Summary

Noticing how down Lance has been feeling, the team gets together to surprise him with acts of kindness, robots, and delicious food. They call it "Project Lance Week".

Notes

Happy V-Day, elizabesutonic! I made sure your favorite character got lots of good love in this fic. Lance has been thoroughly spoiled.

See the end of the work for more notes.

Hunk had many varieties of “very concerned”, but this particular expression, with knitted brows and an almost pouting frown, was a tier 1 concerned look.

“Guys, we need to do something,” he said, grabbing onto Pidge’s shoulder. “Lance has gotten so insecure he’s seeking validation from inanimate objects.”

In the background, Lance wailed to a floating light fixture, “But you understand me, alien table lamp! You appreciate me.” He began to sob.

Pidge looked unamused. “I think he’s too far gone”

Shiro shook his head, and like Pidge, continued to talk like Lance wasn’t in the lounge with them.
“No Hunk is right, to keep this team functional, we need to make sure…”

“We make Lance’s ego bigger than it already is?” Keith said, unimpressed while he picked his teeth with his knife.

“…that Lance’s insecurities don’t go haywire and mess up our Voltron formation.” Shiro glared at Keith

“Yeah, help me and Shiro out guys,” Hunk added in, patting Pidge’s smaller shoulder. Pidge just craned their head back to look up at his face in confusion.

“Uh, give him a pat on the back?”

Hunk smiled patiently. “That is not how validation works, Pidge.”

Keith frowned, returning his tooth-picking knife to his belt. “I’m not going to schmooze Lance’s ego back into working order.”

Shiro gave a loud sigh. “All I suggest is that we take the time to encourage Lance. Little things can make a big difference.”

“I’ve known him for three years, so I’ll help you out!” The buff yellow paladin grinned. “I already know exactly what I’m going to cook for him.”

His mulleted companion looked less impressed. “So what, is this going to be like… Lance week?”

“Yes,” Shiro said, eyes gleaming as if that was the best idea in the world, “Yes, that’s right Keith. It’s project Lance week.”

Keith tapped his foot in consideration. “Can I opt out?”

Shiro and Hunk answered in tandem, “NO.”

Lance was pretty convinced his life was over. Unlike on earth, where he got constant validation in the form of loud video chats with at least five family members and the constant rejection of human girls, here he was not hot stuff.

Besides the one comment from Shiro about how he was the sharpshooter of the group, the other paladins gave him little reason to think he was anything other than the sidekick, the comic relief that wasn’t even that funny. Even Kaltenecker ignored him if he didn’t have any tasty alien plants to give her.

“Kaltenecker, don’t you love me?”

Like a traitor, Kaltenecker turned away from her savior as she chewed her cud. Her four stomach compartments were the priority.

“Kalteneckeeer,” Lance wailed, burying his face in the course hair on her shoulder. She smelled like the worst scents of earth, poop and dirt, and was warm like home.

In response to this human getting all up in her business, she mooed and shuffled away. Okay, Lance
had been a little bit overdramatic about all of this, but now he felt the real salty prickle of tears. No one loved him!

“Oh, Lance?”

Lance swiped at the gunky water in his eyes before hastily turning around, “Oh hey Shiro! Something you need? Some milk perhaps?”

Shiro chuckled awkwardly. “No, I’m not that into dairy products. I was just here to check up on you.”

“Oh?” Lance blinked up at him.

“You haven’t seemed yourself lately.”

“Oh,” Lance replied, speechless for once.

“Is there anything I can do?” The oldest paladin tilted his head in the most well-meaning way. Somehow the gesture activated Lance’s “babble” switch.

“Well, I’m not sure? We don’t hang out that much so I have no idea what I should tell you to do. If you were Hunk I’d say ‘HUG ME MAN’ but you’re not Hunk, so I have no clue, and you don’t even have to worry about me, I’m fi…”

Without much warning, Shiro’s human arm came out, grasped Lance’s shoulder, and pulled him in for a hug. A wrap-around bear hug from a guy with a prosthetic arm shouldn’t have been that comfortable, but somehow, Shiro’s embrace was just as warm and soothing as Hunk’s. A little more firm instead of squishy like a pillow, but solid and reassuring. Lance took a deep breath in he hadn’t realized he’d been holding. His chest felt lighter.

