

Not Another Goddamn Love Story

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/29435886) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/29435886>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Voltron: Legendary Defender
Relationships:	Keith & Pidge Katie Holt , Keith & Shiro (Voltron)
Characters:	Keith (Voltron) , Pidge Katie Holt , Shiro (Voltron) , Lance (Voltron) , Hunk (Voltron) , Coran (Voltron) , Allura (Voltron)
Additional Tags:	Aromantic Asexual Pidge Katie Holt , Aromantic Asexual Keith (Voltron) , Valentine's Day , Platonic Relationships , Arguing , Apologies , Fluff and Angst , Angst , Fluff , Team as Family , Hugs
Language:	English
Series:	Part 65 of Voltron Oneshots
Stats:	Published: 2021-02-14 Words: 3,230 Chapters: 1/1

Not Another Goddamn Love Story

by [SilenceIsGolden15](#)

Summary

Lance wants to celebrate Valentine's day. The local aces aren't enthused.

Notes

Early birthday present/ comfort fic for Naomi (justheretobreakthings). I hope this makes it better.

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

When Lance announced to the team that tomorrow was Valentine's Day, he got a variety of reactions.

"I'll make cookies!" Hunk exclaimed immediately.

Pidge frowned, not looking up from her laptop screen. "How do you know? We lost track of the date on Earth months ago."

"Holidays aren't about the date, Pigeon," Lance replied. "It's about the spirit."

Coran and Allura exchanged a confused look. After a few moments of silent communication, Allura was the one to take the risk and ask, "What is 'Valentine's Day'?"

Lance opened his mouth, excitement practically pouring from him, only to be cut off by an oblivious Pidge.

"It's an Earth holiday about love, usually romantic. It used to be a religious holiday, that's where it got the name, after the Catholic Saint Valentine, but its actual origins are from pagan fertility festivals that were co-opted by the Church to more effectively convert people, which is kind of ironic when you think about it because the Catholic saints essentially perform the role of demi-gods or lesser gods, which by their own definition would make them pagan too--"

"I think that sounds nice," Shiro said, just loudly enough to halt Pidge's infodumping, which had only made the Alteans look even more hopelessly confused. "It could be fun to have some celebrations that aren't about defeating the Empire."

Keith snorted and sank back against the sofa. "You'd rather sit around cutting out paper hearts while Lance uses it as an excuse to hit on Allura? No thanks."

"Hey!" Lance said, setting his hands on his hips. "I'll have you know my intentions are perfectly innocent."

"Sure they are," answered Keith with a roll of his eyes. Shiro laid a quelling hand on his shoulder as a shadow of hurt fell over Lance's expression.

"Just because you can't get a date, Mr. Grumpy-Gills, doesn't mean the rest of us have to wallow in misery too."

"Lance," said Shiro. Lance folded his arms and looked away, and Keith did the same with a scowl. It shouldn't surprise him that Lance would want to do this-- he loved parties and festivities and always wanted to be reminded of home, not to mention his crush on the Princess-- but knowing that couldn't erase the dread building in his stomach.

"Well," said Allura after a silence that lasted a beat too long to be comfortable, "regardless of the proper date, I think it would be interesting to celebrate an Earth holiday."

“I agree!” chirped Coran with his usual eagerness. “You Earthlings are so fascinating with all of your strange customs.”

“Aw, do you have to talk about it like that?” Hunk said with a whine. “Makes me feel like a lab rat.”

Allura tilted her head quizzically as Coran cried, “That’s exactly what I mean! Is it normal for humans to keep rats in labs? Or is it merely a figure of speech?”

Pidge, Lance, and Hunk all opened their mouths. Shiro beat them to the punch.

“It’s a great idea, Lance. Why don’t you come up with some plans and run them by me later?”

Lance instantly brightened up. Keith hugged his crossed arms to his chest and tried not to look like he was pouting.

Of all of the holidays, why did Lance have to choose this one?

Judging by Pidge’s expression, she was thinking the same thing. She closed her laptop with a decisive snick and clambered to her feet, saying, “Count me out. I’ll stick to my nice, quiet lab. You can keep all that mushy shit to yourselves.”

“How did I know it would be the two of you being the killjoys?” Lance’s voice carried an ever-so-slight hint of an edge. “The heartless scientist and the lone wolf.”

Pidge flipped him off. Shiro sighed and rubbed his forehead, probably exhausted with how despite his best efforts, he still couldn’t keep the Paladins from getting into spats. Hunk was writing furiously, most likely working on a cookie recipe already.

