

the secrets the shadows made

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the secrets the shadows made

by [Hymn](#)

Summary

Antok said, “You are an embarrassment. Of course you read all of them. But I bet you remember Lance’s the best. How many times did you read through it again? How many times did you catch yourself staring at his picture?”

That... was not a thing Kolivan was about to admit, actually.

“Get out,” he said, despairing. “As you like to point out: I’m not a drone, I *do* need sleep, sometimes.”

Notes

squeezed this out in time for the kolivance au event! this is for the no war au -- i didn't give myself enough time to write the fic i came up with, so this is just a snippet in a universe where honerva and zarkon never went to the dark side, the galra and alteans and the universe have been at peace for the last ten thousand years, and kolivan is the -- still fairly recently appointed -- paladin of the black lion. now it's time to choose a new paladin for the blue, and during a long, drawn out political circus of accumulating candidates lance and kolivan sort of fall in love, and stuff. yuuuup.

the title is a pretty good indication as to how over the top and dramatically absurd this fic truly is lol

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Oh, yeah,” said Antok, tipped back in the chair across from Kolivan’s desk. “The guards say they’ve had to chase your crush back to bed three times in the last movement alone. Jittery little thing, isn’t he?”

Kolivan stilled, frowning down at his Emperor’s mostly ridiculous missive. Slowly, he craned his head up to meet Antok’s expectant, pleased stare. “...Excuse me?”

“Your *crush*. You know the one. Human, quick, with a mouth and ass that just won’t quit.”

To his utter dismay, Kolivan felt himself very nearly flushing at the lewd phrasing. An image of Lance’s posterior -- because who else could Antok be alluding to, really? -- came to mind, quickly banished. “I do not have a *crush*,” he insisted. And then, slightly more strangled, “And on *Lance*, you must be joking.”

Antok’s tail curved in a dismissive, vaguely rude gesture. “All right, fine. Call it an *obsession*, then. Though that sounds a lot more creepy than something as innocent as crush, you know. You’re allowed to have those -- crushes. Allowed to swoon and gossip about his eyes, or something.”

“Please stop,” Kolivan said, deeply offended.

It just made Antok laugh. “Should be interesting to see if he can shoot. He went to that fancy Earth school, right? The one that’s part of the IGF.”

“The Galaxy Garrison,” said Kolivan, dropping his gaze back down to his tablet. Though, really, it was mostly just a lot of Lotor thinking he was funny; he tabbed it off, vowing to muddle through it on break the following day, and leaned back in his chair with a sigh. “His results were, well... Mostly his files just complained about how much of a handful he was. A lot of inconsistency about his marksmanship, though.”

“Oh?” Antok beamed at him, not at all kindly. “Read all of the candidates files, do you? Each and every one? All --”

“Three hundred thirty two,” drawled Kolivan, narrowing his eyes. “And yes, actually, I *did*.”

The chair legs came down with a clatter and screech of metal on metal. Kolivan hid his wince, and instead tidied up his desk pointedly, hoping his friend would take the hint. Antok didn’t, of course. He just said, “You are an embarrassment. Of course you read all of them. But I bet you remember Lance’s the best. How many times did you read through it again? How many times did you catch yourself staring at his picture?”

That... was not a thing Kolivan was about to admit, actually.

“Get out,” he said, despairing. “As you like to point out: I’m not a drone, I *do* need sleep, sometimes.”

“Yes, but what about your human obsession? Apparently *he’s* not sleeping, you may as well stay up late together having a moment. Arrange a moonlit meeting, maybe, so you can swoop

in and --”

“Out!” Kolivan cried, and, laughing, Antok went.

Once he was alone, Kolivan gave in to the urge to groan, rubbing at his face. He *was* tired, actually, and a hint of a headache had started to encroach not quite a *varga* ago. The candidates -- all *three hundred thirty two* of them -- would be divvied up into shifts to try their hand on the Castleship’s firing range starting at dawn, and Kolivan was expected to be there before anyone else.

Just the thought of the rapid retort of ion blasters echoing about his head was enough to make him wince. He hardly had the energy let alone the *desire* to think on what Antok was trying to imply -- on the mystery of why one of the few candidates sent from Earth had taken to haunting the halls well past curfew.

Maybe Lance was --

No. Kolivan would not entertain such notions, especially not now.

He sighed. Turning off his desk light he went for his private quarters, exchanging the stifling layers of his daily wear for the easy simplicity of pajamas. Sliding into bed, he tried to find a comfortable position -- twisting and turning and then sighing out, relaxing into the softness of the mattress, the quiet and darkness of his now-familiar room.