“You know you’re important to us, right buddy?” Shiro said, and Lance could feel the tired smile in his voice. “You keep us smiling even when things aren’t that great. Keith might not like to say it, but he knows you’ll always have his back. I know it too.”

Lance breathed out slowly, and began to relax. “Thanks Shiro,” he said, giving Shiro an answering pat on the shoulder blade.

“Anytime.” Shiro gave him an extra long squeeze that stayed with Lance the rest of the day.

After that, it seemed way more often that Shiro would complement him on a job well done, or muss his hair fondly, or give him a lingering hug like he sometimes would for Keith, and Lance was so thrilled. If he had told his younger self that Takashi Shirogane would be sharing skinmanship with him on a regular basis, his younger self would have gagged on his own spit. Each side hug and fond hair-tousle boosted Lance’s moral, and he practically floated around the castle of lions.

“Shiro likes me more than you now!” he crowed to Keith and Pidge.

Keith just rolled his eyes. Pidge scoffed, “Ha, you know I will always be the favorite child, peon.”
“¡Buen día!”

Lance jerked his head around, staring down at a robot that looked like four black boxes stacked on top of each other with little wheels sticking out the bottom. It had a few buttons on its back and side and a display screen on the top box, but otherwise it was a sleek yet cute design.

“Lance es impresionante! ¡Lance es gracioso! Me encanta Lance!” the robot chirped, its blue LED lights for eyes changing between circles to lines, with a little LED curve of a smile for a mouth. It spun around, waving its cylindrical arms in the air and snapping its little claws.

It was vaguely internet-translator-speak, but it was definitely Spanish. “¡Lance es muy guapo!”

“Why thank you, robot, you are so right, but where did you come from?”

As if the robot hadn’t heard him right, the robot asked instead, “¿Cómo estás Lance?”

Lance grinned, “¡Bien! ¿Y tú?”

“¡Super bién!” the robot squawked happily.

“Excelente. ¿Cuál es tu nombre?”

“Mi nombre es…” for the first time, the robot hesitated. Lance took pity and helped the little guy out.

“I’ll call you…Conejito, ‘cause you talk so fast, little bunny.” He repeated himself slowly. “Tu nombre es Conejito.”

“¡Conejito!” The robot waved its arms with gleeful ferocity.

Lance felt like his grin had gotten so big it might break his face. As he bent down to the robot’s level, enthralled and charmed, Pidge emerged around a corner, grumbling to themselves and adjusting their glasses.

“It has a few bugs,” they groused, getting a tiny screwdriver out and fiddling with the panels on the robot’s back, “but the more it talks to you, the better at Spanish it will get. It also can grab you stuff and do simple tasks.”

“Pidge, you made this?” His mouth fell open.

“Well, yeah,” they said, unamused at Lance’s surprise. “Who else would be able to make a Spanish speaking robot on an alien ship in the far reaches of space?”

Lance’s grin intensified as the LED face/display of the robot began reading “LANCE IS A ★” on loop.

“I figured you might want someone to talk to in your first language, since none of us speak it… so… yeah.” Pidge’s eyes focused on the robot’s internal workings instead of looking at Lance’s face, which was becoming more and more smug.

“You do have a heart, don’t you little gremlin?”

“That hypothesis has yet to be proved. Come back to me with more scientific evidence,” Pidge grumbled. Lance pulled them into a smiling hug.
Lance spent a good few hours playing around with Conejito in his cabin on the ship, teaching it curse words as well as useful Spanish.

“El paladín rojo es un cabrón.”

“¡El paladín rojo es un cabrón!” The robot parroted back, its LED smile wide and happy.

“Bien, mi Conejito,” Lance chortled, patting it on the head. He heard a knock at the door and called over his shoulder, “Come on in!”