Keith bit the inside of his cheek and told himself Lance wasn’t worth the energy.

“I’ll be on the training deck,” he muttered at Shiro before standing. “See you at dinner.”

Shiro smiled and nodded, but his eyes were distracted; Keith swallowed back the spike of resentment as best he could.

Tomorrow was going to suck.

He took his frustration out on the gladiator. He had it cranked up high, probably too high, but even then he made it stagger with the force of his blows.

He didn’t know why, but for some reason Keith had convinced himself that up here, away from Earth, that this feeling would go away. That it wouldn’t matter how much he lacked, how strange he was-- he should have known better.

The gladiator came at him fast, hitting him hard with its shoulder and knocking him to the ground. But he got his bayard up in time to deflect the incoming strike from the staff and jackknifed back to his feet.

Shiro was the one who taught him not to be ashamed. Who gave him acceptance, who always reminded him that it was ok not to want what the world told him he should need. But those lessons were hard to remember when even Shiro got that look in his eyes. That distracted look.

Keith whirled into his next attack. It cut deep into the robot's torso, but didn't completely destroy it, which was exactly what Keith wanted. He didn't want the fight to be over yet.

Shiro was the most important person in Keith's life, bar none. But that look, that lovesick look, always reminded him that he could never be as important to Shiro as Shiro was to him. There would always be another, closer, more important, and this stupid holiday only rubbed salt in the wound, reminding him that he could never be that important to anyone. That the only love that mattered was the kind he couldn't give.

He ducked under the Gladiator's staff and felt the wind off of it push his hair aside. For a moment he considered letting it hit him-- if he was in the infirmary with a concussion then he wouldn't have to listen to Lance's neverending list of insults, but muscle memory kicked in. Before he knew it he'd cleaved the Gladiator's head from its body, and it dissipated into pixels.

God, Lance. It would be a miracle if he got through the day without punching him, especially if he kept on with the shit he'd been saying earlier.

"You're in a good mood, it seems."

Keith jumped and spun on his heel to face the voice. But it was just Pidge, leaning against the door without her laptop, her hands shoved in her pockets.

She raised her eyebrows at the bayard he was still holding. "Down, boy. I just wanted to talk."

Oh. Right.

"Sorry," he said as he dropped his battle stance. "I just finished a bout."

Pidge sidled a few steps closer. "I saw. You're about as happy with this whole Valentine's day thing as I am, right?"

Keith couldn't resist the urge to scowl. "Of all of the holidays, Lance just had to pick the most inane, useless one."

"I know, right?" Pidge threw up her hands. "None of us are even dating, so what's the point?"

He moved off of the training floor, towards one of the benches along the wall. Pidge joined him, drawing her knees up while Keith chugged a water pouch-- she hated sitting with both feet on the floor.

"We all know it's just an excuse to flirt with Allura," he said when he finished the pouch. His tone was more than a little bitter, but he knew Pidge thought the same, and Shiro wasn't around to scold them this time. "Hunk just wants to make cookies."

“I can’t believe Shiro is going along with it, though. How could he not know what Lance is doing?”

Keith shrugged. “He had a boyfriend before Kerberos. Maybe he misses him.” That was bitter, too. Bitter, and unfair, but Pidge didn’t call him on it, and Keith hadn’t been expecting her to. She wasn’t exactly quiet about her orientation, not like Keith was.

It wasn’t that he was scared. He just figured that people already thought he was strange; he didn’t need to advertise another abnormality.

“It’s not fair,” Pidge grumbled. “Shiro’s probably going to make us do it, for team bonding or some bullshit. It’s going to be fucking miserable.”

“Yeah.” Keith leaned his head back against the wall and closed his eyes. The ache was starting to settle into his muscles, and he embraced it. It was preferable to the ugly feelings he had inside.

He knew it was wrong. When you’re the odd one out, you have two choices: conform, or suffer the consequences. He should be used to the consequences by now. But it never stopped hurting, and no one else seemed to care-- no one, that is, but Pidge.

“If he calls me a heartless scientist one more time, I swear I’ll hack his room controls and make sure he doesn’t sleep for a week.”

Keith was pretty sure that was meant as a joke, but he could still hear the undercurrent of hurt.

“You’re not heartless,” he said without thinking, as he did most things. “You gave up your life and your identity to find your family. That doesn’t sound heartless to me.”