Sleep would be a welcome respite.

* * *

Of course, sleep would not come.

He had nearly dozed off once or twice but always snapped awake, convinced he was late for some meeting, before he could succumb entirely. After three *varga* of itchy eyes and increased restlessness Kolivan couldn’t bear to linger in his bed any longer. Exhaustion and the late hour made him fanciful, perhaps, because he didn’t bother redressing or even finding his boots. Barefoot, barely dressed -- it was Kolivan who would haunt the halls this night, apparently.

What romantic nonsense, he decided, torn between amusement and embarrassment.

Still, he did not turn back. There *was* something romantic about the Castleship during its night cycle, perhaps more haunting still for being planetside. Even after fourteen incarnations, the design retained much of its original ideals: shining white walls, soft blue lights at regular intervals, high ceilings -- it gave off an atmosphere of a holy site, almost, glowing even in the dark.

Kolivan couldn’t help but wonder at what had made an Altean choose *black* as the head of Voltron. A white lion seemed more in line with their aesthetic, after all. But perhaps the late King Alfor had not chosen -- perhaps, instead, he had merely been the catalyst that allowed

Voltron to take shape as it was *meant* to be. As though Voltron had always existed, merely waiting to take form.

Shaking his head, Kolivan dragged his mind from fanciful musings.

He should turn back -- try again to sleep. Soon enough his alarm would sound and he would have to drag himself upright once more, garb himself in black and white armor and be the face and voice of Voltron for countless beings, all of whom wished for nothing more than the same chance, the same *gift* that had been granted him.

Despite the honor, Kolivan wished desperately that they were already at the Blue Lion and the final ceremony. The weight of responsibility was so heavy, and sometimes he feared he might turn to stone beneath it, only to crumble in the next instance.

Right. That was more than enough.

If all his late-night wanderings would give him were morose thoughts, then he had best try his luck once more with sleep. He would turn around and go back to bed. Before any guards caught sight of him and word spread that the Black Paladin was walking about *barefoot* in his *sleep clothes*. What had he even been thinking? He was such a fool, he --

Oh.

Kolivan stilled, glancing about until he was absolutely certain that, *yes*, he was near the wing where --

Kolivan wrinkled his nose, considering. He hadn't been looking for him. He *hadn't*, no matter what Antok might have liked to imply if he knew. Despite himself, Kolivan began walking again, steps steady if curiously hesitant, as though each stride carried some *weight* to it, some hidden purpose other than merely propelling him forward through space. It --

Stupid.

That was stupid; Kolivan had just been... wandering. Through the halls, late at night, unable to sleep. And if he had just so *happened* to wander, entirely without meaning to, near where the candidates were housed -- and one candidate in particular at that, well...

That was just happenstance.

Since I'm here, he told himself, letting the thought coalesce slowly with resolve, *I'll just... take a look. Make certain no one is out of their rooms. And if they are then I'll tell them to go to bed, remind them of their duties, the trials awaiting them, that they are representing their people, their world, their very --*

Ah.

Kolivan's steps faltered, coming to a halt right at the bend, arrested by the sight before him.

The main corridor of this wing was set against the hull of the ship, allowing for wide, arched observation windows. The triad of moons cast pale green and icy blue streaks against the

white halls, gone muted and turned secretive by the dark.

And there, a quarter of the way down the hall, was Lance.

Like Kolivan, he was dressed only in sleep clothes, the collar wide enough that it bared most of one muscular shoulder. He was curled up onto a cushioned seat before a window, forehead tipped against the cool glass, facing Kolivan but with his eyes shut. The sweep of his lashes cast fractured shadows, and the line of his neck was vulnerable, gracefully arched and devastatingly exposed.

Kolivan's breath stuttered to a stop.

-- he -- beautiful, he is so -- so --

Inhaling sharply, Kolivan stopped the thought before it could continue. He hadn't -- that hadn't been what he had *meant* to think, not at all. But he was *tired*, and there really was something about the night, or *this* night in particular. Something about the secrets the shadows made, and the stillness of silence within these halls that -- it had been like entering a still point in time, a place that echoed with *something*, something powerful and transcendent that caught even at Kolivan's heart, pulling and plucking at him as it took him over.

He was helpless but to acknowledge the truth, here, like this. Especially with Lance looking so strange, still and unknown, oddly mysterious, cast in shadows and celestial light; alone and lonely, he --

(-- beautiful --)

"Lance," Kolivan said, again without quite meaning to.