When the knocker did not accept his invitation, Lance sighed and ambled out of bed in his lion slippers, pushing the button to open the door.

It was as if their lovely remarks about Keith had summoned the prick.

The living flashback to the eighties, with his crop-top leather jacket and mullet, did not look like he wanted to be here at all. Yet he stood there, holding big sheets of white paper in front of his body like a shield, not moving.

“Uh, you want something?” Lance looked him over. “Like a fight?”

Keith’s scowl cleared, replaced with confusion. “No?” Then he looked down the hall, and Lance saw Hunk giving him giving a thumbs-up signal around a corner. Keith made a noise halfway between a grunt and a growl.

“Just… listen for a second,” Keith muttered, wanting to be anywhere but here, and pushed the “play” button on a tiny usb-shaped music device clipped to his belt.

Upbeat beachy music played, and Keith flipped the poster-board around.

The first one read “YOU IS KIND” in terrible block letters. Lance glared in non-comprehension as Keith sighed. He flipped to the next poster-board, which had “YOU IS SMART” in Keith’s god-awful handwriting, and Lance snorted at that, giving Keith a cocky grin. Keith returned it with the green face of a man dying on the inside.

The last poster-board read “YOU IS IMPORTANT!” surrounded by hearts that were god-awful looking and a few that looked like they had been drawn by Hunk.

The music continued playing as Lance gaped and Keith’s scowl deepened.

“Wait, what is this supposed to mean?”

“I don’t know; Hunk told me to do it.” Keith said, blunt as always. “Do you feel better?”

“Um…”

“Here.” Keith thrust the papers into Lance’s arms and stalked off, the beachy music playing in his wake.

From his vantage point around the corner, Hunk pleaded after Keith’s retreating figure, “Keeeeeith…”
“I’m done here!” he said in desperation, walking faster as Hunk chased after him.

When Lance opened his eyes naturally after a long night of pampering himself and cool green masks, Hunk was hovering expectantly right over his face.

“Ack, dude!” he exclaimed, nearly falling off the bed in surprise.

“Morning! You up for breakfast?”

“Well yeah, but what are you doing inside my room?”

Hunk didn’t answer him, dramatically shushing him by putting one finger to Lance’s lips. “Just wait right here. I’ll be back.”

The big guy scurried out into the hallway, leaving Lance dazed and more than a little confused. In the ten minutes he waited for Hunk, he managed to get some moisturizer on his thirsty skin, and just as he was patting the lotion down on his cheeks in the bathroom, Hunk burst in again with a loud “Tadaaaa!”

Lance dropped his lotion container on his foot. “Ow!”

“Oh, oops, sorry man! Didn’t mean to surprise you. I’m just so excited,” Hunk chattered, coming in with a tray. “It’s been too long since I’ve been able to make someone breakfast in bed.”

“Huh?” Lance asked intelligently, rubbing his foot and looking back into his bedroom. By his bed was a little tray set up on a metal support stand. Three separate plates were filled with scrumptious smelling breakfast food, everything put in a perfect arrangement with little sprigs of plants as garnish on the sides.

“I tried to make all your favorite breakfast foods from what I could remember, though using alien ingredients made it a bit tricky,” Hunk admitted, beaming as Lance cautiously inched forward, poking a plate holding what looked like crepes with artful chocolate and raspberry drizzle. “It was hard to get the right texture for the crepes without normal flour, but I think they turned out great after I added some of Kaltenecker’s milk and experimented with various grains and those eggs from that bird-like species we saw on the last planet. And who knew salt and sometimes sugar is a universal constant?”

Lance was half-listening, floored by the sight before him and putting a finger in the not-chocolate sauce to lick it. He made a happy groaning sound.

“The juice is from a fruit off of the planet where Pidge found their lion, and it has the texture and mouthfeel of pineapple juice, but it’s pink! I thought you would like it. Then there are scrambled eggs with various herbs and a sort of hot sauce I mixed up, plus some meat from a really delicious crocodile-like species from…”

Without further ado, his lanky friend sat his ass down, grabbed his utensils, and began digging in, moaning with each bite. “Oh my god Hunk, this… this is better than earth breakfast!”