Pidge gave a short, harsh *ha*. “Yeah, but I don’t want a boyfriend or a girlfriend, which is *clearly* the only thing that matters.”

He rolled his eyes in agreement. “I’ll probably snap first. How much trouble do you think I’ll be in if I punch Lance?”

“A lot. You know how Shiro is about team unity and all that.”

“Could be worth it.”

Pidge snickered. “I’ll pay you ten GAC if you do.”

That got a chuckle out of him; he felt a little better knowing he wasn’t the only one who wouldn’t be having fun tomorrow. It felt less lonely that way, and they could close ranks if Lance got too annoying.

Yeah, he felt better. Just a little.

Keith procrastinated getting out of bed the next morning. He laid around for as long as he could stand it, then sloooooowly dragged himself through getting dressed. He was just starting to ponder how to get breakfast without being noticed when a knock came at his door, and he wasn't surprised when it was Shiro knocking-- full of dread, but not surprised.

"I know what you're gonna say," Shiro began, and Keith promptly cut him off.

"Shiro, do I *have* to?"

Shiro gave him a look that was half fond, half exasperated. "I know you don't like the holiday. But I really don't think it'll be that bad."

Keith made a skeptical face. "What about Lance? He was being a dick yesterday."

"I talked to him about it, he won't bother you." Seeing that Keith remained unconvinced, Shiro sighed and added, "Just trust me, alright?"

That was just unfair. He knew Keith couldn't resist when he said stuff like that, and those puppy-dog eyes he was wearing. Usually Shiro didn't use those powers for evil.

Today, apparently, was different.

"God, fine. Good luck finding Pidge, though."

Shiro smiled knowingly and stood aside, waiting for Keith to follow.

He led Keith down to the kitchen where everyone was gathered, including a very grumpy looking Pidge, who was tapping away on a table with just a little more force than necessary. Hunk was behind the counters, working busily away at something, while at the other end of the table sat Lance, with an explosion of colored paper and other crafting supplies littering the surface. Keith had no idea where he'd gotten all of it from, but maybe there was a closet somewhere filled with mountains of the stuff, or the Castle fabricated it all, or some other sci-fi bullshit like that.

He seemed to be demonstrating something to Allura and Coran-- as Keith and Shiro entered, he held up a heart cut out of red paper for the Alteans to observe.

"On Earth, the heart is a classic symbol of love," he said, like a professor giving a lecture. "So on Valentine's day we make cards and give presents to the people we love, and a lot of them are heart themed."

For their part, the Alteans were paying just as close attention as a couple of teacher's pets.

"Human hearts look like that, then?" asked Allura.

Across the room, Pidge snorted. "Not even remotely."

"It's not meant to be biologically correct, Pidge," Lance said as he set the heart down. "It's just symbolic."

“Keith, Shiro!” Hunk exclaimed, having just then turned and noticed their presence. “Finally-
- I made pancakes!”

With a smile and a nudge, Shiro headed towards the counter. Keith followed a tad reluctantly, but was relieved when he found semi-normal looking pancakes; he’d been fearing heart shaped or otherwise love themed, but these were unadorned, if a bit lumpy compared to the real deal.

“Thanks, Hunk,” he said sincerely, and got a pleased smile in return. At least *someone* was having a good time.

Back at the table, Coran was frowning down at the papers before him, stroking his mustache thoughtfully. “Do these cards have to be in red?” he asked and Keith and Shiro took their seats.

Lance shook his head and capped the marker he’d been scribbling with. “Not necessarily. Most people like red for passion and pink for love, but it’s not set in stone or anything. Some people like to customize it to the person they’re going to give it to.”

“On Altea,” said Allura, “Pink is a mourning color.”

There was an audible pause while Lance tried to think of something to say to that. Keith shoved a forkful of pancakes into his mouth-- they weren’t quite like he remembered them tasting on Earth, but they were close enough to be comforting, even just a little.

Then Hunk gasped. “Guys, Valentine’s day is Altean Halloween!”

Shiro choked on his pancakes. Keith thumped him on the back as Pidge laughed.

“I don’t understand,” Allura said. “What is--”

“One holiday at a time, Princess,” Lance said quickly. “How’s your card coming along?”

“Nearly finished.”

Keith’s eyes met Pidge’s. Things hadn’t been too horrible yet, but it was only a matter of time before Lance tried to make them participate, or started telling stories about past relationships, or the jokes started. That’s when they’d start planning their retreat.

