textually fun to run his hands over.

“Keith,” giggled Lance, when he ran his hands down and cupped his ass, “we gotta go fight bad guys…”

“Soon. I’m on break right now,” said Keith, moving to kiss Lance’s neck. He got such a nice gasp in response as Lance’s body writhed against his.

“Hey! No doing sex here,” said Acxa. “If you two are messing around, find somewhere private. Just because we don’t have the usual human mating spot of a hayloft with a blanket does not mean you can do sex wherever you like.”

Lance looked Keith dead in the eye and said, “Okay, that one I caught.”

“We weren’t doing sex,” Keith shot back at Acxa. “We were just kissing!”

“I know you, Kogane, and I do not want to be nearby when that escalates.”

“You didn’t see anything,” argued Keith.

“Babe, the important thing you’re missing here is we just got the green light to go have sex so I’mma do that. You coming with?” Lance was already shuffling away from the group and tugging at Keith to do the same.
Suddenly he had Keith’s attention. “Let’s go,” he said, taking over the pulling along.

“I think I’ve found what motivates you,” laughed Lance, allowing himself to be led by Keith, their pace turning from a speed walk to a run.

“You’ve shown me hick sex, now I’m going to show you Blade sex.”

“So it’s like a dirty initiation?”

“Sure,” agreed Keith with a laugh.

This time it was Keith who knew where they could get some privacy.

“What’s this place?” asked Lance when Keith reached the large ornate doors.

“A room we cleared a few vargas ago,” said Keith, touching his palm to the Blade lock they’d placed on the door. It recognized his DNA and unlocked.

Keith opened up one of the two doors for Lance to go in. Instead of just walking in like a normal person, Lance pounced on Keith, wrapping around him and kissing him so they had to stumble blindly into the room. Lance kicked the door closed with his foot nearly throwing them off balance, but they regained it as Lance used his stumble to back Keith up against a wall.

The kiss was hot and wild until suddenly Lance’s mouth paused. Seeming to become aware of his surroundings, Lance turned and looked over his shoulder to take in the room.

“Keith, what the hell is that?” he demanded, pointing across the room.

“That’s a throne,” said Keith, looking to the platform at the other end of the room with the tall black chair with decorative spikes.

“Why is there a throne in here?” asked Lance, sceptical.

“Well it’s… the throne room?”

“I thought you were taking us to a bedroom!”

“Bedroom? Since when do we use beds?” Keith pulled Lance back in for a kiss. “It’s not a throne room that gets used,” he explained. “The whole palace is just ornamental, a tribute to our history. Our leaders conduct business in other less impressive buildings, but the Insurgents chose this place for the symbolism.”

“And what symbolism are you going for by choosing this room to fuck in?”

Keith shrugged and laughed. “Just knew it was empty and a hell of a lot better than a barn.”

“Fuck off. You love the barn,” said Lance, pressing against Keith and kissing him again. Lance hands ran up to Keith’s hair, finding his ponytail. He’d been a good boy and finger combed out his wet hair when Lance had told him to, but after he just needed it out of the way for battle and tied it back. Lance slid the elastic out of Keith’s hair and began playfully racking his fingers through the loose shoulder length locks as he kissed him slow and deep.

The sensation felt so nice until Lance’s fingers hit a snag and the combing through got rougher which wasn’t a bad sensation, but… “Are you just untangling my knots now.”

“There’s so many of them,” complained Lance. “You have not been taking care of your hair.”
“I’ve been on mission for days! I haven’t been able to wash it.”

“Instead you left it all strangled in a ponytail. You have follicle damage where the elastic’s been.”

“Are you seriously giving me a hair lecture now?”

Lance responded by kissing Keith again. His fingers remained in his locks, tugging sweetly again. When he pulled back he said, “Have I ever told you that I love your hair?” his voice low and sweet.

“No,” responded Keith, just as low, “Never… ever…”

Lance let out a small chuckle. His fingers slid to Keith’s shoulders then crept along until they hit the two buttons at the back that loosened and opened the suit.

“Oops…,” he hummed.

Keith rocked against Lance as they slid the suit down, stealing quick pecks at cheeks and necks and lips, until Keith was free to step out.

*

Keith stepped back and adjusted his hair, pushing it over to one side so it draped across one shoulder. Lance’s cheeks reddened and he felt suddenly captivated by Keith’s looks, his pale naked skin glowing under the purple light. He’d never really dared to take in Keith all at once, like if he ever stopped to appreciate just how damn beautiful he was it would’ve shattered the lie Lance kept telling himself, that he didn’t want this, but oh he wanted this.

“See something you like?” asked Keith, noticing how Lance was staring. He was so sexy when he got flirty.

“Naw,” said Lance, stepping to him and sliding a hand behind the small of his back. “I see things I love.” Lance slid his one hand down to run over Keith’s smooth ass and said, “I love your body and your hair.” He brushed a strand off Keith’s face. “I love your eyes whichever way they look and I love your scars.” He kissed the mark on Keith’s cheek and continued peppering kisses down to his neck where he paused and said, “I love all the parts of you you’ve shown me and every part I have yet to meet.” He looked up so he could meet Keith’s eye as he said, “I love you, Keith.” He felt so perfectly sure of this, exactly like he had the first time he’d told him.

Wide eyes met his as Keith released a shaky breath. “I’m sorry I can’t just… I feel so overwhelmed.”

Lance pulled him tighter against him, sliding his hands to his back in a proper hug and tucking his face against Keith’s neck. “No, it’s okay. If it feels quick, I get it,” said Lance, soothingly. “I know you thought it was sudden when I told you I loved you the first time. Logically it should’ve felt sudden to me, but it didn’t, which was strange, but I realized the reason it was so familiar was because I’ve fallen in love with you before. I’ve been falling in love with you since we met at the Garrison. I’ve done it over and over and each time I’ve stupidly dismissed that feeling because I wasn’t ready for you. But I am now and I’m never letting this feeling go. I’m never letting you go, Keith.”

“That’s good because I’m a runner,” said Keith with a shaky laugh.

Lance kissed him on the shoulder. “I finally realized the solution to that is I should just follow you.” He could picture it in his head, these alternate realities where he watched Keith run from the Garrison and he’d just picked up his feet and ran too. Where Keith left for the Blades and Lance
walked out with him. Every time he climbed into his ship to leave after a visit, Lance just swinging his foot inside and coming too. There were always reasons not to follow, but he wouldn’t entertain those reasons anymore. He wanted to stay with Keith.

“I’d love for you to follow me,” said Keith. “I love you, Lance. I always have.”

“I love you too, Keith. So much.”

That was the first time they’d exchanged ‘I love you’s’ (the first time Lance had a an actual ‘I love you’ exchange) and now suddenly he was the overwhelmed one. He’d thought they’d run off to have sex, but apparently this was what they really needed to do.

“You okay?” asked Keith, petting Lance’s short cropped hair.

“Yeah,” said Lance, swallowing back the emotion and letting it swell in his chest instead. “I’m just in a really weird place right now.”

“I’m sorry, baby. I know this is a lot.”

“No, I meant physically,” said Lance, lifting up his head, “I’m in really weird place.” He laughed, looking back around the room.

Keith rolled his eyes. “C’mon,” he said, pulling his hair back off his shoulders, his raised elbows stretching out that muscular torso, “like you don’t wanna fuck me here.” Lance’s eyes flicked around the throne room, his thirsty mind buzzing with possibilities. “Well? Where do you want me?” asked the very naked Keith.

Everywhere in the universe…

“I thought you were my commander now,” joked Lance.

“I defer my command to you,” said Keith then added for good measure, “Temporarily.”

“Get down on your knees,” ordered Lance.

Keith dropped gracefully down to his bare knees, looking up at Lance with big eyes just like he had the night he’d offered to blow Lance. Keith’s hands reached towards Lance’s still fully clothed thighs, repeating the process step by step.

“No yet,” directed Lance. “Turn around.” Lance caught a spark of excitement in Keith’s eyes as he turned around on his knees. Power bottom or not, he was pretty into being told what to do. “On all fours.” Keith obliged, placing his palms down on the ground. Lance tugged off one of his gloves, loosening each finger at the tip before sliding it off completely. Holding it in his hand, he bent and smacked the glove against Keith’s ass. “Git!”

Keith whipped his head back to look at Lance with a furious look on his face. “I am not a cow!”

“Then why do you like getting spanked like one? Now I told you to ‘git’ so start moving.”

Keith gave Lance a bratty pout before turning to look ahead. Slowly he began crawling on the floor. He arched his back and popped up his ass, putting on a show for Lance just like he’d hoped. His ass looked incredible. Lance stepped slowly behind him, enjoying the show, running a hand through his hair because suddenly it was way to hot in here despite the Garrison suit controlling his temperature.
“How far?” asked Keith when he met the steps that led to the throne’s platform.

“Keep going,” said Lance, noticing the thickness of his voice. He swallowed in a lame attempt to clear it. “I’ll tell you when.”

Keith took a few steps on his knees then flipped his hair as he looked back over his shoulder, “Am I getting… hotter?”

“Definitely hotter,” said Lance, his voice coming out as an exhale.

The last time he’d had Keith, they hadn’t done anal, but watching him climb those steps on his hands and knees, all Lance could think about was burying his dick in his ass. The way the crawling made each cheek rise or fall opposite of the other was memorizing.

“Is this the hot spot?” asked Keith. He’d stopped again. “Is this where you’ll fuck me?” He dropped to his hip and opened up his knees displaying his hard cock and giving it a playful stroke.

“I didn’t tell you to stop,” said Lance, though he knew his voice was conveying that he really wanted this right now, yes please. So he corrected his tone and said, “Keep crawling.”

Keith turned back to his knees and said, “You’ll probably need to spank me again to get me to move.”

“Hey, I’m in command here,” said Lance. He lifted his foot and pushed Keith’s ass with his boot instead.

“Fucking rude,” complained Keith but he started moving up again anyway.

“When you get to the throne, put your elbows on the seat,” instructed Lance as Keith reached the top of the platform. Keith did as he was told. Lance removed his second glove then knelt down behind Keith. He drew back his bare hand and slapped Keith’s ass hard, the sound of the smack echoing in the large throne room. Wow, that sounded good and the sting in Lance’s hand felt invigorating.

“H-harder,” stuttered out Keith.

“Please?”

“I’m not doing the polite shit La- ahh!” Keith cried out as Lance hit him again on the same spot. A hand shaped welt was appearing on Keith’s pale ass cheek.

Lance grabbed a handful of Keith’s hair and gave it a light yank. Not enough to hurt, but enough to make things interesting and ensure Keith was listening.

“I know you’re just sassing so I’ll punish you more.”

“M’more,” said Keith, shaking his ass at Lance.

Lance had to let out a shaky exhale again. There was so much he wanted to do with that reddening ass. Lance switched his grip on the hair so he could spank Keith on the other cheek, drawing a breathy “Ah” from his boyfriend and giving that red welt a twin.

Lance bent over Keith, brushing his long hair out of the way so he could nibble and suck on his shoulder. He grinded his hips against Keith’s ass and smacked him on the side of it this time.

“Mmmm fuck,” moaned Keith. He was rubbing his ass against Lance’s hardness now, unable to
hold back against his instinct to take the lead.

Lance didn’t want to come in his Garrison suit so he moved to a crouch, hooked his arms around Keith and lifted and spun him until he could lower him into the throne’s seat.

Lance dropped to his knees and had to pause again as he was caught in a moment of feeling so enamoured with Keith. The sight of him naked, long dark hair down, limbs spread open, chest heaving, mouth plump, cheeks red, sitting in a Galra throne… Lance had this sudden compulsion to start worshipping him. But then… he’d felt the same instinct the first time Keith had sucked his dick. Turns out he wanted to bow down to Keith whether he was sitting on a throne or on his back in the hay.

“You know,” confessed Lance, “I always thought you’d end up here.” He looked at the throne. “In the future.”

“I don’t –

“Want to lead,” said Lance in unison with Keith then he added, “Jinx! You owe me a coke!”

Keith dropped his head into his hands like he couldn’t believe he was in love with this dork. “I never wanted to be on top.”

“Of course because you’re a bottom,” said Lance, grinning at his own pun.

Keith shook his head then continued on like Lance hadn’t spoke. “I’ve been at the bottom and it was lonely. I imagine the top is just as lonely. I just want to be in the middle… with you.”

Lance forced himself to not burst out singing, ‘Jokers to the left of me…’

“You’re a good leader, Keith,” he said instead.

“You are too,” said Keith. He bent forward and grabbed Lance’s arms to pull him up higher on his knees so their faces were close and level. “Don’t put me on a pedestal and I won’t do that to you. We’re in the same place, remember? We stand on equal ground.”

Lance pushed forward and kissed Keith because he always knew just what Lance needed to hear and he was so grateful he had him.

“I love you, Colorado,” he said because he just wanted to say it and say it and say it.

“I love you too, Nebraska,” said Keith, “Now how the fuck do you get that suit off because I don’t see any release buttons.”

“I.. oh shit, I don’t remember.”

“You don’t remember?!” snapped Keith.

“I was so hyped up getting ready to come here and see you that everything is a blur. You might have to cut me out of it.”

Lance watched Keith’s knife fingers twitch. “Don’t tempt me…”

“Okay, you can’t actually do that because I need something to wear afterwards.”

“It’s fine. I’ll just open a hole for your dick to fit through.”
“Alright, it’s not like I don’t trust you with your Blade around my junk because I do – don’t – but after I’ll just be walking around with my cock out?”

“I don’t see what the problem is.”

“You fucking horny Galra weirdo,” said Lance, pushing up to standing. “You make fun of me for being a hick, but you’re sense of decency is shady as fuck.”

Keith shrugged because of course he was unapologetically a slut.

* *

It took several minutes for Lance to locate the release clasps on his suit. Keith just lounged in the throne naked and watched him the whole time. When he did ask for a hand Keith just said, “It’s the blade or nuthin’,” with a shrug.

Awkward strip show and all, Lance was so adorable. Keith’s desperate need to get fucked could apparently be put on hold if it meant watching Lance be a complete dork trying to get off his suit before removing his boots. See, this is why the Blade suit was all one piece. No hassle.

When Lance was finally naked, Keith drank it in, the farmer’s tan not much darker than his natural skin tone, those Altean marks glowing bright on his body that ran like rivers down his thighs and arms and hip bones…

“That treasure trail always drives me crazy,” admitted Keith, running light fingers over his own sensitive cock.

“There are so hot, Lance, it’s crazy.”

Lance tried to hide his smirk. Poor boy loved that praise and attention, needed it, but was embarrassed by how much he did. Keith wasn’t ever going to let him starve for it again.

“Come lay that beautiful piece of ass all over me,” said Keith.

Lance put one hand down on the armrest and leaned to kiss Keith sweetly. When Keith leaned up for more, Lance just pulled back and plopped down unceremoniously by Keith’s knee. He was his loyal pet, looking up at Keith with loving eyes. This prompted Keith to run his fingers through Lance’s short hair. Lance nuzzled against his hand. Keith’s every look and gesture was met with affection. His heart felt so full it could burst. He loved Lance so much and wanted him so badly. It was a lot to take in at once.

“I know,” said Lance, quietly, like he was reading Keith’s thoughts. His hand ran up Keith’s thigh, hand wrapping around Keith’s cock. “You’re beautiful too, you know?”

Lance bent over Keith’s knee and pressed a kiss to the tip of his cock. Keith’s whole body melted
just a little, sinking into the throne. He’d found the throne itself uncomfortable at first, but with Lance there it was just perfect.

Lance flicked his tongue over the slit, then sank his lips down over the head of Keith’s cock, coming at him from the side. Keith hummed his appreciate for Lance’s warm mouth. As Lance bobbed up and down on the tip, he ran finger tips down the shaft and cupped Keith’s balls.

“Better than the suit,” mumbled Keith.

“Huh?” asked Lance, muffled from a mouth full of cock.

“Nothing,” said Keith. He’d explained the Blade suit’s special settings at a later date. All thoughts drifted away as Lance pulled off then used his hold on Keith’s cock to slap it against his wet tongue and lips. Keith’s moan vibrated his chest as Lance kept this up. Who taught him that? Keith did not teach him that.

“Like it?” asked Lance, his tone teasing.

“Yeah, fuck,” moaned Keith. He kept sliding lower, his hips pushing off the edge of the throne’s seat.

Lance lifted his leg and wrapped it around his shoulders, nestling himself between Keith’s thighs. He dove back in, licking around the base of Keith’s cock then moved lower to lick and suck his balls.

Keith ran his hands down his own hair, just drinking in the sights and the feeling of Lance. He was so good at going down on Keith even as a novice. Fuck, how good would he get with more practice?

Lance went lower, adjusting himself on the ground so he could use both hands to open up Keith’s ass cheeks and lick across his asshole.

“Fuck Lance, ah,” sighed Keith. “You know I love that.”

“That’s why I do it,” said Lance. He vibrated his tongue across Keith’s entrance then pulled back to add, “I love it too.”

“You eat me out like a good country boy,” said Keith.