Hunk beamed, watching his friend eat haphazardly with way more pleasure than Lance stuffing his face should have produced.
As he took one bite of the crepes with a chocolate-sauce substitute, Lance made a noise like a dying horse. “I’m going to die of happiness.”

“That was the goal.” Hunk radiated the kind of happiness one can only experience by making good food for another person.

Lance paused with his spork halfway to his mouth. “Aren’t you going to have a bite?”

“Naw man, I already had a taste of everything and a little of something like oatmeal… I think the Arusians called it Mfgog?”

“But sharing is caring Hunk!” Lance instead, thrusting a spork full of crepe in his face. “Sharing. Is. Caring.”

Hunk obligingly took the bite Lance had given, and they spent the rest of the morning chatting and drinking pink juice. Lance felt like he was back to rooming with Hunk at the Garrison. It was a warm, comforting sensation.

Lance had thought that breakfast would be it for the day, but Hunk had way more stuff in mind. After they talked for an hour or two and laughed a lot, Hunk went back to the kitchen to cook up super spicy fried alien bird wings with a creamy dipping sauce, the closest approximation to ketchup and chicken nuggets, and imitation raw chocolate chip cookie dough that was mysteriously purple. When Keith and Pidge tried to steal some, he swatted their hands away.

Lance ate it all with gusto, though he complained to Hunk afterwards, “I couldn’t eat more if you paid me.”

Hunk only smiled knowingly.

When Lance caught the scent of slow-cooking beef wafting out of the kitchen, he knew he was doomed.

“Is… Is that what I think it is?” The blue paladin leaned cautiously above the steaming pot.

“If you’re guessing ropa vieja, then yes.” Hunk smirked at Lance’s gob-smacked expression.

“You made space ropa vieja and tortillas?!?!”

“And tostones. I know you loved your dad’s fried plantains, so I found a fruit that has the same starch content and general composition.”

Lance’s shrieks of joy could be heard through the entire castle.

This time, the whole team was invited to also partake in the feast, because as Lance announced, “It would be a crime if any of you died before trying good Cuban food.”

The huge dining table was filled with fresh fruits, meats, tortillas, fragrant rice and beans, and empanadas with spicy-hot Cuban-style sauce. Lance poured the red-orange stuff on everything, while at the same time clutching his stomach as he groaned in pain.

“Hunk, you’re going to kill me!” he said around a bite of empanada. “My stomach, my poor stomach!”

Even Keith, who insisted, “Cuban barbecue couldn’t be as good as Texas brisket,” gave it all a try and was silently enjoying his food. Shiro didn’t cease his praises of Hunk the entire meal. Only
Coran didn’t clean his plate, but his tastebuds were weird, so Hunk was not offended. Allura enjoyed it enough to count for both of the Alteans.

“To Lance and Cuba!” Shiro toasted with a glass of the pink juice.

“To Lance and Cuba!” The team echoed, clinking their goblets together.

They finished it all off with a huge, thick, layered, melt-in-your-mouth blue cake that had bright buttercream icing and small sparklers on top. Pidge and Hunk had rigged it so a tiny fireworks display launched off the top of the cake without setting the cake or anything else on fire, and Lance was entranced by the display.

The leftovers were the food of the gods and lasted Lance a good two more days.

“To Hunk I will sing your praises forever,” he promised as he dug into some leftover alien wings, and Hunk laughed and laughed.

Lance was in the control room looking at a star chart when the two Alteans in the crew waylaid him.

Pushing a button reluctantly, he paused in his search for earth among the many galaxies and turned to see Allura and Coran. Coran looked obscenely pleased while Allura seemed a bit disgruntled.

“Shiro requested that as a part of team bonding, I do something for you to encourage your morale.” Allura said between her teeth. Lance’s eyebrows jumped up and a leer began to form on his face.