Though his voice was quiet and the hallway long, it carried. Kolivan saw Lance flinch, startled, and bang his forehead into the window. "*Quiznak*," came the low-voiced hiss, and the -- the magic, or whatever it had been, of the previous tableau snapped and faded, releasing him.

Kolivan felt like himself again, and that was finally, recognizably *Lance*, all right, rubbing at his forehead gingerly. Snorting, Kolivan hurried down the hall toward him, hand outstretched.

"Let me see."

"Wha -- Kolivan! You startled me, dude, what the *hell* --"

Frowning, Kolivan grasped the human's chin firmly in hand and angled him toward the faint moonlight. "You are meant to be in bed," he chastised, though gentler than he should have. "Hm. This might bruise. Are you dizzy? I can take you to the med bay if you --"

"Oh, my *God*." Lance laughed, and Kolivan nearly jumped when fingertips made contact with Kolivan's naked forearm, bared in his sleeping clothes. "I'm fine, dude. It was just a little bump. No concussion, I promise. What are you doing awake?"

“...Patrolling,” Kolivan decided, still eyeing the smooth skin of Lance’s forehead, the shadows that shifted beneath his glossy brown tufts of hair. Even having spent so much time in a bustling hub of diversity for the later half of his life, Kolivan still found Lance so *alien*, so entirely outside his realm of reference. It was -- startling, to say the least. Distracting.

Beautiful, he thought once more, and was bewildered at the way his chest was aching.

Slowly, he dropped his hand.

Lance’s fingers slid along his arm, circled coyly about his wrist in passing, and scraped short, blunted human nails against Kolivan’s broad palm, each barely-there touch electric.

Kolivan shivered, breath catching. His whole existence contracted to hyper-focused awareness of those brief points of contact. They were the entirety of the universe in that one moment, for those few brief heartbeats. It was Lance; *everything* was Lance -- his scent, his blue eyes; his cockily arched eyebrow; the vulnerable slant to his mouth. Kolivan could almost taste him, felt overwhelmed and reeling, felt --

Lance’s hand let him go, falling back to his lap where he fiddled with the hem of his long shirt. Kolivan stared for a moment, barely breathing, the floor becoming solid beneath his feet once more.

The moment, strange and -- and *something*, Kolivan still didn’t know what, exactly, but he was never going to skip sleep again if this was the sort of weirdness that continuously befell him when he *did* -- managed to pass them by, more or less unscathed.

Frowning, Kolivan stepped back to an appropriate distance. For his part, Lance merely leaned back against the window once more, head lolling indolently. A lazy grin etched across his face, but his eyes still looked dark and too steady, solemn in the night. He said, “Patrolling, huh? I hear they’ve got guards for that. You sure take your job seriously, Black Paladin, bare feet and all.”

“Of course,” said Kolivan, decidedly ignoring the comment as to his attire. “As all paladins should. We are the universe’s best defenders, we --”

“Ah ah,” Lance cut in. “Not *best*. I think the IGF might get into a snit to hear you dismiss the last, oh, thousands of years of intergalactic effort to keep the peace as second fiddle to a giant war machine that mostly just looks impressive and does tricks at important events.”

“A snit,” repeated Kolivan, voice nearly flat.

Almost as though he could hear the checked amusement, Lance winked. “Just a tiny one. What are you really doing out here, Kolivan? Can’t sleep? Is that a hazard of being one of the universe’s lofty defenders? Too much responsibility breeding insomnia, hm, maybe I should rethink --”

“*Lance.*”

Lance shrugged, gaze flickering back out the window, toward the distance. "You ever get homesick?" he asked before Kolivan could answer any of his previous questions. Irrked, Kolivan scowled at him, folding his hands carefully behind his back to try and gather some modicum of professionalism to this entirely strange conversation.

And then he realized -- homesickness. Kolivan had heard the human speaking of his family -- large and closely knit -- that he had left back home, on Earth. No wonder his sleep was troubled, if he was suffering so. No wonder he sought the distant horizon.

It was awkward, attempting comfort. Kolivan was not well-versed in it, but he could make the attempt at company -- at idle chatter, perhaps. He said, "Not... as such, no."

"Really?"

Kolivan traced his sight along Lance's profile, catching on the uptilt of his nose, the somber press of his lips as he quirked them into something not quite a smile, but not quite anything else, either. "No," Kolivan admitted. "My father was... a hard man. And the village I come from was not kind, either."

"*Village*," Lance said, face turning back to Kolivan all at once, eyes wide and mouth curling with pleasure. "You're from a *village*? Not somewhere big and sprawling and metropolis? Just a tiny little -- what was it?"