“And you take a cock like one,” countered Lance, his voice almost a growl. He dove back in, sucking and licking, making Keith’s skin heat up and his hips rock against Lance’s mouth.

“Lube,” said Keith, realizing he needed to get fucked now or die. “In my Blade suit.”

Lance licked himself up to sitting then said with his bright, optimistic voice, “I brought some too.” Then he scurried on his knees to his Garrison suit.

“You’ve learned,” said Keith, trying to get control of his breathing. “Proud of you.”

Lance scuffled back with a bottle of lube, already pouring it onto his fingers. He slid one inside Keith, making him gasp, then said, “Tighter than usual.”

“Shut up,” groaned Keith, “I’ve had a lot of stress.”

“Poor baby,” said Lance, working a second finger inside of Keith. “Let me take it all away.”
Lance was a giver, that’s for sure. He went back to sucking Keith’s cock as those rough farmer fingers worked him open. Keith just relaxed into it, feeling his orgasm build up quick and spill over, knowing he’d come again soon and not caring to hold back. Fuck Lance’s mouth felt so good, how could he not come in it?

“Maybe warn me next time,” said Lance with an eye roll as he wiped stray cum from his bottom lip.

“Oops,” said Keith, flatly. He knew Lance was joking anyway. “If you’re mad, you don’t need to fuck me.”

Lance stood up and for a second Keith got worried he really wasn’t going to fuck him (he wanted that cock, dammit!) But he could see Lance was already smoothing lube onto his dick with one hand. The other hand he held out for Keith who took it and stood up on shakey legs.

“My turn to sit on the throne,” said Lance, sitting down. He looked at his lap with that hard cock sticking up and asked, “Will you crown me?”

The puns were very frequent this one fuck session, but Keith could look past it (as if he didn’t love Lance all the more for it.) He barely even rolled his eyes as he climbed onto Lance’s lap. One foot on either side of Lance’s hips and he helped him find the right angel so Keith could sink down onto the big cock.

Keith moaned as he bottomed out, but not nearly as loudly as Lance, their joined voices echoing in the large room. Lance bit his bottom lip, tension on his face. He’d been holding out for a long time.

“Don’t move yet,” he warned Keith. “I know you’ll probably bounce me into coming in thirty seconds so just give me a minute to enjoy being inside of you.”

Keith let his forehead drop and knock against Lance. He was so fucking sweet and Keith had a hard time understanding how he deserved someone he loved this much.

“I’ll be good for once. I promise,” said Keith, hoping he meant it.

“Liar,” chuckled Lance as he used his hands on Keith’s hips to move him up just a bit, dragging Lance’s cock out. He didn’t have a chance to miss the fullness as Lance pushed his hips up back again.

Keith held himself in place while Lance slowly moved this way. It felt so good, just these small, graceful movements. He watched Lance’s face at close range, seeing it so open and loving. Keith had to hold it together to keep from getting choked up because he loved him so fucking much. Keith to lean his head against the side of Lance’s because his gaze was almost too much in the moment.

“Are you mine, Keith?” asked Lance, his low voice so close to his ear.

“Yes,” hissed out Keith, wrapping his arms tight around Lance’s shoulders.

Lance’s hands gripped harder on Keith’s hips with this confirmation. His slow roll turned into a sharp thrust as he fucked up into Keith.

“Yes,” moaned Keith again, both answering the question and approving of the change. “Fuck yes.”

Fingers dug into flesh as Lance tipped onto his toes so he could lift up higher and faster, feeling like he was filling Keith up deeper than ever.
“I’m so happy,” said Lance’s voice, hitched yet full of emotion.

“I know,” said Keith, still holding him tighter, feeling that dick hit him so good. “Me too.”

Keith knew Lance when he was coming, knew how his body moved and how his breathing sped. It was a quick fuck, but it was so perfect. Then…

The door burst open.

Lance froze, making a choking sound, which must’ve had something to do with cutting off all pleasure sensors seconds before orgasm. Logically Keith knew someone walking in on them should be cause for alarm considering this was the middle of mission and he should follow Lance’s lead and stop moving, but it was Keith and he couldn’t really ever be good so when Lance’s hips dropped and refused to return he just let himself drop down and bounced his ass on Lance’s cock as he glanced over his shoulder.

“Halt, who’s…,” began one of the two Blades in the doorway. Having, confirmed that they weren’t there to kill them, Keith just went ahead kept enjoying himself. “Oh sorry, Keith,” she said, recognition hitting her.

“Oh sorry,” said her partner.

Keith had already turned back to Lance, free to keep doing what he was doing, which was feeling that heat build low inside of him while he took that cock so nice. Keith heard the door shut again as his orgasm gripped him, closing his knees tight around Lance’s sides as he came on his boyfriend’s stomach.

To Lance’s credit he waited until Keith had finished his aftershocks before he lightly hit his arm and whined, “Keith!”

“What?”

“Don’t what me! That is the second time you came right after someone walked in on us. I’m beginning to think you’re an exhibitionist.”

“Beginning to think…,” muttered Keith, confused that this was ever in question.

“I can’t believe they just saw me,” pouted Lance.

“Your face was hidden behind me,” said Keith soothingly, remembering that although he gave zero fucks about who saw him fucking, Lance still had many fucks to give.

“They saw my dick… they saw my dick in your ass…” Lance let his face drop against Keith’s chest. His cheeks were warm from either fucking or embarrassment.

“They were Blades,” said Keith. “This shit happens on missions. No one makes a big deal. You’ll know that soon now that you’re one of us.”

Lance raised up his head. “Am I really?”

“I’d love to have you with us and not just because I’m currently and literally fucking you.”

“Okay… I guess I didn’t know them so maybe it’s not so bad.” Keith didn’t have the heart to tell him that was Zethrid and Ezor…

“Now let’s get you off, baby,” said Keith, smoothing his hand over Lance’s cheek. “You still feel
pretty hard to me.” He demonstrated this by raising up his hips and dropping back onto Lance’s cock again.

Lance hummed and shook his head. “Excuse me for getting very distracted.” Then he hooked one elbow under Keith’s knee and hiked it up over his shoulder.

Oh nice.

Then he hooked the other elbow under the other knee and hiked it up on the other shoulder so Keith was in a very vulnerable position, sitting up right on Lance’s cock in his lap with his legs bent up and over his shoulders.

Very nice.

“Flexible,“ mumbled Lance, his eyes shading over with lust.

“All for you, baby,” said Keith, he put his hand on Lance’s knees and leaned his weight onto them. This way he was able to push the back of his thighs against Lance’s chest and thrust his hips up then drop them down to continue bouncing on that cock.

“Fuck,” groaned Lance, “You’re incredible…”

“All yours, Lance…” said Keith lifting and dropping down onto that cock. “You can use me.”

“You use me,” said Lance, gripping his hands around Keith’s ass. He pressed a kiss to the inside of Keith’s knee. “You love fucking yourself on my cock.”

“I love it,” confirmed Keith, picking up his pace even more, making it rougher. “Love it when you come in me.”

Lance’s agreement was just a moan, his head dropping back.

Keith bent his arms and leaned back further, getting a new angle, one Lance could rock with him so they could fuck against each other, finding their rhythm.

“I want your cum in me, Lance,” begged Keith.

Lance reached out a free hand to pump Keith’s cock, still slick from coming all over his boyfriend. “Want you to fill me up. Wanna walk around with you dripping out of me.”


“Waited so long for it… Wanna keep getting it.”

Then arms were behind his back and Keith was being moved to a new position. Lance stayed inside of him the whole time and soon Keith was on his ass with the throne’s armrest pressed into his back. Lance was over him and kissing him as he was thrusting into him. One leg planted, one leg kneeling on the throne’s seat, ever inch of his cock filling Keith up as he moaned into his mouth and fucked his way through his orgasm.

Keith’s head dropped back as he let himself go again, coming between the tight press of their bodies, appreciating how close they were and how good this ecstasy felt sharing it with Lance.

Lance moved to stuttered thrusts, rolling his way through his climax. “I love you,” he said.

Keith’s voice was ragged from thirst andfuck, but he returned it with, “I love you too.”
Lance stuttered his hips and stilled, a hot and sweaty weight on top of Keith that he loved with all his heart. Lance dropped his head against Keith’s shoulder and squeezed him tight.

For a long while all they could do was catch their breath. Keith felt a wave of drowsiness hit him. All those sleepless nights working the mission, threatening to pull him into post-fuck sleep even in this uncomfortable position.

“Thank you,” said Lance quietly, rousing Keith’s sleepy brain, “for sticking it out with me and waiting until I was ready.”

“No problem,” said Keith. “You know I can always come again.”

Lance lifted his head so Keith could witness him roll his eyes. “I meant in life, Keith.”

“Truth be told,” said Keith slowly, choosing words to match his feelings, “I didn’t think I was waiting because I didn’t expect you to return my feelings. To me it just felt like existing.”

“Then you’re perfect without even trying as you usual,” said Lance in a mock bitter voice. “Either way, your existence means a lot to me.” He pecked Keith on the lips and sat back, pulling Keith up to a more comfortable position. “Do we gotta be heros now?”

Keith flopped right back against Lance’s sweaty chest, hugging him and wishing this moment didn’t need to end.

“Yeah, this was kinda long for a mid-mission sex break,” admitted Keith.

“We get those?”

“No, you can thank the Union for that.”

After several false starts, they managed to untangle from each other and get up. Lance skipped across the room to where Keith had abandoned his blades suit. Keith thought he was planning to bring it for Keith but instead Lance stepped into it and pulled it up, sliding his arms into the sleeves. The clasps automatically clicked together and the suit adjusted in size to fit.

“Huh. Stretchy just like the Paladin suit.”

“What are you doing?” Asked Keith

“Trying your suit on. You said I could join the Blades. Plus isn’t it cute when I wear your clothes?”

Dammit that was true. Lance was more than cute as he flipped up the hood. He was sexy.

“Keep it,” said Keith, getting up so he could put on the Garrison suit with all its separate pieces.

“Really?” asked Lance, eyes widening.

“Yeah, I’ll just pick up a new one back at base. You’ll need your own anyway.”

“Nice!” said Lance with a smile then his expression changed. “Whoa. Why does it feel like it’s sucking at my skin? What’s happening?”

“Suit is self-cleaning,” said Keith.

“I don’t like it,” said Lance, spreading out his arms.
“You’re covered in cum though. Necessary evil. Kinda miss it since so am I.”

“Um, excuse me, I seem to remember you begging to be filled with my cum so you can’t complain.”

“Weapons switch,” said Lance, when they were fully dressed in each other’s outfits. He unstrapped Keith’s Blade and brought it to him. Keith accepted his knife then Lance held out his hands outside both Keith’s hips. The red Bayard materialized in one, the Blue Bayard in the other.

“Wait...do you have the both the blue and red Bayards?”

“What?” said Lance, holding them against his chest. “Allura would’ve wanted me to have it!”

“How did you get them though? I thought they were locked in a display case at the Garrison.”

“Pidge and I stole them back and you can’t get mad cause you steal all the time! Plus I did bring you the black Bayard, but Pidge has it.”

“Pidge has it?” Keith closed his eyes and held out his hand. A moment later the black Bayard materialized in his hand.

“I do not get how to do that,” said Lance, flabbergasted.

“It’s a Black Paladin thing,” said Keith with a shrug. Then he leaned in and pecked Lance on the lips. “Let’s go be heroes, sweetie.”

*****

Keith used the still working comms to contact Acxa and find out where their crew had ended up. They rendezvoused with them outside the Great Hall. The numbers in the group had grown with Zethrid and Ezor having met up with Acxa plus the original MFE’s were with them too. Keith and Lance got a lot of looks strolling up with their suits switched.

“Wait… you two switched clothes…,” said Pidge, acting highly confused for show, “But then you would’ve had to have undressed… is it possible… guys, do you think Keith and Lance might be…?”

“They are doing sex,” said Zethrid.

“It’s true,” confirmed Ezor. “We saw them.”

“That was you two that walked in!?” gasped Lance, his embarrassment returning.

“What’s going on?” asked Keith, drawing the conversation back to the mission by addressing the MFE’s. “Why are you four on the ground? Shouldn’t you be air support?”

“Air battle’s over,” said Griffin. “Wrapped pretty quick after the Atlas transformed so we switched to ground support.”

“Wait, the Atlas transformed?” gasped Lance. “So Shiro came to space?”

“Probably felt he had to after all his kiddos went first,” said Pidge.

“He booked it back to Earth right after though,” said Nadia.

“Why are we standing around?” asked Keith, nodding to the Great Hall entrance.
“Great Hall’s been cleared,” said Acxa, “We captured the last of the Insurgents while you two were on your break.”

“Good work,” said Keith, putting away his blade and bayard.

“Now hold on,” said Lance, “We completely missed taking out the big bad?”

“Yeah,” said Romelle, “Went pretty smoothly.”

“Keith,” pouted Lance, “We took too long.”

“It’s fine, Lance.”

“Aren’t you sad you missed it?”

“I’ve done hundreds of Blade missions. If I insisted on getting the glory of the final take down each time, I’d be exhausted. We’re part of a team. Any success is everyone’s success.”

“I guess,” said Lance with a pout that made Keith want to kiss it.

“Alright, we have new orders,” said Acxa, her hand to her ear like she was listening to her comm’s earpiece. “Altea’s palace is in a similar situation to the one we just handled. They want us to send a squad to help out.”

Keith looked at those assembled and counted out the numbers in his head. “I want Hunk, Pidge, Romelle, Griffin, Ravazi, Leifsdoitir, Kinkade to head to Altea to assist. Acxa, stay here with me. Lance will take lead on this one.”

“Wait what?” sputtered Lance.

“You said you were disappointed you didn’t get to take out the big bad in battle. Here’s another chance.”

“Whoa, hold on,” said Griffin. “I have seniority.”

“Not over us,” said Hunk.

“Actually because of your time skip, I do and I far outrank McClain. Technically he’s still only considered cadet.” Griffin gestured to Lance as he said this and Keith watched Lance’s face fall in reaction.

“His rank,” said Keith, raising his authoritative voice, “is Paladin of Voltron. One of only five in the universe. Equal to my own rank. I say he takes lead and if you have a problem with that, Griffin, you can go crying to your two living parents.”

“Ohhhhh,” gasped Nadia.

“Is that an insult on Earth?” whispered Romelle to Acxa. “Not being an orphan?”

“Stop getting excited,” said Griffin, looking at his sniggering friends. “Took him nearly a decade to come up with a single insult.”

“You know Hunk and I are also the same rank as you and Lance,” pointed out Pidge.

“Either of you want to lead?” asked Keith, looking at them seriously.
“Oh no, no thanks,” said Hunk shaking his head.

“Naw. I’m good,” said Pidge with a shrug. “Just wanted it acknowledged.”

“Anyone else besides Griffin have reasons to doubt my decision. Please note being an asshole is not a real reason to question me.” Keith looked around to see faces mostly neutral beyond Griffin.

“I don’t care which human I follow,” said Zethrid. “You all look the same to me.”

“Yeah, I can only tell them apart by their top fur,” said Ezor, her eyes looking up to Lance’s hair.

“So strange only having fur on top of the head.”

“They have a second fur,” said Acxa, “a bottom fur.”

“They do?” asked Zethrid and Ezor in unison.

“It warms their sex organs.”

“But this one looked smooth,” said Ezor, pointing at Lance.

Lance blushed again, which wasn’t very leader like of him.

“Whatever. TMI,” said Griffin, “Let’s see what you got, Comeback Kid.”

Keith saw Lance hesitating so he pulled him aside and said, “Look, I’m asking a lot of you right up front. Plus it’s Altea…

“It’s not… the Altea thing. It’s the lead.”

“Trial by fire is the way the Blades initiate.”

“I figured that out when you came back the first time all black and blue,” said Lance.

“It doesn’t have to be that way for you. You want to take things slowly, you can.”

Lance thought about this. “Do you really think I should be leading by myself? Can’t you at least come with?”

“You just got rid of one crutch by leaving the farm, I’m not going to be your new crutch. You don’t need me there to guide you. You’re ready to do this. You’ve been ready to do this since the Castleship. I believe you can do this.”

“Do you only believe in me because you love me?”

Keith dropped his hand on Lance’s shoulder. “I love you because I believe in you.”

Lance looked so touched. He took a deep breath and set his face. “I won’t know until I try, right?”

“That’s my Sharpshooter,” said Keith.

As Keith leaned in to kiss him, Lance said, “You’re the best fiancé ever.” Keith’s lips froze, unable to participate in the kiss he’d initiated as he contemplated what lance had just called him.

“We’re… not engaged,” said Keith slowly, concerned that he didn’t get where this had come from.

“Sure we are,” said Lance casually as if they weren’t discussing their entire future relationship.
“When we talked on the comm earlier you told me you wanted to marry me on the farm. I don’t have any on objections to that so that makes us engaged. Well… I do object to the venue. I think we can be more original than that,” said Lance with a laugh.

“That’s not how engagements work!” snapped Keith.

“Sure they do, Colorado,” said Lance, giving Keith a peck on the cheek then leaning back out of punching range.