Allura looked mildly disgusted. “But for my comfort and convenience, Coran will act as my proxy.” She gestured to her co-captain.

“Lance! Lance my boy!” Coran said excitedly, picking Lance up off the ground and giving him a hairy smack of a kiss to the cheek. “If I had known you were lacking palutnose, or what you Earthen call ‘gumption’, I would have done this much sooner!”

He continued to hug and kiss Lance until Lance’s look of surprise and slight distaste melted into giggles. The mustache tickled, okay!

“Are you feeling reinvigorated?” Coran asked as Allura covered a smile with her hand.

“Uh,” Lance stuttered. He couldn’t say no to Coran’s enthusiasm. “Yeah man. Thanks.”

“You are essential to our formation of Voltron, and the blue lion could not have picked a better pilot.” Allura said truthfully from a safe distance of a foot or two away. “I hope my proxy was sufficient.”

Craning his neck in Coran’s strong hold, Lance nodded in her direction. Allura nodded in a businesslike manner back.

Coran gave Lance one last energetic noogie and returned Lance to the ground. The Altean stood straight and seriously, looking at Lance with pride.

“Know that you are my favorite helper on this ship and our conversations mean so much to me, blue paladin. If you are ever in need of palutnose, I am ready and here to supply!”
“Alright Coran.” Lance smiled with fondness, brandishing finger-guns. “You know how to work that palutnose!”

Coran’s guffaw echoed throughout the control chamber.

The next time they reconvened in the paladin suit room to get ready for some Voltron practice runs, Lance spoke his mind.

“Uh, guys?” Altean and earthly heads swiveled in his direction. “I just wanted to say thanks for thinking of me so much for the last few days. It’s the first week I haven’t felt lonely and useless around here, to be honest.” He scratched at his scalp and looked down at his feet, his usual bravado abandoning him. His friends just smiled around him, listening intently.

“And… yeah. Just, thanks a lot. I don’t know if I can thank you guys enough.” Shiro clapped him on the back, Pidge gave him a voiceless high-five, and Hunk seized him in his patented bear hug. Laughing in the air, Lance suddenly came to himself and looked around. “But wait, where’s Keith?”

Like a slow-moving tortoise, Keith shuffled into the room. He was covered in the most ridiculous array of stuff, and Lance couldn’t hold back a giggle-snort. On his head was a party hat, and he pulled at the bright blue shirt saying “Blue Paladin for President” with his free hand that wasn’t covered in a “Lance is No. 1” foam hand, like the ones they sell at football games. Keith usually looked vaguely uncomfortable in his own skin, but right now he was practically trembling with nervous energy. There were layers and layers of beads and light-up necklaces on his neck, and his shoes glowed as he walked.

Hunk nodded encouragingly, a smile on his face as he put Lance back down to face Keith. Apparently Keith’s first attempt at boosting Lance’s happiness had been deemed illegitimate, requiring a retrial. “Keith has something to show you.”

“Is that a blue boa?” Lance snorted, and Hunk shushed him.

Keith opened his mouth determinedly, as if he was either going to start yelling at all of them or he was actually going through with what Hunk had planned, then his lips tightened. He scoffed, shaking off all the extra costume accessories and light-up clip-ons while Hunk made unhappy noises in the background (“It took so long to put all that on you!”).

Back down to his normal mode of dress besides the blue shirt and surrounded by a litter of cheesiness, Keith crossed his arms. He refused to look at Lance, turning more purple than he did when he was angry.

“Lance…” he said as if the words were being dragged out of him, “you’re…you’re not a bad pilot.”

Lance was thrilled.
I'm feeling lazy and don't want to list all the Spanish translations because they are either a quick Google Translate away or you can Google the food names for pictures. The alien words are entirely made up.

If y'all want a key with all the translations though, feel free to request it in a comment! Also if you saw any problems with my Spanish, let me know! Hope y'all are as well loved as Lance is in this fic. <3 Cheers!

Edit: Got my Spanish checked over by a native speaker, yay!

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