Startled by Lance's interest, Kolivan hesitated. Then he shrugged a little helplessly. "A fishing village."

"*Fishing*," Lance breathed.

"Yes," Kolivan said, brows furrowing. He was decidedly bewildered, now. "It was off a coast with deep, cold waters, perfect for *ghaidzya* to breed in. They are big enough to eat a Galra whole."

"Holy crow," Lance squeaked. "Are you -- seriously? *That* is what you guys fished? How the --"

Exasperated, Kolivan said, "*Lance*. You are supposed to be asleep. You are all going to the firing ranges tomorrow and you should be well-rested."

"Pshaw." Lance waved a dismissive hand. "I'm not worried. Are you worried? About little ol' *me*? Why, my dear Black Paladin, you shouldn't be! We all know the trials are just for show. The lions pick whoever they want, regardless of tests."

"Still," Kolivan argued, despite the truth of that. "You should --"

Lance stood up, a clean, smooth motion that was all lean muscle and rolling shoulders and hips. Kolivan, for some reason he could not have articulated under threat of death, nearly swallowed his tongue, staring. Lance smirked. Then he sidled even closer, and in a voice gone soft and lilting, said, "Fine. Bed time it is, then. Are you going to come see me to my room, Black Paladin? Tuck me in to be certain I stay there like a good boy?"

“Hn,” was about all Kolivan’s brain managed, curiously blank.

Chuckling, Lance clapped a friendly hand to Kolivan’s arm, hot where the edge of his palm met Kolivan’s bared bicep. “And don’t worry about tomorrow,” he said, squeezing once before letting go. “I’m an *excellent* shot, Kolivan.”

Forcing his tongue to unstick from the roof of his mouth, Kolivan pivoted on his heel to watch the human go. “Not according to your CO,” he said, which was absurd, because it made Lance stop in his tracks when he’d been about to palm his door open. He needed to go to sleep -- and so did Kolivan.

Still, Kolivan was oddly grateful when Lance turned to him, all over-the-top wounded pride.

“Hey, now, they don’t --”

“I’ll help you,” Kolivan promised, prowling closer. “If you -- need it. I’m better with a blade, but I’m passing fair with a gun as well.”

Lance’s eyes were round, the irises darkly blue as he tilted his stubborn chin up, staring. “...Well. If that’s the case, then -- sure. I’m a shit shot. You’d better teach me real good, Kolivan.” He cleared his throat, but his voice still sounded strangled and rough-edged when he said, “Think you could help me on my stance?”

“Your --”

“Mm, like,” he mimed holding up a gun and turned, stepping back so that the heat of him was a wall against Kolivan’s front, and -- when had Kolivan come so close, nearly looming? The curious, crackling buzz of his brain was still there, thrumming, and he didn’t quite think as his hands came up, hesitating just on the outside of Lance’s shoulders, tips of his claws nearly close enough to catch at the silken weave of Lance’s sleeves.

That damned collar was still gaping; the nape of Lance’s neck entirely exposed, the hard muscle of his shoulder shifting as he breathed.

It was his turn to clear this throat, stepping back awkwardly. “Yes,” Kolivan managed. “I think I... might. Be of assistance.”

Lance dropped his arms, tilting his head to peek back at Kolivan over his shoulder, smooth skin and heavy-lidded gaze, he -- it -- Kolivan swallowed with difficulty. His heart was *pounding*.

“Thanks,” said Lance, mouth quirking with secret humor. “G’night, Kolivan. See you in the morning?”

This was not anything like where he had expected his late night wanderings to take him. This was -- unprofessional, at the very least. Antok would no doubt be thrilled, smugly insisting that this was *proof* -- of obsession, or the possibility of a crush.

Ridiculous.

Kolivan was victim to neither of those. He *wasn't*.

But it was impossible to deny that Lance was beautiful; that something in his nature struck a chord with Kolivan's, tugging him along into the human's orbit. Dangerous; unpredictable; exciting. Like the start of a fight when you were unsure of its outcome. Kolivan was not an idiot -- even he couldn't ignore the titillating thrill of attraction growing between them.

But he *could* contain it. Keep it safely within the bounds of what was allowed.

Kolivan forced his breathing to remain steady; clasped his treacherous hands firmly behind his back, and gave a single, sharp nod in return to Lance's words and waiting silence. The door had barely shut the human safely away before Kolivan bowed his head and gave a great, heaving sigh.

"Good night, Lance," he whispered, safe in the empty, silent halls.

End Notes

feel free to hit me up on

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