“But I didn’t ask you and you didn’t ask me!”

“Waste of time,” said Lance, stepping further back, heading towards the group. “We’re obviously going to be together forever.” Then Lance turned to address the others. “Alright Team, lets move out! Altea isn’t going to save itself!”

Lance took off at a jog, looking happy and cocky and confident just like his usual self. The others followed him like it was natural. Keith wondered if Lance has any clue where he was going, but he pulled up a map on the Blade suit’s wrist console, already working the suit like it belonged to him.

“You’re not going?” said Keith, noticing Romelle had stayed behind.

“I don’t go to Altea. I’ve never had a connection to it. Plus it just reminds me of Allura and that still hurts.”

“The one that got away…,” sighed Acxa.

Keith was lost thinking Acxa has misunderstood, but then Romelle’s face confirmed it.

Oh.

Ohhhhhp

“Once we were all in the same boat,” said Acxa gesturing to the three of them with a deep frown. Her moods were usually neutral with a hint of snapping at Keith but this whole mission she’d seemed down and he doubted it was over Daibazaal being in danger. “But Keith’s one came back. Mine wouldn’t do that.”

“Yes, I would,” came a fourth voice.

The three of them turned and raised their weapons as a precaution then lowered them when they saw a familiar face in a Garrison suit.

“Veronica?” breathed Acxa, staring at Lance’s sister. “You’re… you’re here.”

“Yeah,” said Roni, shifting on her feet. “I’m here too.”

“Wait, did you teleport with Pidge and Lance?” asked Keith.

“No, I took a ship,” said Veronica, clearly insulted. “I requested one to shuttle me to the Atlas. I told those idiots I’d fly them myself, but they didn’t want to wait and they were dead set on using their ‘Kosmo beacon.’ They were so hyper over it so I just left them to it. I did drag Shiro with me though because retirement or not, this was a Atlastron job.”

“Why come to space at all?” asked Acxa, stepping forward.

“Because Lance really inspired me,” said Veronica. “So I quit my desk job and I transferred back to
“Oh, good for you,” said Acxa with no emotion behind her voice.

“Acxa, they’re bringing in a third generation of MFE planes. They’re training potential pilots right now. I told the Captain you could probably fly one of those without training and he said the position is yours if you want it. Well, I think he said that… his exact words were “bi boh boh bii bii’ which I didn’t fully understand…”

“W-why would you get me a job on the Atlas?”

Veronica’s face softened. “Because I’m in love with you and I want to share a life with you and I want to start right now.”

“Veronica,” gasped Acxa, she took another step forward then hesitated. She glanced between Keith and Veronica. He’d never seen her look uncertain before. “I’m not sure I can just leave the Blades.”

Keith scratched his head and shifted on his feet. “I think I just hired your replacement so…” Keith nodded towards Veronica.

A mix of emotion passed over Acxa’s face then she smiled at Keith, turned away, and ran into Veronica’s arms. They kissed and Keith has this strange sensation of knowing exactly what they were feeling. Especially when the kisses heated up.

Romelle sighed loudly and dropped her back against the wall. Sensing her annoyance Keith looked at Veronica and said, “Hey sis, throne rooms empty if you need some privacy. Acxa can unlock it.”

“Thanks bro,” said Veronica, tugging on her girlfriend’s hand.

Acxa stayed put though. With a grin on her face she leaned in to whisper something in Veronica’s ear.

Veronica nodded then cleared her throat and said, “Romelle, you wanna come with?”

Romelle lifted her head to look at them. “Come?”

“Join us,” said Acxa offering out her hand. Veronica mirrored the gesture.

“Can I… do that?” asked Romelle, looking at Keith, “Go off during a mission to do sex?” He noticed her feet were already inching in their direction.

Keith shrugged. “You can in my squad. Go. Be slutty.”

Romelle kicked up her feet to run towards Acxa and Romelle.

“Get your sexy Sailor Moon ass over here, girl,” cheered Veronica as Romelle caught up and took their hands. Giggling the three of them took off toward the throne room. Keith heard Veronica’s voice drift down the hall saying, “Just wait until you see this cluster thing Acxa does,” before they were out of sight.

Then it was just Keith left to do a sweep of the palace. But he didn’t mind because him and Lance were always in the same place even when they were apart.

A flash of blue caught his eye, drawing his attention to the comm attached to the belt of the
Garrison suit. Lance was calling him?

“What’s wrong?” asked Keith, his voice steeped in concern over getting called so soon after Lance had left.

“Nothing,” said Lance, his voice happy. “We’re in transit, but I wanted to ask you something.”

“Okay,” said Keith, assuming it was about the mission.

“Do you want to stay in touch over the comms the whole time? Like not hang-up ever?”

“Lance, I told you, you can do this alone. You don’t need my –”

“Not asking for your help. I just want to keep talking to you all day just like Jim and Pam did after they got engaged. They wore those tiny bluetooths…”

“Are Jim and Pam friends of yours?”

“Keeeeeith,” whined Lance, which usually meant Keith had missed a reference.

“Laaaaaance,” he whined right back, “I’d love to stay on the line with you.”

“Good because I miss you already.”

“I miss you too, Sharpshooter.”

Chapter End Notes

Summary song is Stuck in the Middle with You by Stealers Wheel

Spotify Playlist for Save a Lion, Ride a Cowboy

Join my Klance facebook group Klance Transformative Works or The Voltron Fanfic-ers group Please answer the membership questions! You can also find me on tumblr

My Tiktok is @chillysuperpunk

Thank you so much for reading this novel length fic and sticking with me! Much love!

xoxoxoxBBBK

p.s. One more chapter to go!
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Two rangers, off to see the universe
There's such a lot of worlds to see
They're after the same rainbow's end, waitin' 'round the bend
Keith's Altean friend, moon river, and Bii Boh Bi

Chapter Notes

Posting this is so bittersweet. I'm so sad this is over! This chapter is all good feelings though. Just fluff and humour and smut so enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So this is the palace grounds,” said Lance. “Probably one the most beautiful spots on Altea… Actually, I don’t know that. I’ve really only ever spent time here, but when I try to picture the rest of Altea I just picture more palaces if that makes sense? Like an entire planet covered in palaces? Just palace after palace after palace – you know what? It can’t be just palaces. Keith’s spent more time here than me. Keith, what’s the rest of Altea like?”

“Not palaces.”

Lance gave Keith an irritated look then said, “Thank you for that elaborate explanation, Keith. Oh! Juniberry fields too. They’ve got those, but I guess we also have one so it’s not that interesting. Anyway, what do you think?”

“Hmmmm,” said Pop-pop, doing a full three-sixty scan of landscape. When he’d completed his turn he nodded sagely and said, “I like Daibazaal better.”

“What?!?” shrieked Lance.

“Hmm same,” agreed Lance’s mom. “It has a better vibe, you know?”

“I agree,” said Krolia.

“Well, of course you do,” said Lance, “But my parents are Altean.”

“Yes, but I’m thinking we want a more fun planet for the reception,” said Lance’s mom.

“Reception?” questioned Keith, his ears perking up.

“But wouldn’t Altea make a better backdrop for the photos?” asked Lance, his tone pressing that everyone should agree with him, but on what?

“What photos?” asked Keith.
“Here is an idea,” said Kolivan, chiming. “Perhaps a ceremony on Altea followed by a reception on Daibazaal would allow you to, as the human’s say, have ownership of your sugar bread and ingest it as well. You would be able to take the photos in this… unnecessarily colourful backdrop then have a party in a location with a better vibration.”

“I like that,” said Krolia. “Altean wedding receptions are so formal and drab.”

“Wait, hold on,” said Keith, shaking his head, “Are you all planning our wedding?!”

“We,” said Lance, pointing around at everyone including Keith, “are planning our wedding. Chime in at any time. Like, you have yet to share an opinion.”

“How can I have an opinion on wedding that isn’t happening?”

“Rude, Keith,” said Lance, getting uppity, “I bring my parents all the way to space to look at potential wedding locations and you try to call off the wedding?”

“First, I thought you brought them out here for vacation. Second, I never proposed to you and you definitely never proposed to me so there is no wedding to call off!”

“Why do you need to have a proposal?” asked Krolia. “Why can’t one person suggest marriage then the other agrees? Engagement commenced.”

“That is exactly what a proposal is,” said Keith.

“We did do that,” said Lance. “You told me you wanted to get married.”

“That’s not a question!”

“What is this? Jeopardy? You didn’t answer in the form of a question so our engagement doesn’t count?!”

“Exactly! There is no engagement!”

Lance sighed and rubbed his temples. When he looked back at Keith, he gave him a dismissive wave then turned away in a huff. “I literally can’t anymore. Can someone else deal with him?”

Lance walked away, leaving Keith frustrated. Kolivan, Krolia, and his mom followed after Lance, but Pop-pop stayed behind.

“I thought he was joking about us being engaged,” blurted out Keith.

“Maybe at one point he was,” said Pop-pop with a shrug, “but most jokes have some truth to them.”

“What does that even mean?”

“Look, I think I understand what’s frustrating you. You thought you’d take some time to just enjoy dating without stressing over the next step.”

“Exactly,” said Keith, “I don’t want to put pressure on us. It’s only been a few months since Lance joined the Blades.”

“And you want to know for sure if this is the right fit.”

Keith looked at Pop-pop with all seriousness. “It’s the right fit.”
Yet you’re unsure if there’s a future here. If Lance is the right choice.”

“Of course it’s yes to all those things! I’m not questioning any of that.”

“Oh okay,” said Pop-pop, nodding knowingly, “so you don’t believe in marriage.”

“Not the institution of marriage, no,” said Keith, feeling a rant coming on. “I don’t see how a legal document could make my relationship any more valid than it already is and don’t get me started on the complication of intergalactic marriage laws. All these planets with individual rules in individual countries, because like Earth, it’s not like every planet has just one culture and tradition. And then half the planets have ceremonies for marriage, but no laws are involved. Then there are planets and cultures that don’t recognize marriage at all. It is just a construct.”

“Oof, okay,” said Pop-pop, looking uncomfortable. “You better let me break that one to Lance.” He turned to go, but Keith held out his hand to stop him.

“No, but the thing is. I’m not a fan of the concept of ‘legal marriage…’ but the idea of having a party where our friends and family get to witness us promise each other we’ll be together… that I really like.”

“So then you’re not agreeing you’re engaged really because he didn’t wait for you to ask?” Pop-pop tilted his head inquisitively. “That part of the tradition you want to keep?”

Keith shrugged and looked down. “Would’ve been nice.”

“Keith, my boy,” said Pop-pop, dropping an arm around his shoulders, “This I get. Rosa didn’t wait for me to ask her either. Popped the question herself on our third date and yes, it was sudden and I was a little miffed I didn’t get to be the one who proposed, but… when it’s right, it’s right.”

“I guess that’s true,” said Keith, “I want to spend my life with Lance. I just… wanted to make a bigger deal out of getting engaged.”

“Oh Keith, you may have missed it, but Lance is already making a huge deal about you being engaged, with you involved or not. And, if you keep saying over and over that you wanted there to be a proposal well…”

“Well what?”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if he’ll pop the question himself if you don’t get with the program.”

“But… wait… he can’t just…” Then Keith’s feet were kicking up without instruction and he was running after the little group wandering the grounds.

* 

“Personally I like a good topiary,” said Lance, “but what if we got them trimmed to look like Keith and I.”

“Brilliant,” said his mom.

“I don’t know if Coran will go for that,” said Kolivan.

“Question,” said Krolia, “Can we bribe Coran and if that doesn’t work, just threaten him into making any changes in the grounds we see fit?”

“LANCE!”
Lance turned to see Keith running up to them. Lance was still mad at him so he kept on his best ‘oh, it’s you?’ face (despite the fact that a big part of him still went ‘fuck, I love him so much!’ every time he saw Keith’s face.)

“What is it?”

Keith stopped in his tracks, looking scattered and anxious.

“What is it?” Lance asked again, this time with concern.

“Uh, can I, ask you something?”

Keith… ask Lance something? Oh my god, is it finally happening?

“Of course.”

“Do you wanna…,” said Keith, his eyes shifting to the others. Was he not going to get down on one knee for this? “Uh, can I take your family out tonight?”

“Huh?”

“You included. I just… I thought of this great bar I know on Altea that I think you’re all going to love.”

“Oh, yeah of course,” said Lance.

“Cool. Um, continue what you’re doing,” said Keith and then he walked off.

Okay… what?

“So continue wedding planning?” Lance yelled after him. “Because that’s what we’re doing!”

Keith just kept going. Huh.

********

Keith pushed his way through the crowded bar, following the sound of this boyfriend’s voice.

“So basically I’m surrounded, right? And they think they’ve disarmed me, but then… BOOM second bayard! Never saw it coming!”

Keith’s boots scraped along hay strew floorboards as he peaked around ten gallon hats. He finally spotted his love, Lance, sitting on top of the bar and holding court with a group of fans, which were a mix of Alteans and tourists from other planets.

“Red bayard, Altean boardsword form - which actually makes sense due to the whole Altean DNA thing - then SLASH SLASH.” Lance swung his arm around like it was a sword as he reenacted the battle. “Took all of them out. Done before dinner time.”

“Are you still retelling the story of how you won the battle of Altea?” asked Keith, maneuvering his way into the group.

“Single-handedly won,” corrected Lance. “But no, this was our last mission on Cenzar Five. Where I had to go it alone after my partner fell in a Cenzarian Cole Pit.”

“Pits are easy to fall into,” snapped Keith. “You can’t always see them in the dark!”
“It just so happens,” said Lance, addressing his followers again while ignoring the light of his life, “that the ‘having a second Bayard move’ works more often than not.”

The followers responded with a mix of oh’s and ah’s.

“Okay, well if you’re not signing autographs next,” said Keith, “Your family requests you join us at our actual table.”

“I guess I can give y’all a few minutes of my very valuable time.” Lance hopped down to a chorus of disappointed sighs. “I’ll be back for selfies later,” he assured his fans then he stepped forward and pecked Keith on the lips.

“Having fun?” asked Keith.

“When am I not?” replied Lance with a grin.

Keith had lived through times when Lance was definitely not having fun. Those times of low moods and self-doubt had even visited recently, but his boyfriend had worked so hard to rediscover himself, that he deserved to have his good moods rounded up to ‘always.’

They grasped hands and Keith led him back through the bar since Lance was too busy giving people finger guns as they called out his name in greeting to focus on where he was going. They weaved their way through tables dressed with red-and-white-checkered tablecloths and passed under skulls of large and strange alien creatures mounted to the walls. They passed by the jukebox, which wouldn’t take anyone’s credits as payment that Marco had called, in a moment of pure frustration, “disappointing” and “possibly in need of maintenance.”

There was a press of people on the dance floor in front of the small stage where a slug-like alien was bellowing out the words to a song in a language so strange Keith’s translator chip wouldn’t even able to pick it up. Mindlessly, he scratched the implant behind his ear that he’d had inserted his first day at the Garrison. ‘It’s a universal translator,’ Shiro had explained to him, ‘it can translate anyone language you hear spoken to you in real time.’ Little did the inventor realize it would prove to be literally universal (well, about 95% universal,) but then again it was Holt tech.

Behind the slug was a screen playing random stock footage, (which when you have an entire universe to gather stock footage from can get really fucking random) with symbols representing words in that language highlighted on the screen. Keith tore his eyes away from the bizarre alien karaoke and spotted something else to stare at.

“Coran’s looking awfully comfortable here,” said Keith, nodding to Coran who was leaning against the bar at the far side of the restaurant, one boot kicked out. He was wearing jeans, a denim shirt, and a jean jacket.

“Coran was always country,” said Lance, “We just never put him in the right context.”

“He’s rockin’ the Canadian tuxedo,” said Keith, admiring the denim on denim on denim. “Maybe better than you do.”

“Shut up,” murmured Lance.

Coran was supervising Nadia and Silvio as they drew on placemats with crayons, but when he spotted Keith and Lance, he gave them an enthusiastic wave. The two of them looked at each other then Lance gave Keith’s hand a tug, confirming he wanted to detour to say hi to Coran.

“Hello Number Four, Number Three,” said Coran as they approached. “Congratulations on the
engagement.”

“Who’s engaged?” asked Keith, feigning obliviousness.

“We are, Keith. Keep up,” said Lance before turning back to Coran. “You know you’re the one person I was nervous about announcing our relationship to.”

“Really? Why’s that?”

Lance’s shoulders hiked up like they did when he got nervous. He rubbed the back of his neck and said, “I don’t know. I thought maybe you’d expect me to love and mourn Allura forever and never move on…”

“Wha - ? How - ? Stay in love with Allura?!” snapped Coran, raising up on his tippy toes like he did when he was truly frazzled. “You weren’t even good enough to date her, let alone be her abandoned love in the mortal realm, bidding your time until you die and meet her in the After! She is not waiting for you, she’ll definitely meet someone better there!”

“Not good enough?” cried Lance, hand twitching in Keith’s grasp. “How am I not good enough?!”