There was some rustling of papers, then the Princess’ voice, surprisingly shy: “Here, Coran, this is for you.” When Keith turned he saw Allura holding something out. It was orange, and cut roughly into the shape of a mustache. Coran looked absolutely delighted, and, ok, even Keith had to admit that it was sweet.

It was positively tooth-rotting when, a few minutes later, Coran gave his to Allura. Light blue paper, cut in the shape of a tiara.

By then he and Shiro were done with their pancakes. Shiro got up to take their plates to the dishwasher, and Lance stood almost immediately after, a few slips of paper in his hands. For a moment Keith thought he was taking the opportunity to drop a card of his own at Shiro’s

place, but he went right past it, and Keith only barely had time to exchange another look with Pidge before he was upon them.

“Hey,” he said, almost bashfully. “I-- these are for you guys.” He moved quickly, dropping one paper in front of Keith and sliding the other to Pidge. Keith picked his up-- a simple red heart, folded in half to make a card-- and raised a suspicious eyebrow. Pidge didn’t look any more convinced by her card, this one green, and Lance flushed. “They aren’t bombs, guys, jeez! Just open them.”

God, fine. Keith flicked his open, and his breath caught.

The inside had more pieces of paper stuck to it in a pattern of stripes. On the left were rows of white, green, gray, and black. The other side was the same, but with purple stripes instead of green.

“Is this...” murmured Pidge.

“Yeah.” Lance looked down at his feet, then took a breath, seemingly steeling himself. “Shiro told me that you guys were aroace. So I made these as an apology. I was a jerk yesterday.”

He actually seemed sorry, and that was what got Keith’s head spinning more than anything else. When was the last time he’d heard Lance give a sincere apology? Had he ever?

Before either of them could answer, there was a clang from the kitchen. “Cookies are ready!”

“Hope you didn’t use any scaultrite this time,” Shiro said, chuckling as he slid past Lance to get back to his seat. Pidge’s eyes had a bit of a sheen to them, but all Keith could do was sit there and look at what he’d been given.

He’d never actually gotten a Valentine’s Day card before. Sure, he’d gotten those cardboard ones elementary schoolers bought for their class parties, but those had never meant anything. School rules, everyone had to get one. Once he had figured out who he was, what he was, he’d accepted the fact that this holiday just wasn’t for him.

This had thrown him through a hell of a loop.

“Here, look,” Hunk continued in the background, probably handing out little plates of cookies. “I made them blue! Alteans like blue, right?”

“Thank you, Lance.” Pidge couldn’t conceal how her voice cracked. “I... this is really...”

“It’s ok,” responded Lance with an understanding grin. “I get you.”

For a split second, Keith panicked. He didn’t know what to say, he never knew what to say, what was right and what was rude, and that was when he wasn’t in a mental tailspin, how was he supposed to respond to this, and from *Lance* of all people--

He was rescued by a shadow falling over the table. Hunk, carrying a plate of cookies. He exchanged some sort of a look with Lance and the latter backed off, returning to his seat by

Allura and Coran. Just when Keith thought he could breathe again, Hunk put the plate down with a cheerful, “Here you go!”

It took him a second to recognize the shape. His jaw dropped, and Pidge burst into tears. She flung herself at Hunk in one of her usual desperate, grasping hugs, her card still clutched in one hand.

They were in the shape of spades.

“Woah, woah,” said Hunk shakily. “I didn’t mean to make you cry!”

“I think we broke Keith,” someone else said. He heard Shiro chuckle next to him, then his familiar hand on his shoulder.

“You alright there, bud?”

Somehow he nodded. Words took a little more effort to manage. “Yeah, I’m good, I just-- I wasn’t expecting this.”

When he finally tore his eyes away from the card and the cookies, he found Shiro giving him a gentle smile. A loving smile, and suddenly Keith’s eyes burned hot. He ducked his head to conceal it, but Shiro had already seen; luckily he knew not to make a big deal out of it. He just drew Keith close and ruffled his hair.

“Not so bad, huh?”

Keith smiled, surreptitiously wiping his cheeks.

“Yeah. Not so bad.”

End Notes

For those of you who don't know, the green white and black flag is for aromantics, the purple white and black is for asexuals, and the spade is a symbol usually associated with asexuality. For the aros and aces out there who have a hard time on this holiday, you're not alone. We're not broken, and our love is enough.

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