

Summary: Voltron Force fic. Pidge and Daniel were out Zee Sector doing routine work when something happened, something that messed with Pidge's mind and worse. What is it about his Balton Heritage that has made him the target? Pidge centric fic. Contains: friendship/possible slash between Hunk and Pidge, Pidge/OC, MPreg, stalkerism, dealing with the annoying Cadets in a more realistic manner, and more stuff that would give away the surprise.

Categories: [Anime](#) Characters: Ensemble

Genres: PreSlash, Slash

Warnings: Hurt/Comfort

Challenges: None

Series: None

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Chapter 1 by Zuzanny

24/07/2012

Voltron Force and it's characters do not belong to me. I am borrowing them only 'coz I like to play with them.

Hacked

by Zuzanny

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Returning to consciousness was a hard and gradual thing that mainly revolved around realising he could hear sounds and feel things. The first noises came as beeping of machines, swooshing air, foot steps on metal floors, and people's voices- although what they actually said was beyond him, it all blurred together. More noises came, things dragged across floors, creaking as people sat in chairs... Sometimes the sounds were louder than others, and sometimes that hurt, and when it hurt the machines would beep louder and more insistent and then would come the running feet and the voices. But soon after that, there would come coolness and warmth all at once and the pain would melt away and then so would he.

Physical sensation, beyond the presence or absence of pain, was something that soon followed awareness of sound. Sometimes there would be all encompassing warm snugness that would grow uncomfortable when left too long. Abruptly be voices buzzing in his ear and cold, with things running all over him. Sometimes cold liquids that made him shiver, but roughness dragged against his skin would take the cold away. Then touching all over, shifting, rolling, feeling like falling only to stop and be covered in warm snugness again. He would try to tell them to stop, but he couldn't find his mouth. But it didn't matter, they would soon go and leave the beeping and swooshing as the only sounds around.

There was one particular voice that would often hover beside him, and give him warmth around the hand. When that voice and the warmth of his hand were gone, he wanted to ask them to stay, but couldn't remember how.

Pain brought unwanted awareness. It cut through the fog encasing his mind, persistent clawing in his head that never really left, and would briefly fade only to return. When it was at its worst, there would come vibrations from within his own self, and a voice would come with that vibration, and then the feet and the other voices would surround him. With the voices would come the cool-heat in his arm that made the pain fade, but not for long. Never for long. Then everything would start all over again.

The familiar voice was back, and this time the warmth was not around his hand but... running through his hair, caressing his scalp. It felt nice. He wanted it to continue forever.

"I wish you could wake up and tell us what happened." The voice said, and it was such a shock to be able to understand the voice that he turned his head towards it and opened his eyes. There was a large brown haired man wearing yellow and black, leaning in close from the chair he was seated in. His strong hand paused in its caressing and reached across to the other side of him almost blocking his view of the man. "Pidge?" the man yelped, leaning in closer. "Can you hear me little buddy?" The man sounded almost excited. "Are you back?"

It was hard to keep his eyes open though. He felt so tired from just turning his head, and his eyes started drooping closed no matter how hard he struggled to keep them open. He wanted to keep his eyes open because he realised that he recognised this man. Both the man's voice and appearance were familiar and he didn't want to lose that.

"Stay with me little buddy!" the man insisted, giving his shoulder a slight shake. He realised that there was a name floating through his mind that was attached to this man and brought feelings of warmth and happiness. He felt his own face shifting to reflect those feelings.

"Hunk..." he breathed out, watching as Hunk's face lit up with his own happiness.

"I'm here, Pidge." Now the hand wasn't running through his hair any more, Hunk clasped both his large, warm hands around his smaller, much paler one. He tried to squeeze Hunk's hand, but only managed a twitch. "I'm here," Hunk continued. "I won't leave you."

"Don't stop..." he managed to breathe out again, eyes losing the battle to stay open. "feels... nice..." He felt like he should be sinking into the mattress.

There were a few moments where Hunk said nothing, then asked, "Want me to keep patting your head? Okay." And he did.

"Mmmmmmm..." he managed to vocalise before exhaustion pulled him back under. He didn't hear the approaching feet, or the voices of team mates and medical personnel. He was content with Hunk's fingers running through his hair.

There was another sound now, a light tinkling against glass. It was raining.

Hunk was asleep in the arm chair beside the bed the next time he woke. There weren't so many machines beeping while they did their monitoring as there had been. The room was dimly lit. It was only that he recognised the sound of the snores that emanated from the chair, and the particular feel of the hand clutching his, that he knew it was Hunk.

He squeezed Hunk's hand, not very hard really, but it was enough to make Hunk snort and snap awake. "Hey..." he murmured up at Hunk, who's eyes immediately focussed through the gloom down to him. Hunk leaned close and tightened the grip on his hand.

"Hey, Pidge." he could actually hear the smile in Hunk's voice. "Welcome back. How are you feeling?"