“You’re not Altean! And you’re not a Royal! And you’re certainly not an Altean Royal!”

“I’m confused,” said Keith, “Did Ancient Altea have more than one kingdom? Because your stories really made it seem like Alfor was the one running the entire planet.”

Meanwhile, Lance was sputtering like he was struggling to transfer his outrage from inside, out. “N-not Altean?!” he finally yelled. “Then what are these?” he asked, pointing to his marks with his free hand. “I have Altean heritage!”

“Yes, well, so does Shiro and to be perfectly frank he was always more of a match for Allura,” said Coran, twisting his mustache between his fingers.

“But Shiro’s gay!”

“I don’t know what that word means.”

“It means he dates men!”

Coran thrust his arms towards Keith. “So do you!” Keith had to suck his lips into his mouth and bite down to keep from laughing.

“He’s bisexual,” said Nadia, not looking up from her drawing.

“Exactly,” said Lance, pointing to his niece, “and… and… AND how can you still disapprove of me dating Allura? You’re the one who dressed me up in those courting vestments!”

“That’s another thing,” snapped Coran. “I worked hard on those and Allura told me you didn’t even wear them to the date!”

“Because they looked stupid!”

“They did look stupid,” agreed Keith.

“So you saw him in them?” asked Coran.

“Yeah, they were so bad I had to go find Keith and show him,” said Lance, matter-of-factly.
“Oh well, that settles it then,” said Coran, suddenly relaxing.

“Settles what?” asked Lance, edge still on because fights don’t usually end that abruptly.

“You didn’t wear them to meet with Allura, you wore them to meet with Keith so according to Royal Altean custom, you never officially began a relationship with Allura.”

“That’s not true! We kissed and everything!”

“They did,” said Silvio. “I saw them. It was gross.”

“Uncle Lance kisses Uncle Keith with tongue,” countered Nadia. “It’s way grosser.”

“The presenting of yourself in courting vestments to another is the signal of your intent to, well, court them,” Coran explained, patiently. “So no, you weren’t dating Allura. Technically you were dating Keith.”

Keith let a sputter of a laugh go this time.

“That is not how it works on Earth! I only changed for the date because I wanted to look nice for Allura. Those clothes looked ridiculous”

“Of course they did!” said Coran. “The entire point of the courting vestments is to humble yourself in front of your potential mate to show vulnerability and if they still accept you then you become mated.”

The laugh finally escaped Keith. He couldn’t hold it back, though he tried, but his attempts to not laugh just resulted in him doubling over.

“What is so funny?” snapped Lance, still on the defensive.

“Y – you went looking ah – all over for me,” sniggered Keith, “just to show me…”

“I wanted your opinion!”

“On the clothes you didn’t even wear…,” said Nadia.

“Shh! Go back to your drawing!”

“You c – you coulda just texted me a photo, buh - but you climbed up the side of Black…” Keith had to bite down for a moment to keep his laugh from making it too hard for him to finish his sentence “… wearing pots and pans…” Keith lost it, shaking with laughter.

“I just… I wanted to…” Keith could hear Lance’s voice was all worked up, but his vision was blurry from tears in his eyes so he couldn’t see Lance’s meltdown. “You know what! Next time I blow off prepping for my date to spend hours searching for you and scale the side of a Lion as tall as a building, have the decency to confess that you’re in love with me instead of letting me go on the date!”

“Oh, you poor repressed boy,” said Keith, wrapping his arms around Lance’s shoulders. “You’re right. This is totally on me.”

“Well, I’m glad that’s all settled,” said Coran, proudly. “Keith was always your boyfriend and that’s the one dark stain removed from Allura’s dating history.”

“What about Lotor?” shrieked Lance. “He was way worse than me!”
“Ah, yes, but he was an Altean Royal you see.”

“If you moustache a stupid question,” said Silvio, “you moust get a stupid answer.”

Nadia giggled then said, “You moust learn from your moustake.”

“This is so insulting,” murmured Lance.

“I know, baby,” said Keith, rubbing his boyfriend’s shoulder. “Let’s get you a drink so you can drunk it all better.”

“I thought Coran liked me,” whined Lance as they got out of earshot.

“Coran loves you. He’s just protective of Allura. She was like a daughter to him.”

“Like I wasn’t good enough…”

“Babe, stop wallowing about wanting to be the right fit for someone you can’t be with and oh yeah, you’re currently with me.”

“Sorry,” laughed Lance, leaning over to kiss Keith on the cheek. “You know when I get the opportunity to feel bad about myself, I just go for it.”

“You do love a good self-esteem spiral.”

“Hey!!” there was a chorus of greetings from the table they’d just reached. It was not however, their family’s table but –

“I guess we should make the rounds while we’re still sober,” said Lance.

Keith agreed and they went to go say hi and hug their other guests. The Atlas had just wrapped a mission two systems over so Keith was able to invite all their close friends tonight. Lance gave Pidge and Hunk from behind hugs, wrapping himself around them both while they stayed in their seats.

Shiro stood when Keith got near and scooped him into a hug. Keith’s return hug was one handed, however, as he still had hold of Lance’s hand who was distracted talking to Shay.

“Proud of you,” he said. Keith could hear Shiro’s voice rumbling in his chest.

“You say that every time I see.”

“And it’s true every time I see you,” he chuckled. He stepped back to pat Keith on the shoulders. Something about the crinkle around Shiro’s eye made Keith hug him all over again with his one free arm.

“I’m proud of you too,” said Keith.

“Oh, does it go both ways now?” chuckled Shiro.

“It’s nice,” said Keith, softly, “to see you out here.”

“Well, I’m just consulting on the Atlas for now.”

“Con-sul-ting,” said Curtis from his seat, using big exaggerated air quotes. “It’s his fancy way of pretending he’s still retired.”
“Hey! The floaty arm is back,” said Lance, poking at the space between Shiro’s shoulder and arm, you know, where typically an elbow would go.

“He’s allowed to wear it on special occasions,” said Curtis. “That’s our agreement that I’m very much regretting.”

“He’s mad because I grabbed his ass from across the bar.”

“I didn’t realize it was you!” snapped Curtis. “I nearly punched a Taujeerian!”

“I always thought the floaty arm was cool,” said Lance.

Keith looked at Shiro and said, “See, now you know it’s in bad taste,” making Shiro and Curtis laugh and Lance scowl.

Suddenly Keith was being pressed into a new hug and he couldn’t figure out by who until he saw the short ponytail.

“Oh hey, Matt, uh that’s a… that’s a nice long hug.”

“You hugged me last time I saw you. We have a hugging relationship now.”

Keith let out an awkward laugh. “Sure okay.”

There were Blades at the next table Keith wanted to say hi to. Lance was busy talking to the Holts so they just stretched their arms out to full length so they could keep holding hands while chatting at different tables. A server had to duck under their arms.

“This is a good crowd,” said Lance, when Keith was finally able to drag him away from his conversation. “The only thing missing is a celebrity guest.”

“We have one,” said Keith, squeezing Lance’s hand.

“Yeah, but I already know Bii Boh Bi. I meant like a new celebrity I can become friends with and maybe get invited to party on their yacht.”

“I know and I meant the celebrity is Loverboy Lance.”

Lance laughed. “Well, I already know me. But I don’t own a yacht.”

“We should get you a yacht.”

“We should!”

“There you two are,” said Lance’s mom as they sat down at their family’s table. “We ordered without you, but you can probably still put in an order if you chase the server down.”

“What looks good?” asked Lance, flipping open his menu with the name of the bar ‘IT’S AMERICA!’ written in bubble letters across the plastic cover.

“It all looks weird,” said Luis.

“What’s a Cactus Fried Tractor Tot?” asked Lance, reading it off the menu.

“Order it and find out,” said Keith.
“Every dish is like a country themed word jumble,” said Jason. “Roadkill Apple Steaks… Upside Down Tumbleweed Fly Soup.”

“He kept hold of his menu just to complain about it,” said Rachel with an eye roll.

“It makes no sense,” continued Jason, listing more dishes from the menu in his hands. “Ragtag Turtle Pie... Non-dairy Dairy Milk Cheese Curd Bites feating. Milk… Watering Hole Mashed Pork Crackers…

“You gonna open that menu?” asked Lance, glancing down at the closed menu in front of Keith.

“Naw. I’ll just order off the Jason.”

“You can’t,” said Rachel. “I’m cutting him off.” With that she snatched his menu away.

“The food might be weird, but the drinks are amazing,” gushed Lisa, holding up her drink. “Look at this! They have to serve it in a sippy cup because the liquid floats to the top! How does that even work?”

Through the clear plastic of the cup Keith could see the liquid at the top instead of the bottom. It gave him flashbacks to the Castleship pool.

“And it glows in the dark!” continued Lisa

“She found that out by putting it under her shirt and peeking down her cleavage,” said Luis. “She’s also already had six of these.”

“You should probably slow down there, Lise,” said Jason.

“Shut up, Jason!” snapped Lisa. “Nobody fucking asked you!” Then Lisa eyes went wide and she grabbed Rachel’s hand. “Oh my god, that was pure habit. I’m so sorry, Rach. I forgot he’s your boyfriend now.”

“Tell him off all you want,” said Rachel with a shrug. “He’s not my boyfriend.”

“Noooo,” said her mom. “He is just the boy you are sleeping with that you brought on our family vacation”

“Yeah exactly,” agreed Rachel as if the previous statement contained no sarcasm.

“We are very pleased Jason could join us,” said Pop-pop, returning to the table with a tray of shot glasses. A cheer of “shots shots shots!” erupted amongst the siblings.

“Keith, it’s tequila that gets Galra drunk, right?” asked Pop-pop, handing Keith the first shot.

“I can’t speak for all Galra, but it gets me drunk.”

“Good. Have two,” said Pop-pop, placing a second beside Keith.

“Lisa want two also please,” said Lisa, reaching out like a baby.

“I feel like you’ve had a lot already,” said Pop-pop, considering this.

“Oh, let her have it,” said Mrs. McClain. “Coran said he’d watch Silvio and Nadia over night at the palace so she can let loose a little.”
“Lisa doesn’t do loose a little,” said Luis.

“To be fair, none of us do,” said Veronica, appearing beside Pop-pop and snatching a shot.

“Thought you were sitting over yonder,” said Lance, nodding to the table with Aexa, Krolia, Kolivan, and Bii-Boh-Bi, and various lesbians.

“Over yonder doesn’t have shots. I was summoned by our family’s battle cry.”

“Shots shots shots?” asked Keith.

“Now you’re getting it bro.” She cheered Keith and they downed theirs shots together. Veronica then looked at Lance and said, “We on?”

“We so on,” answered Lance.

“Cool,” said Roni before prancing back over to her girlfriend.

“What’s on?” asked Keith.

“Oh, you heard that?”

“ Heard that thing you just said right beside me? Yes, I heard that.”

“Nice to know you’re paying attention to me at all times,” said Lance, giving Keith’s hand a squeeze.

“Okay,” said Marco, suddenly. He held up a freshly rolled joint and asked, “Who wants to try Altean weed?”

“Me!” said Lisa, jumping to her feet.

“Why not?” said Mrs. McClain, standing up.

“Alright mom,” chuckled Keith. She smiled at Keith and patted his head on the way past. The three of them left together. Jason shook his head as they went.

“How is there weed on Altea?” asked Jason. “Also, how are we in a country bar on another planet?”

“Earth culture is kitschy,” said Keith. “You’ll see it replicated all over the universe.”

“But how?” pressed Jason. “How are they copying us? Especially before we became universal. And how do they have peanuts here?” he asked, picking up the bowl from the center of the table then he set it down and gestured to the stage. “How do they have karaoke? And how does Altea even exist when it was destroyed 10,000 years ago?”

“Okay,” said Rachel, grabbing Jason’s wrists so he’d stop flailing them about. “I am so close to having Kosmo teleport you back to Earth so you better chill the fuck out or you’re getting disinvited from this vacation.”

Lance was ignoring Jason’s outburst and studying his menu, but Keith wasn’t done with him and his little side convo with Veronica. “So what exactly is on?”

“Are you still on about that?”
“You better not be planning to propose to me.”

Lance slapped his menu down and looked at Keith. “How could I be planning to propose to you,” he raised his voice louder, speaking clearly enough for the whole table to hear, “WHEN WE ARE ALREADY ENGAGED!”

“No, we are not,” countered Keith.

“I thought this dinner was to celebrate your engagement,” said Luis. “Did I miss something?”

“We’re missing an agreement to get married,” said Keith. Jason laughed at this. “I wouldn’t laugh. One day you’ll be enjoying your casual sex with a Sanchez-McClain then the next day the whole family will be planning your wedding.”

Keith watched as Jason’s face blanched.

“Okay, first of all,” said Rachel, attitude fully turned up, “you do not tell my boyfrie – er - non-boyfriend where our relation – er - non-relationship is heading! Second,” she pointed between Jason and Keith, “don’t pretend either of you wouldn’t be fully psyched to marry into our cool as fuck family.”

“I am not disputing that,” said Keith, matter-of-factly.

“Then what’s the fuckin’ problem?” asked Rachel. Without giving Keith a chance to answer she went on, “You’re our collective fiancé now. Deal with it.”

“Hey!” said Lance, slapping his hand down on the table, “You’re not marrying Keith too!”

“I do what I want!” yelled Rachel.

“Dad!” snapped Lance, turning to Pop-pop who was distracted, leaning out of his chair to speak with Shiro at the next table.

“Yes?” Both Shiro and Pop-pop answered in unison because Lance was in fact looking at both. Lance blushed, but kept his outrage and said, “Tell your daughter she’s not also marrying Keith!”

“Daughter?” repeated Shiro. “I don’t have a daughter. I have a Pidge. Did you mean Pidge?” Shiro cleared his throat and said, “Pidge, you can’t marry Keith.”


“THANK YOU, LURG!” a loud voice, interrupted the inevitable Lance implosion that misunderstanding was sure to cause. Everyone at both tables turned to the stage to see the karaoke host (dressed in an outfit that looked exactly like Woody’s in Toy Story) wave the slug-like alien offstage. “Thank you for that varga long rendition of…,” the following words just sounded like throat gargles. The crowd applauded politely. “Next up we have,” the host looked down at a note card, “Lants and…

“Lants?” mouthed Keith.

“Ver…Verrrrr… I can’t read this name.”

Veronica dropped down into a crouch between Lance and Keith. “Ready, Lants?”

“Ready, Verrrrr!” he answered, rolling that ‘R’ with that sexy tongue of his. Lance was out of his
seat and heading to the stage before Keith could process what was happening.

“Ohhhh my god,” said Rachel, “Lisa can’t miss this. Jason, go get Marco, Lisa, and mom!”

“Get them yourself,” said Jason.

“No, you get them and then stay outside because I’m done with you.”

“I will go get them,” said Luis, standing up.

“Keith, what is happening?” asked Acxa, appearing by his side.

“Oh, I’m guessing they’re about to sing.”

“But then everyone present will judge their abilities.”

“Yes.”

“And if they perform poorly, they’ll be shamed and as their romantic partners, we will feel second hand shame.”

“They’ll do fine,” said Keith.

“How do you know that?” asked Acxa, truly concerned.

“Ac, have you tried tequila yet?” asked Keith, turning to the second shot he never took. He handed it to her and said, “Drink this then go order ten more.”

Acxa narrowed her eyes and said, “Your problem solving skills have greatly weakened,” but she drank the shot anyway then winced. “I hate it. I want more.”

“Bar by the dance floor,” said Keith, getting up too. All four tables their extended crew had taken over were rising to head to the dance floor anyway.

The song began with a keys and a strumming guitar. The images on the screen behind Lance and Veronica were random stock footage from another planet accompanied by coloured dashes counting down the start to the opening line. Veronica and Lance looked comfortable onstage, dressed in their tight jeans and button-up shirts, cowboy boots, and hats (of course since it was the dress code of this restaurant which is why Keith was also in cowboy boots and red plaid button up and no other reason!)

“This one goes out to our favourite Galrans,” said Lance.

“Yeah, this is for Keith and Acxa,” added Veronica.

“Oh no,” said Acxa, “We’ve been named.”

Onstage Lance sang, “When you’re gone!”

Veronica joined in to sing and their friends erupted cheering so loud it nearly drowned them out.

“I've been wanderin' around the house all night
Wondering what the hell to do
Yeah, I'm trying to concentrate but all I can think of is you”

“Oh my god!” cried Lisa, barrelling onto the dance floor with Marco right behind her.
“They have English karaoke songs?!” they gasped in unison.

“We need a songbook!” said Marco.

Lisa gripped his arm and said, “We need all the songbooks!”

“This is typical,” said Rachel, drawing Keith’s attention to her. “They didn’t even think to ask me to join them.”

“Good. I don’t want you singing to me,” said Jason, standing beside her.

“I was never going to sing to you!” said Rachel, sticking a finger in Jason’s face. He knocked that finger away and then… then simultaneously grabbed each other and started making out.

Yep, that tracked and was Keith’s cue to move far away so he could focus on his beautiful Lance onstage and not the smacking sounds those two made when they kissed.

“Baby when you're gone I realize I'm in love
Days go on and on and the nights just seem so long
Even food don't taste that good, drink ain't doing what it should
Things just feel so wrong baby when you're gone”

“I did as you instructed.” Acxa’s voice was loud enough to be heard over the music. “I purchased ten tequilas.”

“That’s goo – whoa!” Keith cut himself off when he saw the weighted down tray she was holding nearly effortlessly in one hand. “That’s ten bottles, not shots, but okay.”

“You didn’t specify a size.”

Keith’s eyes widened as he watched Shiro’s floating arm glide over, grasp a bottle, and then retreat back to where ever the man was in the bar.

“And then there were nine,” mumbled Keith.

“Huh?” said Acxa, looking to her tray after having missed the bottle heist.

“Yeet!” chirped Pidge, reaching up to snatch a bottle off the tray. They turned and called out, “Hunk, look what I just scored!”

“Eight.”

Suddenly Acxa was converged upon by Lisa, Krolia, Rachel, Razavi, and both Lance’s parent as they grabbed bottles before taking off just as quickly.

“What the bitch?” groaned Acxa. “That was my bitter drink.”

“We only need one each,” said Keith, grabbing a bottle for himself. Acxa dropped the tray off on top of the cowboy hat of a short alien nearby then they cracked open their bottles and took swigs.

“Ah this is torture, this is pain
It feels like I'm gonna go insane
I hope you're coming back real soon 'cause I don't know what to do”

The dance floor was bumping with people and aliens alike. Keith was moving to the music without really meaning to, but apparently when he drank, he could dance… kinda. Acxa was stark still in
contrast to what was happening around her.

“They have a coordinated dance,” said Acxa, pointing to the remainder of the Sanchez-McClain-Dubois who had naturally broken into a line dance.

“They do that,” agreed Keith.

“You seem less coordinated,” said Acxa.

“At least I’m trying. This is your family too now, Acxa. So drink up and let yourself go loose. Best way to get through it.”

“That’s what she said.”

Keith stopped dancing to stare. He’d heard that phrase fall out of Lance’s mouth about a thousand times. He never expected Acxa to make that joke. “Last night,” continued Acxa, sensing Keith’s confusion, “Veronica said that before we did sex. She was right though.” Acxa took several gulps from the tequila bottle. Ah see, the lowered gag reflex of a Galra Halfling…

“That narrows your focus,” said Keith, directly her attention to the stage. “Then we can just focus on how adorable they are.”

“She is so shitting adorable,” said Acxa, gazing up at Veronica then she threw her fist up in the air and shouted, “Woo! Go Roni!”

Whoa. Acxa’s tolerance might be lower than Keith’s…

“Things just feel so wrong
Baby when you’re gone”

*

“Yeah, when you’re gone, babe!” sang Lance.

The video screen behind him began the countdown on a hefty instrumental break. He squinted past the stage lights and spotted the mullet he’d recognize anywhere (though to be fair it was considerably less mullet-like now that Lance had cut and styled it for the evening.) Suddenly he just wanted to be near his love so he jumped off the stage to go see him. Veronica seemed to have the same idea, dropping off the stage and into the crowd after him.

Lance had to politely manoeuvre through his fans and friends before he reached Keith. He found him dancing (of all things) with Acxa, both of them with a full two-six of tequila in their hands.

“May I cut in?” asked Lance.

In a flash Acxa had her blade out and activated. “I’d like to see you try,” she said, advancing on him.

Lance threw up his hands in surrender. “I was just asking if I could dance with Keith!”

“Oh,” she said simply, deactivating her blade and stepping aside.

“Hey,” said Keith, swinging his arms around Lance’s shoulders. “Shouldn’t you be up there?”

“You’re not paying enough attention to me so I had to come tell you to focus.”
“Patience yields focus,” said Keith with a big head bob and Lance realized he was a bit tipsy already.

“Yes, sweetie, patience yields focus, but I want you to look at me.”

“You have the whole bar’s attention,” argued Keith, swaying along with Lance.

“But I want your specific attention.” When Keith made a dismissive sound, Lance added, “Everything I have ever done since I met you has been to get your attention.”

“You have my attention,” said Keith, leaning in to kiss Lance.

Lance recognized his musical cue and realized he should be singing, not kissing but then… the song didn’t seem so important right now.

“Oh baby, when you’re gone,” sang Veronica, taking over Lance’s part. She was mere steps away, slow dancing with Acxa while still singing into her mic.

Lance thought he could stick with Keith and sing Mel C’s part, but then he felt his mic ripped out of his hand.

“When you’re gone!” sang Rachel, now holding Lance’s microphone.

“Hey!” he spat, pushing Keith away so he could lunge for his mic.

“I realize I’m in love,” sang Veronica.

“So in love,” sang Rachel, backing out of Lance’s reach.

Veronica followed Rachel and Lance back to the stage, singing the chorus while Lance tried to snatch his microphone back to no avail. This was his big declaration of love, dagnabbit!

“Even food don’t taste that good,” Veronica and Rachel sang together then Rachel hit that high “Ohhhwoohhhh” that Lance had really wanted to sing and had deliberately spent half an hour warming his voice up for.

“You’re such a brat!” he yelled, following her onstage. “Give me back my mic!”

“Ugh whatever, jerk,” said Rachel, shoving the microphone back into his hands and storming off stage like Lance had been the one to do something wrong.

Then he had his mic back just in time to sing the final:

“Baby when you’re gone, yeah
Baby when you’re gone”

The crowd applauded enthusiastically.

“Woo!” cheered Hunk, cupping his hands around his mouth. “Yeah Lance!”

Veronica grabbed Lance’s hand and they bowed together. Lance noticed Rachel in front of the stage, giving a bow too, which was stupid because she wasn’t part of this!

“Romelle!” called out Veronica, looking to the back of the restaurant. Lance looked and saw Romelle had just come in through the door. Roni thrust her microphone into Lance’s hands and jumped off the stage.
Romelle waved and pushed her way towards the dance floor. Acxa and Veronica started weaving their way over to her.

Lance put the mics in their stands and jumped down too, immediately getting pulled into Keith’s arms.

“You were sooooo goooood,” said Keith, swaying a little, not holding his own weight on his feet.

“Okay, how much did you drink while I was up there?”

“Notsmuch,” lied Keith with a giggle, the tequila bottle still clasped in his one hand.

“You made it!” said Veronica, loudly as she reached Romelle.

“Sorry I’m late. I had to psyche myself up to finally step foot on the planet.”

“I’m so glad you came,” said Acxa, leaning in to kiss Romelle hello and getting extra sloppy and handsy with it.

“Same,” said Veronica, waiting her turn to kiss Romelle hello.

“Two girlfriends?” said Luis, eyeing the three of them with suspicion. “Now I feel like I’ve been pretty opened minded, but this seems like too much.”

Lisa gave him a sharp shush. “Quiet, love. You just sound insecure.”

“That’s a recipe for disaster,” argued Luis.

“That is a recipe for a heckin’ good time,” said Lisa, grinning. “Plus I get two more sisters-in-law. It’s a win-win-win-win situation.”

“ALRIGHT NEXT UP,” said the karaoke host, back onstage, “we have…” He squinted at his notecard. “Mmm –mmervv…”

“Marco and Lisa!” said Lisa, running onto the stage with Marco racing on right behind her.

Keith and Lance looked at the spot Lisa had just been occupying.

“How did she get up there so fast?” gasped Lance.

“It doesn’t say Marc –hey!” cried the host as Lisa snatched away the microphone. “Fine. Whatever,” he said, as she guided (pushed) him offstage.

“This one’s going out to all the folk from the Heartlands!” announced Lisa, grinning.

“And West Virginia,” added Marco with far less enthusiasm. He thought better of it and added, “Any Virginias really.”

The music started up and it was distinctly not country. Not even Earth sounding.

“This isn’t our song,” said Lisa.

“You sure? Maybe it’s a remix,” said Marco. He turned around to the screen to see symbols representing an alien language in place of the lyrics. “Oh no, this isn’t it.”

“Excuse me,” said Lisa, waving at the host. “This isn’t our song.”
“Because it wasn’t your turn!” he yelled back.

“Yeah, but we’re here so maybe we can just go now if you change the song?”

“Lisa is being very ‘I need to speak to a manager,’” said Lance.

“I wouldn’t expect anything less,” laughed Keith.

“Someone needs to tell her this isn’t Annie’s bar and she can’t do whatever she wants.”

“Hmmm. Feels like a management problem to me… We’ll let them deal with her.”

Marco threw out an arm. “It’s okay,” he said, a serious look crossing his face, “I think I can read it…” He took a deep breath then began to sing. “Gleeeefadbruckglecken – Nooooo. Nope. I don’t know what that says.”

“MARCO AND LISA, EVERYBODY,” said the host, back onstage and yelling to be heard. “WEREN’T THEY GREAT?”

Marco took a big bow.

“W-wait! We didn’t sing,” cried Lisa.

The host took Marco’s microphone. “Your actual turn will come back around. Can I get the actual Marvello to the stage?” An alien that looked half horse, half lobster pranced their way onto the stage.

“Alright, I’m going to have a smoke break,” said Lisa as if this was her decision, “but we will be back!” Why did that sound like a threat?

“Mmmm,” said Keith, leaning his head on Lance’s shoulder and closing his eyes.

“Okay,” said Lance, stepping back so Keith was forced to stand up. “Let’s get some butchered version of America cooking into you to soak up that tequila.”

“You take such good care of me,” swooned Keith.

“I’m your fiancé. It’s my job.”

“Hey!” said Keith, sharply, sticking a finger in Lance’s face. “… Not yet your aren’t.” Then he booped Lance on the nose and giggled.

“Yet, huh?” Okay, so they were obviously already engaged and that shouldn’t excite Lance, so he wasn’t going to get excited…

…

……

……….Oh my god oh my god oh my god!

Lance brought Keith back to their table. They ordered then ate everyone else’s apps while waiting for their mains. The food was surprisingly good here. The drinks too. They had a version of beer that wasn’t quite beer (way too fizzy) but it got Lance loose like beer.

Lisa and Marco were eventually called to the stage for real and got to sing their own rendition of
All I Wanna Do.

“This ain’t no disco,” said Marco.

“Ain’t no country club either,” said Lisa.

“This is West Virginia.”

“Altea!” half the bar yelled.

“Agree to disagree,” said Marco answered back. While Lisa sang, “All I wanna do is have a little fun before I die says the man next to me outta nowhere...”

Then Krolia got up and sang Moon River, which shocked everyone at first then brought tears to their eyes by the end.

“Alright, mom,” said Keith, giving her a high five on her way back to her seat.

“That was beautiful, mom,” said Lance. Based on her queer look he dialled it back. “K-Krolia... I meant Krolia.”

Eyes still narrowed she said, “Mom is fine, Lance.”

More people kept getting called up to karaoke during the meal. Jason sang Honey, I’m Good then right after Rachel sang Before He Cheats while swinging the mic stand around like it was a baseball bat. Jason watched it with nervous sweat collecting on his forehead. He was probably having flashbacks to having his truck keyed.

Hunk and Shay sang Need You Now and absolutely killed it much to everyone’s surprise.

“See!” said Lance, thrusting an arm towards the stage.

“See what?” asked Keith.

“Shay is singing a song and she’s not even from Earth so you can’t use that whole ‘I don’t know the words’ excuse for not doing karaoke with me.”

Keith blinked. “When did I ever say that?”

“You were gonna say it as soon as I suggested we do a song together.”

“You never suggested that.”

“Because I knew you’d say no and I knew it would be a whole argument and look!”

“Lance, you can’t just start in the middle of an argument! I need a chance to decide if I’m going to argue with you first.”

“Fine. Do you wanna sing with me?”

“No, I don’t know any songs.”

“You are from Earth! Shay isn’t, yet Shay knows this song!”

“Hunk, probably plays it for her,” said Keith, fully on the defensive now.

“I play music for you all the time in our ship!”
“But that’s different. I can’t remember how those songs go. My memory just doesn’t work like that.”

Lance crossed his arms. “Bet you’d suddenly remember the words if they had My Chemical Romance songs.”

“Yeah, of course, but that’s real music.”

“Oh, so country isn’t real music?”

“Are you two fighting or is this foreplay?” asked Hunk, returning from the stage.

“Both,” said Keith and Lance in unison. They immediately smiled at each other.

Everyone kept getting up and switching tables so they could talk to each other and finally (after enough drinks) Lance announced his idea for Mega Table and directed everyone in pushing all four of their tables together.

“I’m worried the staff is going to get annoyed with us,” whispered Keith.

“The fact that this concerns you is proof positive that you’ve sobered up. Besides, I know what to do if they try to boot us.” Lance cracked his knuckles.

“Punch the manager?” asked Keith, looking at Lance’s hands.

“No! I meant sign autographs. Why do you try to solve everything with violence?”

Bii Boh Bi distracted them from their argument as he sang the one purely pop song in the songbook. This was N Sync’s Bye Bye Bye, but all the words were replaced by ‘Bii’s and Boh’s.’ When he got to the chorus he sang, “Biiboh, bi bi bi!”

“Why is he singing about bees?” asked Jason.

“He’s not saying ‘bee,’” said Pidge, “‘Bee’ is just how they pronounce the sound that we say as ‘bye,’ but spelt ‘b-i.’”

“Wait…,” said Lance, gears turning, “So every time Bii Boh Bi pointed at me and screamed, ‘Bee!’ he was actually screaming, ‘Goodbye?’”

Keith and Pidge shared a look. Keith shrugged. “He’s close…”

Romelle and Coran got up onstage next and sang a song that Lance absolutely swore had to be K-pop, but Keith informed him it was definitely not Korean. Pidge chimed in and said the new Altea had fused the English language with Ancient Altean and this was what their new musical style sounded like.

“You’d think our chips would translate it though,” said Pidge, looking to the chip’s creator.

“It interprets unknown languages based on conversational tone,” said Colleen, “It doesn’t do well with singing. However, I have been analyzing other translating tech from dozens of other species. I will have an upgrade for all of you within the next six months… give or take the time dilation.”

“What you invented our translator chips?” asked Jason. “I thought you were the plant lady.”

“I do anything to do with bioengineering,” said Colleen.
She continued explaining her profession to Jason while Lance went back to watching the performance. It may not have been Korean, but the animation with all the hearts and kitty-like creatures in the lyrics video, plus the coordinated dance Romelle and Coran did together, sure did look like K-pop.

“She is sooooo cute,” cooed Veronica, laying her head against Lance’s shoulders while turned her seat to watch Romelle onstage.

“I knooooow ,” agreed Acxa, mirroring Veronica’s gesture and laying her head on Keith’s shoulder.

Lance caught the surprised look on Keith’s face before he corrected it. He hadn’t really thought those two had a touchy feely kind of friendship. Of course this change might have to do with the fact that Acxa was still drinking from her tequila bottle (Keith had misplaced his a.k.a. Lance stashed it away for when Keith was done eating, but don’t tell him that.) Funny thing was that now that Acxa and Veronica were together that basically made Keith and Acxa brother and sister too and the mirroring of his and Veronica’s cuddle seemed to fit.

“You two fell pretty quick this time,” said Lance.

“Yeah, when you finally stop hesitating,” said Veronica, “it’s easy to just keep going.”

Lance caught Keith’s eye and they shared a smile between them.

“I fell fast the first time though,” said Acxa, twisting her head to look at Veronica.

“Yeah, same,” agreed Veronica. “I was just too chicken shit to say anything.”

“Time wasted,” muttered Acxa.

“Eh, we’ve got time,” said Veronica, always the optimist. “I liked Romelle the first time I met her too, you know. Even asked Lance to set me up with her.”

“You never asked me that,” said Lance, shifting so Veronica was forced to remove her head from his shoulder and look at him.

“I did! I asked if you’d set me up with your long haired friend.”

“You asked about Keith!”

“If I wanted to be set up with Keith, I would’ve asked to be set up with the gay mullet boy who was clearly in love with you! I asked to be set up with your long-haired friend. You assumed Keith because you only ever think of Keith!”

“You could’ve corrected me!” snapped Lance, his cheeks growing hot.

“And not get to watch you implode over the idea of someone else dating Keith? No way. It was way too fun.”

Lance glanced at Keith to see how he was taking this. He looked pleased, but didn’t add anything, just stroked Acxa’s hair while she looked like she was ready to pass out. Lance grabbed Keith’s free hand and squeezed it under the table.

“Mmm want something?” asked Keith.

“Nope. Just casually loving you.”
A CLINKING sound drew their attention away from each other. Lance looked to what was maybe the head of mega table (who knows) to see his father standing up, while clinking his glass with his knife.

Lance let go of Keith’s hand then scooped his arm behind Keith’s neck and pulled him into a surprise kiss.

“What are you doing?” asked Keith, pulling back.

“That sounds means we kiss.”

“That sound means we pay attention to Pop-pop.”

“We are so happy you could all join us tonight,” said Pop-pop, addressing the table. “Anyone who knows me, knows I tend to get choked up during speeches, but this time I’ll…” Pop-pop stopped and sniffed. “Nope, I’m already overwhelmed.”

“Sit down,” said Lance’s mom, standing up. She raised up her glass and said, “Here’s to family. The ones we’re born into and the ones we grow into, the ones we find and the ones we lose, the one’s we seek out and the ones we choose. To family.”

“To family!” everyone repeated, raising their glasses up in cheers. Some of the aliens looked unsure, but followed the gesture.

When they’d finished sipping their drinks, Pop-pop looked at Keith and asked, “Anything you’d like to add, Keith?”

Everyone leaned in to stare at Keith.

“Nope,” said Keith, cool and expressionless.

“You sure?” pressed Lance. “Anything you wanna stand up and say in front of everyone? Or get down… perhaps on one knee…?”

“I’m good,” said Keith with a shrug.

“Alright, well, let’s drink more,” said Lance’s mom. The table cheered their agreement.

Lance looked at Keith’s profile and frowned. Silvio’s laugh drew Lance’s attention as he ran around the table with Nadia and Coran in hot pursuit. When Lance looked back he saw Keith’s seat was empty with the man himself slipping away from the table.

They way Keith had invited him out, he’d convinced himself something was going to happen. He shouldn’t gotten ahead of himself…

“You know that speech mom gave was similar to a song I wrote,” mused Marco.

“We may have a case for plagiarism,” said Rachel, excitedly.

“I did borrow some lines from that song,” said their mom.

“Ah ha!” snapped Rachel. “A confession! When I’ve got my law degree I’m sewing the pants off you.”

“What do you think you’re going to get for you and Marco, Rachel?” asked Pop-pop. “The share of the farm you were already going to inherit?”
A buzz against his butt pocket drew Lance’s attention. He leaned on one cheek to retrieve his phone, confused as to who the message could be from when everyone he knew was here around mega table.

‘U up?’ read the text and it was from Keith…

Lance looked to direction he’d seen Keith head in and saw him leaning against the wall in a hall by the stage, looking directly at Lance with a smirk. He pushed off the wall and disappeared further down the hallway.

No excuses to leave the table were needed since everyone was busy talking to each other. Veronica was trying to get people signed up to play Never Have I Ever since Romelle and Acxa had never heard of it and there was a heated argument going on debating whether or not it would be weird if parents played (though everyone agreed it would be funner if Abuela joined in.)

Lance tilted down his hat so he could get through a crowd for the first time in three months without all eyes on him. He reached the hallway without getting spotted, and walked down it, the noise of the bar fading slightly in the isolated spot. He found Keith at the end, leaning against a door with a sign that read: Patio Closed.

“Keith ‘Colorado’ Kogane,” said Lance, stopping short of arm’s reach and leaning casually against the wall. “Did you just summon me for a booty call?”

Lips twisted up in a closed mouth smirk. Lance had been planning to play hard to get, but just the look of that cocky mouth got blood pooling low. Fuck, he was still so gone for this boy.

“It’s not a booty call,” said Keith, stepping forward in a move that would suggest that in fact it was… “I just knew it would get your attention.” Keith’s lips were inches away when he used his new position to grab the door behind him and swing it open. “I wanna show you something.”

Lance stepped through the door Keith held opened for him out into the dark of Altea’s night. He was greeted by the familiar snore of a cosmic canine. Kosmo had made himself at home on the patio, pushing the tables off to the side so he could lay down and nap.

“Oh look… Kosmo,” said Lance, wondering if this is what Keith wanted to show him. Oh god, what if he wanted them to teleport somewhere right now? He did not want to puke up his Tractor Tots…

“Not Kosmo,” said Keith. “Look.”

At first Lance looked around his immediately area confused as to what was special with a typical patio. It was just a wooden deck with picnic benches. Finally he looked beyond the railing and out to the… sand? And the…

“Whoa,” gasped Lance.

“I know,” said Keith, stepping up next to Lance.

“I didn’t know Altea had any large bodies of water especially not… I mean, after the pool on the ceiling and Coran describing rain as boiling how rocks, I didn’t know…”

“I’m not sure it’s technically water,” said Keith, looking out at the waves of glowing neon blue that were lapping at the light pink sand. “But I realized earlier you hadn’t actually gotten around Altea yet and figured you’d never seen one of their oceans.”
Lance grabbed Keith’s hand and turned to him. “I love it. You knew I’d love it.”

“Lance…,” began Keith, his voice as light as the breeze blowing his hair. He stepped towards him, their bodies naturally orienting against each other, his hand slipping behind Lance’s neck as Lance picked at stray hair strewn across Keith’s face. “I wanted to ask…”

“Are you fuckin’ kidding me?!” cried Lisa from behind them. “There’s a whole fuckin’ ocean out here!”

They both turned back to witness Lance’s siblings and their partners pouring through the back door.

“Whoa!” gasped Marco, stopping on the deck to stare. He had an Altean fruit in his hand, which he appeared to have carved into a bong with a smiley face.

“It’s so freakin’ pretty!” gushed Rachel, charging forward. She put one hand down on the rail and launched herself over and onto the sand below.

The other’s followed suit, hopping or climbing down off the deck to run towards the ‘water.’

“Is it caustic?” called out Veronica, already half way to the water with Romelle and Acxa in tow. At least she was being cautious.

“It’s safe,” answered Keith.

“It looks just like my drink!” shouted Lisa (she of course had brought her drink out with her.)

“That does not mean you should drink it!” scolded Luis, holding her back from diving face first in.

“Keith said it wasn’t caustic!”

“That is not the same as non-toxic!”

Kosmo let out a loud bark. He’d woken up from the noise and when he spotted the others frolicking in the water, he stood and bounded over the rail, racing towards the ocean.

Lisa screamed with delight. “The fuckin’ blue pupper’s come to play!”

Lance laughed watching them pull off their cowboy boots so they could wade into the water.

“Alright,” said Keith, bending down to pull his boots off.

“Seriously?” questioned Lance, eyeing him.

“You know you want to.”

Lance gave a grin in response and pulled off his boots and his hat. They jumped down onto the sand and joined their siblings and Kosmo in frolicking in the glowing liquid. After about ten minutes, Keith took a firm hold on Lance’s arm and led him away from the others. They walked in ankle deep water, letting the waves rise up to soak their pants legs before retreating as they swung their clasped hands between them.

Lance did most of the talking, voicing every thought that popped into his head while Keith smiled and laughed. The restaurants and businesses that lined the beach front dropped off, giving away to a natural wooded area made of trees Lance had never seen before, isolating them from civilization.
“You better not be leading me away to kill me,” said Lance, when he looked back and saw his siblings were just dots in the distance.

A heavy sigh was his answer. “I have had so many opportunities to kill you over the years, you really think I’d do it now?”

“At least I’d die at my happiest,” said Lance.

“I guess it would prevent me from ever disappointing you in the future,” said Keith, with a far off look like he was considering it.

“Really?!” snapped Lance.

Keith broke his serious face and laughed.

“Plus you’re not going to disappoint me.”

“I know that. I just had thought I was getting you alone and then half the bar followed us out.”

“The siblings sensed shenanigans. It’s hard to shake them when there’s potential for shenanigans.”

“Believe me, I’ve noticed.”

“Now what do you want to get me alone for?” asked Lance, stopping their walk so he could face Keith properly.

“The one thing we haven’t properly done together,” said Keith, like this should be obvious.

Here we go…

“Can you guess what that is?” asked Keith.

“I think guessing would defeat the purp – why are you undressing?” asked Lance, watching Keith unbutton his shirt

“Because we’re going to skinny dipping,” said Keith like this was obvious (it had not been obvious!) “For real this time.”

This was not at all what Lance expected and he was fully prepared to have a pout about it, but then Keith whipped off his shirt and started on his belt causing Lance’s brain to jump to a new thing to focus on.

Fuck… those abs…

Lance should not still get excited every time he saw Keith undress (he’d gotten to watch it at least once a day for months,) but somehow it had lost none of the novelty.

Plus… Lance was definitely a better swimmer than Keith and there was a real opportunity to show him up right here and now!

They stripped down to their boxer briefs. Keith’s were red and cute and when they got wet they clung to his ass and made Lance think all manner of lewd thoughts. The water was not cool enough to calm his arousal and he kept catching Keith dragging his eyes across Lance’s semi.

“Keep it in your pants, Sharpshooter,” snickered Keith.
“Maybe try not being so hot.”

“Never going to happen,” laughed Keith, before tackling him in the waves.

They swam and body surfed under the foreign constellations, the ocean way more fun than the creek back home. Eventually they took a break, dropping onto the wet sand, happy and panting. Keith kissed Lance then gave him a half smile. He pushed back to his feet and walked out to calf deep water while looking up at the Altea’s two moons.

Lance stood and approached him slowly, feeling a strange sense of destiny drawing him forward. He stood shoulder to shoulder and looked out, listening to the waves.

“Lance…,” said Keith softly.

“Keith…?”

Keith turned to Lance, a smile drifting across his lips, before he gracefully dropped to his knees in the water, before him.

“Wait!” said Lance, throwing out his hands, frantically. “I don’t care about marrying you.”

“What?” asked Keith, pressing his eyebrows together.

“I mean, I do. I really do. I’ve never cared more about anything. But it doesn’t have to happen soon or if it does, yes, we can do the whole traditional proposal thing if that’s important to you, but I do not want you to feel pressured into proposing to me. It would not feel good for it to go down this way and I would be worried for the rest of my life that you only asked me to marry you because I made you feel like you had to and –“

“Lance!” said Keith, cutting off his ramble. “Listen to me carefully….” Lance nodded his understanding. “You don’t have to worry about any of that… because I literally got on my knees so I could blow you.”

“What?!?” shrieked Lance. “Why would you do that?!”

“Because I have much better access to your dick from this position,” said Keith, defensively.

“But you would’ve known I would’ve thought you were proposing!”

“Why would I propose to you? We’re already engaged!”

“That is so like you to –” Wait… “Do you mean that?”

Keith laughed. “Yep.”

“Oh god, Keith, seriously, how much are you fucking with me right now?”

“Well, I wanted to fuck with you,” said Keith, sliding his hands to Lance’s hips and giving them a massage.

“I just wanna know if you’re serious about marrying me?!” asked Lance, his voice reaching that high pitch he hated so much, but when he was upset, this was it…

“See, now that is worded like a proposal,” said Keith with a wicked flash of his eyes.

“I fucking hate you,” said Lance, burying his face in his hands.
“Naw, you love me.”

“I can’t take this teasing.”

“Okay,” said Keith, sliding down Lance’s waistband. “I’ll stop teasing and get down to the dirty.”

“Stop deliberately misunderstanding me!” snapped Lance.

“Sorry, I’ll just ask then… do you want a blowjob or not?”

Lance was going to fucking murder Keith. “Yes! Just blow me! At least with my dick in your mouth, you’ll stop confusing me.”

“Gee, Lance. Maybe say please.”

Lance rolled his eyes. He wanted to storm off. He really did, but… “Please…” He was also still semi-hard and Keith’s eyes shone so pretty lit up by the glowing Altean marks on his hip bones matching exactly the colour of the glowing ocean and oh my fucking god, a whole bunch of shit just suddenly made sense… Unfortunately this new revelation was wiped clean out of his real head as Keith licked up his cock’s head.

“Fuck, that tongue of yours,” mumbled Lance, because he didn’t have to keep his thoughts to himself like he did at first. When Keith had first shown him exactly what his tongue was capable of. Lance could not keep quiet when Keith was swirling it around the head of his cock before sliding it down to tease his balls.

“What about it?” asked Keith, quietly, pausing.

“Feels amazing…”

“Better than my…” Keith sucked the head of Lance’s cock into his mouth then popped it back out “…lips?”

“It’s the whole fucking package… Just that mouth…”

There was a twinkle of a smile in Keith’s eyes as he went about sucking Lance’s cock. He drew it in slowly then pulled back smoothly, sucking so sweetly.

Lance let out a shaky, keyed up breath. It was hard to believe this was his life now. That Keith was his life. For all those times he sneakily (maybe not so sneakily) sucked his cock back at the farm and all the adrenaline and excitement of something new and forbidden, all that was replaced with the bliss of knowing he was his.

Lance bent forward, causing Keith to have to let his cock slip out.

“Will you hold still?” muttered Keith, but Lance ignored him and dropped a kiss on the top of his head.

“I love you,” whispered Lance.

“I love you too,” said Keith, “But you’re supposed to be seduced, not romanced.”

“Can’t I be both?” chuckled Lance as he bent back up straight.

Keith smiled at him, emotion barely masked underneath. “You can have anything. Just ask.”
“Can I have a blowjob?”

“You’re a fucking dork.” swore Keith, but he moistened his lips and went back to sucking Lance off anyway.

A moan escaped Lance as Keith sucked with more vigour, maybe annoyed, maybe proving something. Probably a little of both because so often there was an unspoken competition between them. A bit of fun rivalry to keep them entertained. Of course Lance’s favourite competition was when Keith wanted to see how fast he could fuck Lance into oblivion. They both always came out the winner.

Lance slide fingers into Keith’s wet hair (failing to resist the urge to finger comb out the tangles that had formed from the swim.) Keith, bless his heart, misinterpreted Lance’s grooming for something else. He pulled back with a satisfying pop.

“You wanna take control?” he asked, continuing to stroke Lance’s cock. Not what Lance had been thinking, but when Keith was offering to let Lance throat fuck him…

“Open,” said Lance, firming up his grip on the back of Keith’s skull. Keith obliged him, opening up his mouth wide. He was so cute like this. Kneeling in the water, the waves lapping up to his nipple line then retreating. The ocean and Keith, the two best things Lance knew in the whole the universe.

“Good,” said Lance as he lined himself up on Keith’s tongue. He worked himself in slowly, careful not to touch the back of the throat. He didn’t want Keith to choke… not yet anyway.

He let himself moan, enjoying Keith’s sexy mouth. It was cool at the front, chilled by the night air, but warm further back, drawing Lance in, in, in. Keith gagged, just a little, but didn’t retreat. His eyes shone so bright from the blue glow of Lance’s hip marks, just a hint of tears collecting there.

Pretty eyes…

Blue in this lighting, but Keith’s colour never stayed still.

Lance pulled himself back out.

“Wider,” instructed Lance. Keith’s choke had caused his jaw to relax a little. Keith did as instructed, stretching his jaw wide, the lips unable to stay wrapped around the teeth. A spark of danger caused a bit of heat to unfurl in Lance’s gut. “Now, flash me dem fangs.”

Keith’s jaw snapped shut, his eyes widening in exasperation. “The fuck do you mean by that?”

“You’ve been practicing controlling it,” said Lance, “You can bring it out if you want to.”

“I thought you enjoyed having skin on your dick.”

“You’re not gonna bite me, Keith,” said Lance, taking Keith’s jaw in his hand and bending down to coo at him.

“I might bite you right now because you’re fucking annoying me.” He tried to jerk his head to the side to release Lance’s hold on his jaw, but Lance also had a hand behind his head.

“You’ll be good and I’ll be in control.”

“Which means if you bleed, it’s your own damn fault.”
“Sounds like you’re gonna do it,” said Lance with a grin.

Then Keith hissed at him, letting his eyes pop yellow and those fangs flash, but just for a moment though. A second and they were gone, but that didn’t mean Lance recovered from it.

“Holy shit…,” muttered Lance, his dick giving a twitch in agreement.

“You’re actually into that?” asked Keith.

“I don’t understand how any living being could not be into that,” said Lance, gesturing to Keith.

“My alien trait is not a fetish,” said Keith, grumpily.

“Says the guy who calls the Altean marks on my hip bones my ‘treasure trails’ and regularly likes to lick them.”

“This is true,” purred Keith, his voice going from annoyed to teasing in zero seconds flat. Lance felt Keith press forward against the hand holding his jaw. This time he released him, letting the boy press two hands down into the water in the tight space between them and lean in to lick up the glowing mark on Lance’s inner thigh.

Lance’s leg trembled. How was that hotter than a dick in the mouth? Keith’s tongue moved higher up, swirling around the mark on his right hipbone. Lance was grateful he had Keith’s hair gripped with his one hand because he needed something to steady himself, especially with Keith keeping big wide eyes trained on Lance and he just… he just fucking loved him and his brain wasn’t working so he couldn’t really remember what he’d wanted Keith to do…

Keeping his hands pressed down between his open legs, Keith used his mouth and tongue to guide Lance’s cock back into his mouth. He continued sucking, making cute little humming noises as he did his work. Less than a minute in, he pulled off with another satisfying pop. Those eyes finally left Lance as his face turned down to the water.

Lance had a moment of concern, worried that Keith was upset. His whole being was ready to drop down into the water with him and wrap himself around his love.

He must protect the Keith.

“Keith, are you…?”

Keith looked up then, blowing away all of Lance’s concern as he was met with yellow cat eyes.

A sharp intake of breath was all Lance could muster in response.

Keith’s lips twisted into a grin, those pointy incisors poking out his top lip.

“Fuckiloveyou,” rushed out of Lance’s mouth because holy shit! Keith was gonna let him do this!

“It’s your own damn fault if you bleed,” said Keith, always needing to act at least a bit grumpy despite smiling.

“As long as you don’t bite my dick off, we’ll be fine.”

“Hey, I have a vested interest in you keeping your dick. I’m just saying, you’re playing with fire.”

“With you, I’m always playing with fire,” replied Lance, though his voice had lost its snark, replaced with fondness. His fingertips dipped under Keith’s chin, caressing him there. Keith was
instantly docile, nuzzling lightly into his touch.

God, Lance loved him so much.

His fingers slid up, brushing lightly over Keith’s bottom lip. Keith’s tongue pushed out to meet the pad of Lance’s thumb with the tip. Keith’s lips pressed down into a soft kiss and then they were wrapped around the tip of his thumb. Lance pushed his thumb further into Keith’s warm mouth. The boy responded with a tight suck, just like it was a cock, massaging it from below with his tongue.

Lance chewed on his own lip, clamping down on the moan threatening to escape him because, fuck, he didn’t know he was into that, but oh he was so into that.

Inspired, Lance pushed his index finger into Keith’s mouth then his middle finger. Retreating his thumb back out again, he curved his fingers to match Keith’s tongue shape. Keith began bobbing on his fingers, sucking hard as he drew them in then pulled his head back again. All the while big yellow eyes held Lance’s gaze.

Lance spread open his fingers slowly, creating a gap between them that Keith wiggled his tongue between. Lance wanted to test the boundaries of Keith’s mouth. He found the edge of a fang with a wince and a small retreat. They were in indeed sharp.

Keith paused his sucking, though his face was more ‘I told you so’ than concerned.

“Open,” said Lance.

Keith obliged and Lance ran his wet index finger along his top teeth, starting at the middle and working over to the one fang. He lightly tapped it, testing that sharp edge, feeling a prick that was exciting to his senses.

“Wider,” he said, his whisper barely audible over the waves. Keith opened up more. “Show me wider, sweetie.”

Jaw stretched, lips were forced to retreat from shielding teeth and Lance could see his pretty fangs out in the open, shining in the light of the two moons.

“A little more tongue,” instructed Lance. Keith poked out his tongue enough to cover his bottom teeth, but not overlap his lip. “Perfect.” Like a slip and slide for his dick.

Lance still had a hold of Keith’s hair with the one hand, the other he used to guide his cock into place, laying it heavy on Keith’s tongue.

“Whatever you do, don’t bite down…”

Keith looked like he wanted to say something smart back, but of course he couldn’t move. This was the ultimate challenge for Keith. He wasn’t restrained so he could take control if he wanted to (and he always wanted to,) but if he did, he would hurt Lance.

This is what trust looked like.

Lance pushed on the back of Keith’s head, guiding him forward onto his cock, watching it with interest as it was swallowed back into Keith’s throat. He tugged Keith back by the hair before it touched the back of his throat.

Lance pulled out completely, releasing the tight grip from Keith’s hair.
“That good so far?” he asked, checking in.

Keith gave Lance the most annoyed look and instead of answering him, placed a hand on Lance’s and squeezed encouraging him to grip tighter again on his hair. At the same time he opened his mouth wide and pitched forward to bump his bottom lip against Lance’s cock.

Okay, message received. Keith was not backing down from this challenge and why would he? He was a professional level slut. He had been paid to slut… well… he’d stolen money after slutting, but the point being you wouldn’t find him in the ‘amateur’ tags on a porn site. No, Keith was ‘five star rated, has his own channel with followers in the six digits’ slut level.

Lance didn’t need to be told twice. Keith’s persistence always turned him on. There wasn’t a kink or hickish scenario Lance had come up with yet that Keith wasn’t game for. He couldn’t have asked for a better partner.

Keith didn’t gag when Lance’s cock bumped the back of his throat. Not the first few times anyway. Lance marvelled at the look of his cock sliding into the hot mouth of Keith’s, just out of reach of those deadly fangs.

“Ah fuck, Keith,” moaned Lance. He went a little too rough with this push, bumping the back of Keith’s throat harder than before. Keith gagged, but managed to hold his mouth open, causing his yellow eyes to roll back.

Lance retreated, out of the wet and the slick of Keith’s mouth.

“S’okay,” said Keith, wrapping a wet arm around to Lance’s ass, urging him to stay as close as possible. “I’m not gonna to hurt you.” His free hand was pumping at Lance’s cock. He was opening up wide again, proving to Lance what a good boy he was. Fuck, he was incredible.

And this was Lance’s life now. Flying around the universe, helping people, having random kinky public sex with Keith on every planet they visited. Engaged or not (but probably engaged?), Lance loved his new life. To think he almost didn’t take this path… almost didn’t end up in a glowing blue ocean, pushing his cock into Keith’s fanged mouth.

He could’ve stayed home and missed this.

This time Lance cupped his hand behind Keith’s head. Firm enough for Keith to lean into, but not so much that Keith couldn’t push and lean back if he needed to get out of there quick. With Keith braced, Lance bent his knees a little and thrust himself into Keith’s mouth.

He fucked Keith’s mouth like this, under two moons, waves lapping at his calves.

He fucked into Keith’s mouth, chasing the most incredible feeling burning deep in his stomach.

He fucked into Keith’s mouth, but tried not to make him gag (too much) because it meant Keith have to pull off to take a breather and he didn’t like that.

Still Keith needed rest soon, but not for too long.

Keith opened up a third time, yellow eyes shiny with tears and bottom lip pump from taking so much cock. Lance went back to work. His thrusts were accompanied by his moans and Keith humming like he was slurping up a treat.

Hands moved below water. Keith had his own cock out now. Was stroking it in time to Lance’s thrusts. Lance knew from experience water wasn’t the best lubricant for jerking off, but this
ocean’s liquid had some slick to it and he could just imagine how good it felt for Keith to be touching himself like that.

Keith was so turned on by letting Lance throat fuck him.

This was why he was perfect.

“You take that cock so good,” muttered Lance. He wasn’t going to last. Didn’t want to last when what he was chasing felt so incredible.

Keith smirked and that was a bad idea because it narrowed his jaw and then Lance felt the tiniest prick against his cock, threatening to become a much more…

He went to retreat, but Keith’s mouth followed him. Lips clamped tight over his cock, sliding down his length and… everything was fine. Keith’s lips had tucked to protect his teeth, but how was the possible with the fangs…

Lance met Keith’s eye. Keith’s human eyes… Fucker had switched back.

“How did you -?”

Keith popped off his cock and said, “Didn’t wanna bite ya.” He moistened his lips and dove back onto Keith’s cock.

“Your reflexes are incredible as always.”

Keith sucked himself back off with a pop and said, “You stay on target and I move quick.” He licked up along Lance’s cock.

“We do make a good team,” mumbled Lance.

Keith audibly moaned his approval, his voice vibrating around Lance’s cock. He hadn’t thought that was dirty talk, but fuck Keith moaning on his cock felt good.

“You gonna come?” asked Lance, his voice hitching. “I like watching you.”

That could be interpreted in all manner of ways. He did like watching the way Keith worked his cock in his mouth, but he also loved the way Keiths’ bicep pumped as he stroked himself below the surface of the waves. Couldn’t wait to see Keith just lose it…

“Come,” instructed Lance. “Come while sucking my cock.”

“Mmmwwhhh,” was Keith’s response, vibrating another moan over Lance’s dick.

“Come because you love it so much.”

“Fuu-mmm,” swore Keith, releasing Lance’s cock from his lips for half a second before going right back to bobbing.

Lance gripped Keith’s hair again. “You can come, baby. I’ll take control.” He pulled Keith’s head back so he could push him forward again. He wasn’t rough, but Keith just lost it, moaning and gasping over Lance’s cock, working his arm rapidly as he moved through it on his knees until his arm was tense and stuttering and Lance was coming next.

He loved the man with his lips wrapped around his cock. Loved him so much and the life they’d started together.
“Mmm yes, fuck Keith,” mumbled Lance.

Fuck, how was he supposed to stay standing through this? When the littlest wave threatened to pitch his orgasming ass over?

But Keith had him, one hand steadying his hip while Lance’s hand dropped to his shoulder.

Keith supported him, which he needed when every muscle contracted and released, threatening to collapse him from the pleasure of it.

He was coming into Keith’s mouth too.

Fuck, he loved coming in Keith’s mouth.

Peace washed over Lance, the lap of the waves reminding him of how perfect this night was. Of how Keith had set up this evening filled with things he loved. Plus he didn’t even complain about Lance suddenly coming his mouth like he sometimes did…

“Mmm, I love you,” said Lance giving Keith a kiss on the top of the head. He tugged at Keith’s arm, expecting him to join him standing. They’d been away awhile and they’d left guests back at the restaurant.

Keith didn’t budge, but stayed kneeling in the swallow water, gentle waves cresting as high as his pecs then retreating.

“Lance…” said Keith, finally looking up at him. There was a tiny knit of tension between his brows, but his eyes themselves looked so open and loving.

“Yeah?”

“Do you… wanna get married? … to me?”

“Keith,” gasped Lance, his hands flying to his mouth. “I said you didn’t hav –”

“I know, but I wanted to,” said Keith, awkward half smile in tow.

“But you can’t ask me now,” snivelled Lance. “My dick is still ouuuut. And you have my cum on your lips!”

“Here,” said Keith, tucking Lance away with one hand and wiping his mouth with the back of the other. “Now you wanna answer the question?”

Lance had convinced himself this wasn’t going to happen… didn’t think he needed this at all… and now…

Lance nodded, big bobs of his head because he suddenly couldn’t speak. And he was crying. Just silently crying.

He dropped down to his knees, splashing into the water so he could wrap his arms around Keith. “Of course. Of course I want to marry you. I already told you we were getting married.”

“You seem pretty happy that I asked though,” said Keith and he was trying to be an ass, but from his tone Lance could hear he was choked up too, his natural rasp turned to level eleven.

“The way you’ve been this trip… I thought you didn’t actually want to get married,” confessed Lance, “At least maybe not now…”
“The only thing we need to do to commit to spending our lives together is just to love each other,” said Keith, frankly, “But I’m kinda coming around to liking parties and, hey, you know if you ever want anything from me you just need to ask.”

“Oh,” said Lance, sitting up to look Keith in the eye.

“I’d give you the universe if I could.”

And Lance had no doubt Keith would find a way if only he just asked…

Asking yeah, Lance had been an idiot.

“Hey Keith,” said Lance, gazing his eyes, “Will you marry me?”

“Yeah, okay,” said Keith, seeming struck by emotion.

“I don’t have a ring,” added Lance.

“That’s okay… I did not get you a ring either.”

“We don’t need rings,” said Lance with a laugh, all those happy tears finally flipping over to giddy happiness.

“I was thinking I’d take you shopping….”

“Oh, if there’s shopping then I definitely want a ring, yes. We can get matching ones!”

Keith winced. “We have very different styles…”

Lance responded by kissing him, full on the lips. He had more to say, but Keith’s took his face in his hands and held him there, peppering him with kisses over and over.

*

“Have I mentioned that I love you?” Keith asked.

“Not in the last two minutes,” said Lance, “and it was very rude of you to wait this long.”

Keith kissed him again, firmly this time. “I love you, Nebraska.”

“I love you, Mullet.”

“Ugh,” groaned Keith. “I had a new nickname!”

“Yeah, no, it was too nice of one. Now c’mon,” said Lance, popping up to standing and tugging at Keith’s hands. “Let’s go!”

“Go where?” asked Keith, letting Lance pull him up to stand.

“To get married,” said Lance, skipping onto the shore and grabbing his pants.

“Well, we’re not doing it right now,” said Keith with a laugh.

“No no no no,” said Lance, shaking his head. “You can have all the time you need to get dressed and do something with that hair of yours and then when you’re ready, we will.”

“Okay, I know you’re joking,” said Keith, giving his pants a shake to get rid of the sand. “This
morning you were so set on wedding planning.” He stuck a leg in while Lance slipped his arms into his shirt. No wait… Keith’s shirt. Apparently they were switching clothes again.

“Yeah, but then you planned the perfect wedding.”

“What are you talking about?” asked Keith, pulling his pants up.

“Keith, c’mon,” said Lance throwing his arm out in the direction of the restaurant. “You planned this.”

“Planned what?” asked Keith, bending to pick up Lance’s shirt from the sand.

“A surprise wedding.”

Keith choked and froze, half bent over. “I… no, wipe that idea from your brain!”

“Oh yeah, okay so you didn’t invite all our loved ones to a venue that is perfectly us.”

“That venue is not us,” said Keith, angrily putting on his shirt. “I am not an ‘It’s America!’ kind of guy.”

“You are so country, you don’t even know,” chuckled Lance, which was annoying because they were in the middle of an argument and Lance was acting like it was just witty repartee.

“I… you can’t just… weddings take planning!”

“Weddings are just a party where we exchange vows which is literally just saying nice stuff and promising to be together. Oh! We can ask the Captain of the Atlas to officiate!”

“You’re giving me whiplash here, Lance,” groaned Keith.

“I’m not… I think that was from the throat fucking earlier.”

“This is just revenge for me screwing with you before, isn’t it?”

“Fine,” said Lance, his shirt now fully buttoned because he could focus enough to get buttons to work, meanwhile Keith could no longer figure out how to ‘clothes.’ “Tell me what you had in mind for our wedding.” Lance stepped up to Keith and began working the buttons for him instead.

“… there should be a wedding.”

“Ah, see, this already fulfills that requirement.”

“Wait! That’s not my only idea, my brain is just panicking because this is all happening so fast!”

“Yeah, because it’s us.” Lance finished the last button on Keith’s shirt. “And we rush into things and we’re kinda disasters, but we love each other and that makes us perfect. Keith, this is the best the day of my life, I just want to keep this ball rolling.”

Lance picked up Keith’s belt and began threading it through for him. “Also,” continued Lance, “you told me this thing about how I just have to ask you…”

“Don’t turn that against me,” warned Keith.

“But Keith,” said Lance, grabbing Keith’s hands in his. “Will you please just marry me tonight?”
Keith laughed, the tension releasing as his resolve took a hike. “You’re crazy. You know that, right?”

“Crazy about you,” said Lance, full on booping Keith on the nose and prompting him to swat at his hand.

Lance laughed and gave Keith’s hand a firm tug. He started at a speed walk that turned into a jog as he pulled Keith along back down the sandy beach.

Lance’s smile was infectious and soon Keith felt just as joyful as Lance looked. Really, who was he kidding? If Lance wanted to exchange wedding vows at the restaurant tonight, Keith was definitely going to do it…

Besides, if he decided soon after that he wanted a different wedding, he could always tease Lance into thinking this first one didn’t count. He could probably marry Lance a hundred times over if he played his cards right…

*****************

“Guess what!” bellowed Lance when they reached the section of the beach where the siblings were playing with Kosmo. “We’re getting married!”

“Yeah, we know,” said Acxa. “You’ve mentioned it several times.”

“No, but like right now. In this bar.”

Everyone turned to look at Keith like Lance’s word wasn’t good enough for them. He nodded it. Well, that was good at least.

“Called it,” said Luis, “Surprise wedding.”

“You really couldn’t have scheduled it for before we went swimming?” asked Romelle. “Now we’re going to be wet.”

“It’s not… a plan,” said Lance, “it’s spontaneous.”

“For you, but Keith planned it,” said Luis. Everyone turned to look at Keith.

“This is Lance’s idea,” said Keith, pointing at him.

“Oh my god, you two are the fucking worst,” swore Veronica.

“What does that mean?” gasped Lance.

“It means you two were obviously going to get married tonight,” said Marco.

Lisa nodded and said, “It’s sad that you’re just figuring this out yourselves.”

“How can you possibly know what we’re going to do before we even know?” snapped Lance.

“Because everyone knows what you two will do years before you do!” Rachel snapped back. “It’s your entire deal!”

“Everyone you know is here,” said Jason, “and aren’t they usually all on missions? Makes sense you’d want to take the opportunity because it’s not going to present itself again.”
“Nobody asked you, Jason,” grumbled Lance.

Lance was sure everyone on the inside of the restaurant would be surprised. He was disappointed by that reaction as well.

“I thought you already got married earlier in a private ceremony,” said Sam, “and this was the reception.”

“I thought that too,” said Ezor.

“Galra ceremonies aren’t fit for children,” agreed Zethrid, “you’d want to do it alone beforehand.”

“Not fit for children as in violence or sex?” asked Lance. He watched all the Blades share private smirks. “It’s both, isn’t it?”

“We’re not going to do the Galra version,” said Keith, “… though maybe tell me about it later.” Zethrid gave Keith a thumbs up. “We’ve just going to do it our way.”

“Awkwardly, years too late, and with public nudity?” asked Rachel.

“So you do know the Galra version?” said Zethrid.

“We are just going to exchange vows,” said Keith.

“Exchange vows,” said Lance, doing razzle dazzle fingers.

The karaoke host agreed to let them use the stage and the Captain of the Atlas agreed to officiate so all what was left was to gather a wedding party.

“Allright, team Groom Lance, form up!” he said, rubbing his palms together. “I’m going to need all the siblings up here plus I’ll take Hunk and Pidge and…”

“What are you doing?” asked Keith.

“Groomsmen,” answered Lance, “for the wedding party.”

“The stage isn’t that big,” said Keith.

“You’re just upset because you’re losing.”

“This is not a competition,” said Keith, “Plus if you invite everyone to the stage, then there will be no one left to watch.”

“But you invited Shiro up here,” said Lance, gesturing to Shiro who was standing beside Keith.

“Yeah,” said Keith with a shrug, “But it’s Shiro. I’m obviously going to invite him.”

“Hi I’m-obviously-going-to-invite-him. I’m Shiro.” Shiro snorted with laughter.

“Ignore him,” said Keith, quickly. “He got drunk while we were swimming.”

“If you like Shiro so much, have him give you away.” Lance regretted it as soon as he said it “Sorry Kro –er mom,” said Lance, glancing at his soon to be mother-in-law.

She shrugged. “Shiro put in more hours. Plus… dad jokes.”

“I don’t think I need to be given away,” said Keith.
“Should I be given away then?” asked Lance, confused.

“Depends. Which one of you is the chick?” asked Griffin, loudly.

“It doesn’t work that way,” Keith shot back.

“Is it you? I bet it’s you.”

“Okay, alright,” said Veronica, moving to the front of the stage and taking over directing the wedding. “Original concept was just vows so no one is being given away in some kind of archaic display of ownership over obsolete virginities. Shiro stays as Keith’s best person and Lance gets a best person too. Lance, who do you want?”

Just one? Lance looked between Hunk and Pidge. Crap. If he chose Hunk, Pidge would kill him, but if he chose Pidge… Hunk would likely be perfectly understanding, but Lance would still feel guilty. Lance wished Allura was here so he could ask her.

Huh. That was the first time he’d missed Allura without an uncomfortable emotion attached to it. He simply… just missed his friend.

“Rachel,” said Lance, looking at his sister. She brightened, hearing her name. “Can you move so I can ask Coran to be my best person?”

Rachel’s face fell. “Jerk brother,” she muttered, scowling. She did, however, step aside so Coran could approach and come up onstage.

“This is unexpected,” admitted Coran, “But an honour nonetheless.”

“You were always the other dad on the Castleship,” explained Lance.

“Alright,” said Veronica. She pulled off her cowboy hat and swung it down sharply like a starter flag. “Officiating begin!”

“Bii boh boh bi bii,” said Bii Boh Bi, speaking to Keith and Lance. They stared back. “Boh bi bii,” he repeated, seeming annoyed.

“I’m already lost,” confessed Lance.

“Join hands,” said Coran, translating.

“Ohhh.” They joined hands as instructed. It was actually really comforting being able to squeeze Keith’s hands and have him return the squeeze.

“Boh boh bi bii boh bi boh.”

Keith and Lance looked at Coran.

“He’s asking if there’s any objections.” There was a collective laugh, but then Jason – fucking Jason – raised his hand.

“Ah yes,” said Coran. “The young man everyone seems to despise?”

“Mine is less of an objection, more a four part question.”

Coran made an impatient scoffing sound Lance knew all too well. “Hold your questions until the end please.”
Jason rolled his eyes and dropped his hand.

“Boh boh bii bi boh.”

“You are invited to speak your own vows or he can ask you the prepared questions,” translated Coran.

“Oh, I have something to say,” said Lance.

“As always,” said Keith, getting a laugh. See, their back and forth was adorable. They just never had a live audience to appreciate it before.

“Keith, I used to daydream about the person I wanted to marry.”

“Mrs. Blue Lion, was it?” said Shiro.

“Shhh,” said Lance. “I thought I needed to travel across the universe to find the perfect girl when it turns out the perfect *boy* sat next to me in Calculus.”

“I remember that class,” said Keith. “You were failing it.” This got another laugh.

“You were always right there - barring that whole part when you went off with the Blades and ended up on the back of a space whale for two years - You’ve been there for me like no one else. And just like I was your Right Hand man, I’m excited to be your Left Hand man.” He held up his left hand to illustrate this. No reaction. “Get it, left hand man?” He looked at the crowd, but they all looked lost. “Okay, this joke would land if I actually had a ring.”

“I’m gonna get you a ring,” said Keith, defensively.

“Not in time to keep that joke from bombing.”

“It was always going to bomb. It’s not a good pun.”

“How dare you! All my puns are good!” Lance sighed. He was supposed to be giving a romantic speech right now. “I used to think of you as my rival, but you really just inspired me to work harder. I wouldn’t be who I am today without always striving to impress you. You shaped who I am. I love you so much. I’m so excited that after all we’ve been through you chose me.”

“Bi boh boh.”

“Keith, you’re invited to share personal vows,” said Coran.

“I’m good,” said Keith, simply.

“You’re -?” began Lance.

“I’ll just answer the prepared questions.”

“What? But I spoke from the heart!” snapped Lance, “You should too.”

“I’m not good at being put on the spot,” said Keith, the edge back in his voice.

“Bi boh boh boh bii bii?” asked Bii Boh Bi.

“Wait, what?” said Keith.
“He’s asking you the prepared questions,” said Coran.

“Bi boh boh boh bii bii?” pressed Bii Boh Bi.

“Yes?” said Keith.

“So you would like time to reconsider this union?” asked Coran, his tone concerned.

“I didn’t know that’s what he asked!”


“Do you...,” said Keith scowl, “I do?”

“Dammit, Keith!”

“No one said there’d be a riddle!”

“It's not a riddle! It's a vow!”

“Why can't I just say, ‘I do’ and the vows are over?”

“There,” said Lance, pointing at Keith. He looked around. “Everyone heard that, right? We’re good?”

Keith made a noise like a groan. “Look,” he said, addressing the crowd, “Last time I was put on the spot in front of a crowd like this, I told everyone I didn’t want to be stuck with Lance. So... I would like to officially take that back.”

The audience aw’d and so did Lance. That was actually kinda perfect.

“Bi bii bi bii boh boh,” said Bii Boh Bi, “Boh bii.”

“There is no direct translation for that one, but roughly it means, ‘Your vow has been witnessed and will carry forward as long as your bond strengthens,’” said Coran, “You may finish the ceremony as per your human custom.”

“What does that mean?” asked Keith, looking nervous.

“We kiss, Keith,” said Lance. He leaned in and Keith accepted his kiss, somewhat shy until the applause began. Keith seemed encouraged by this, sweeping his arm behind Lance’s back and kissing him over and over.

“I love you,” said Lance, between kisses.

“Love you too, Nebraska.”

*****************

Keith hit his blade against his glasses next to the microphone so the CLINKING was heard throughout the bar.

“Hold on!” called out Lance, bounding up the stairs of the stage. He slipped his hand behind Keith’s neck, dodged the pointy end of his blade, and pulled him in for a kiss. Keith, however did not return the kiss, but stood awkward and stiff. Lance broke it off early.
“Why did you do that?” asked Keith, looking confused.

“You did the glass clinky clink so that means we do the kissy kiss.”

“No, the clink means ‘can I have everyone’s attention?’”

“That’s what it means when it’s not a wedding,” argued Lance, “Now that this is a wedding it means we kiss.”

Keith blinked like he was computing this. “Right. Sorry.” Then he leaned in and kissed Lance for real. This gained a lot of ohhh’s and claps from the crowd. “I actually just wanted everyone’s attention.”

“Well, they’re paying attention now!” That kiss was fire, who would not wanna watch? “I warmed the crowd up for you.” There was a rumble of laughter from the audience.

“Great, now go be part of the crowd.” That got a bigger laugh. Dammit.

“But I like it here,” said Lance stubbornly.

“I want you there,” said Keith, pointing to the spot in front of the stage.

“But I’m your emotional support Lance.”

“Really? Because arguing with you is what’s making me anxious.”

“Fine,” groaned Lance, “But if your toast bombs, don’t come crying to me.” Lance took the quick way down by jumping off the stage.

Keith cleared his throat. “Thank you everyone for coming on short notice and creating this impromptu celebration.” A round of applause began and Lance clapped along with them. “I guess it’s safe to say Lance and I move pretty fast.”

“Ha!” laughed Pidge, sharply. Lance turned to look at them and when they realized no one else had laughed they said, “Oh shit, you were serious.”

“I’m better at political and motivational speeches than heartfelt ones,” admitted Keith, a little awkward and 100% adorable. “I’m trying to be more open with my feelings. That’s Lance’s influence and when I think about what had to happen for us to get to this point, how we needed to grow as people, my contribution was… not lying about how I felt. But Lance,” said Keith, meeting Lance’s eye, “He had to face a lot and grow a lot and completely change his life by coming to space to be with me.

“I wanna acknowledge how amazing that was and how touched I am that he followed me out here.”

Lance would not cry. He would not cry.

It did not help that Hunk had just grabbed his hand and was sniffing like he was about to lose it.

Keith looked around and said, “A lot of you work out here too. You know it doesn’t matter if you love the work or are a natural, it’s still hard. It’s hard not having a home and you find yourself searching for something, someone to ground you. It is a hard life to pick, but the bonds we create are our solid ground.

“Lance, I know you didn’t just come out here for me, but you were brave choosing this life so I
wanna do something brave too. Something I’ve never done before.”

“Hetero sex?” yelled out Lisa.

Keith laughed. “No. Also, remember there are children here. Your children, Lisa.”

Lisa gave a dismissive wave.

Lance was curious as to what Keith really meant about being brave.

“So this isn’t a toast,” said Keith, handing his drink off to the karaoke host, “I didn’t come up here to talk. I came up here to sing.”

Oh

My

God

“That’s not equal to leaving Earth!” yelled Iverson.

“For Keith it is,” countered Shiro.

“I accept it!” yelled Lance. “I accept the exchange!”

Keith laughed. “I thought this would make you happy.” Keith looked around again and said, “So I don’t know a lot of songs.”

“Sing Welcome to the Black Parade!” yelled Pidge.

“I would if they had it,” chuckled Keith.

“Oh! Sing I Write Sins Not Tragedies!” yelled Razavi.

“Sing Misery Business!” yelled Griffin.

“I, uh, actually had a song in mind,” said Keith, awkwardly. “It’s a song Lance sang to me on our first date and it instantly became my favourite song.”

“Awww,” was the collective reaction.

Now why was it that Lance could hear his own heartbeat?

“We listen to it in our ship when we’re travelling,” said Keith, “and it gets stuck in my head a lot. Lance told me it’s not a positive song, that the singer is in the wrong for how he feels, but... I had this idea for it and I dunno we’ll see...” Keith looked at the karaoke host and said, “Can you cue the music?”

Those first few notes played and Lance had to remind himself to breathe. Then Keith punched that air right out of his lungs when he looked up with a shy smile and said, “So this one’s for my husband...”

He’d said it. He’d called Lance his husband. They’d stood on that stage and exchanged their vows, but hearing him actually called his husband...

Lance felt warm fuzzies all over his skin. This was unreal especially when Keith pulled the mic
stand close and sang:

“Now that he’s left the atmosphere
With drops of Daibazaal in his hair, hey, hey”

Of course Keith could sing without any practice or training, his voice only a bit shaky from nerves.

“Lance acts like summer and walks like rain
Reminds me that there’s a-time to change, hey, hey”

And of course he was good at song parodies even though he’d never heard of Weird Al before!

“Since he returned under Altea’s two moons
He listens like spring and he talks like June, hey, hey
Hey, hey”

Because Keith was a perfect person. At least to Lance. Because he was Lance’s perfect person. His perfect husband.

“So tell me,” sang Keith, his voice losing the nerves and gaining power. This earned him literal screams of approval from the McClain-Sanchez-Dubois crew.

Keith smiled his way through the next couple lines.

“Will you sail across the sun
Will you make it to the Milky Way
To see the lights upgraded
And that heaven is being Bladed?”

Did he just use a blade pun? Oh fucking god he was too perfect and Lance was literally crying about it.

“Tell me
Will you soar like a shooting star
Find strength in all your scars…”

Keith’s voice waivered again. His eye had met Lance’s and now they were both just tearing up, but smiling through it.

“And will you bring me while you’re looking for yourself out there?”

*

Why did Lance have to look at him all emotional? Keith was trying so hard to keep it together, but seeing Lance’s chin quiver. Fuck…

Keith stepped back, pinching the bridge of his nose. He did NOT want to burst into tears right now!

He heard a whistle from the side of the stage and peaked to see Rachel there with Lisa, Marco, Veronica, and Luis. “Psssst,” called out Rachel. “Tag us in, bro!” She reached out her hand like she was expecting a low five.

Keith leaned over to the side and tapped his fingers against Rachel’s outstretched ones. With that
all five of them were barrelling onto the stage, ready to take over the performance and giving Keith the perfect opportunity to slip away without anyone staring at him during his retreat.

He was offstage and back in the crowd five second later, but Lance found him immediately.

“I’m sorry,” said Keith, coming face to face with his husband who was clearly crying now.

In response Lance pounced on him, squeezing him tight in a hug. “Sorry for what?” he asked.

“I wanted to make it through the song for you.”

Onstage the siblings were belting out the words:

“Now that he’s back from that soul vacation
Tracing his way through the constellations”

“It was amazing, Keith,” said Lance, tracing light fingertips down Keith’s cheek. They were wet with his own tears. “I appreciate it so much.”

“You deserve some recognition for how hard you’ve worked.”

“Every time I look at you, I’m certain I’m doing something right.”

Lance was leaning in like he wanted to kiss Keith, he paused as Hunk’s loud voice asked, “Are you we group hugging?”

“What?” asked Keith and Lance in unison, but then they were both being crushed in a bear hug.

And within literal seconds Pidge, Shiro, Romelle, and Coran had joined the mix, smooshing Lance and Keith together in the centre.

“When did we last have a group hug?” asked Coran.

“Shhh,” said Keith, tuning into what was happening onstage, “This is the best part.”

“Now that he’s back in the atmosphere
I’m afraid that he might think of me as…”

Lance and Keith joined in, screaming out the words along with the siblings onstage, “Plain old Jane told a story ‘bout a man who was too afraid to fly south and never did land, but tell me!”

“You screamed directly in my ear,” moaned Romelle, being the first to break off the group hug. She walked back to Acxa, twisting a finger inside her sore ear.

“Uncle Coran!” screamed Nadia running up and jumping into his arms. He stumbled back with a laugh as he was getting up there in deca-phoebs and Nadia was not so small anymore.

“Can I have this dance?” asked Shay, appearing to escort Hunk away at the same time Curtis came to fetch Shiro, insisting he loved this song.

Then it was Keith, Lance, and Pidge.

“Welp,” said Pidge, tipping onto their toes then back to their heels, “I don’t know have a partner so if you’re expecting me to take a hint and give you some space…”

“We are literally surrounded by space right now,” said Lance. On stage his siblings were singing
along to the “nana nana’s.”

“That’s true of any planet including Earth,” argued Pidge.

“Alright, cockblocker,” said Matt, swooping in to grab Pidge by the shoulders, “Mom and Dad want a family photo.”

“Then I am definitely not coming with you,” said Pidge. However, Matt had an easy enough time dragging them away. “Unhand me dork brother!”

Lance offered his hand to Keith and he didn’t even hesitate in taking it this time. Lance pulled him close so they could slow dance.

“Do not tempt me into dirty dancing,” he warned Lance.

“Literally everyone’s parents are here so I’m not going to. Plus feeling pretty satisfied from earlier.”

Keith smirked and leaned close to Lance’s ear to whisper, “But we haven’t had married sex yet.”

“That is a… that is not really a kink,” said Lance with a gulp. “Still… yes, we should do that soon.”

“Give it another few songs and we’ll slip out,” said Keith, hugging Lance closer. Part of him was just so happy having him in his arms while his in-laws argued onstage as to whether they were to sing the old lyrics or Keith’s new lyrics, which they mostly couldn’t remember.

“Will you soar like a shooting star? Soar like a shooting star?” sang Keith, quiet so only Lance could hear him. He’d had his head dropped against Keith’s shoulder but he looked up in time for Keith to stroke his cheek and sing the last line, “We’re never lonely looking for ourselves out there…”

Chapter End Notes

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR READING!!! The interest in this story made me so happy <3 so thank you!

Big thanks to my fellow Klasix not just for the writing support, but the life support.

Love you all!

If you’re looking for another meaty story of mine to get into check out my Beef Keef and Sharpshooter Series. It canon compliant, starts very smutty then the plot comes in (like most of my stories.) The final story Shot Through the Heart is ongoing and a canon-compliant fix-it for season 8. You can jump in and read from there without the others just knowing Keith and Lance are exes at this point (but haven’t let go of their feelings.) For those of you already reading STTH, next update is nearly ready!

Spotify Playlist for Save a Lion, Ride a Cowboy
Join my Klance facebook group Klance Transformative Works or The Voltron Fanfic-ers group Please answer the membership questions! You can also find me on tumblr and @bangbangbeefke1 on Twitter

Thanks again! <3

xoxoxBBBK

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