"Tired." He was actually able to speak it now. He rubbed the crust from his burning eyes with his free hand only to stare at the IV cannula piercing his skin there. "Where am I? In a hospital?"

"Yeah," Hunk replied. "Arus Main Central."

"Oh." He blinked a few times, realising that he knew where that was. He felt pleased about that, but- "Why?"

"We hoped you could tell us, actually." Hunk shifted in his chair. "What is the last thing you remember?"

"You." He replied honestly. "Being here."

"And before being here?"

He tried to think about anything before he had woken up here with Hunk sitting beside him. He frowned. "You." he insisted. "Being here. Touching my hair. I like that." He smiled, hoping this would encourage Hunk to continue massaging his scalp. Hunk didn't take the hint though, just frowned.

"What about before that. Can you remember what you were doing out Zee sector?"

"Zee sector?"

"Yeah. You and Daniel were doing maintenance on the remote sensors or something, and something happened."



He stared at Hunk's face and himself frowned. He had no idea who Daniel was let alone anything to do with Zee sector. . "Zee sector." he whispered to himself, eyes going distant as he tried to think of what Zee sector could even be. But it felt like his head had been stuffed with cotton wool, and there was fog that somehow started playing drums inside his skull. The more he tried to think about Zee sector, the louder the drum beats sounded.

"Don't worry about it." Hunk said, then once again started to run those wonderful fingers through his hair.

His eyes shuttered with pleasure. "Don't stop," he purred. "Feels nice. Takes the drums away. I don't like the drums."

"Okay." Hunk whispered. "You just relax, and I'll keep the drums away."

He fell asleep with Hunk's fingers gently massaging, scraping and stroking through his hair. He didn't see the troubled expression on Hunk's face.

Hunk wasn't there the next time he drifted to awareness. This time it was a young man   a teenager- with messy black hair and a grey uniform that was in the seat. The young man was leaning forward over his knees like someone with breathing problems. His eyes were cast down at the floor while he spoke. He looked vaguely familiar, but maybe that was a resemblance to someone else? Someone a bit older, also with messy black hair?

"I'm so sorry, Pidge." The young man sounded like he was on the verge of tears. "It's all my fault. If I hadn't stuffed up you wouldn't be here now. You wouldn't have been... hurt. I'm so sorry. I know you could never forgive me, but I want you to know that I really AM sorry."

A name connected in his mind. "Daniel," he said, delighted over that realisation.

Said Daniel's head shot up revealing tear stained eyes. "Pidge?" he hedged with such hope in that young voice, and scrambled closer to the bed. "Pidge! Pidge! You're awake!" Daniel was virtually yelling in his ear, and he flinched not at all liking the volume. "I really AM sorry!" Daniel continued.

"Okay." He said, not really understanding why Daniel should be sorry for anything except being really loud. His response had Daniel peering at him with a strange expression, so he did his best to summon a bright, reassuring smile.

"Pidge?" Daniel's voice shook with concern.

"Hmmm?" He smiled some more at the young man.

"Do you remember what they did to you?"

He blinked, his smile never faltering. "What do you mean?"

Daniel grimaced, and shuddered like someone had dropped a block of ice down his back. "Out Zee sector."

He frowned. Didn't Hunk ask him something about Zee sector as well? What was so important about it? Where was it anyway? Hunk had said he was in hospital on Arus, and Arus was a planet, right? Right. And so in relation to Arus, there were other planets and moons and stars and suns and asteroids and satellites and and and... Images flashed inside his eyes or all those objects floating in the vast never ending darkness, and more besides. How could he see these things? How could he recognise locations and distances between each object based on this or that constellation? Or by the angle and colour of the sun light hitting the console? Why was he floating amongst the stars? And why could he see himself seated in front of a console? Why was he here on Arus when he should be on Balto?

"So you're from Balto." It was a woman whispering in his ear, her voice spreading though his mind, dripping with poison and promise of horrors. "How wonderful, a BALTON Voltron pilot. Oh what delightful irony." He could feel her crawling though his mind, sifting through his memories and thoughts and he was helpless to stop her. "And just entering the most INTERESTING stage in your life-cycle. My Lord will be SO pleased." He could feel her glee.

His breath caught in his throat, and he tried to struggle out of the hands holding him in place. "No," he gasped out in terror while she laughed and continued to spread through his mind. "No, you CAN'T! Stop it!"

"Pidge?" Daniel's voice made him blink hard, and he was back in the hospital bed. The machines were beeping loudly again, probably to do with his pounding heart. He took in a couple slow breaths through his teeth trying to calm his heart. "Are you alright?"

"No." He whispered, whole body trembling. "I think... I think I have been hacked."

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Chapter 2 by Zuzanny

09/08/2012- 11/08/2012. Big thanks to Matt for his help!

Voltron and it's characters don't belong to me, blahblahblah, etc..

Hacked

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chapter 2.

(insertlinebreakhere)

Keith stood beside Daniel, both watching through the observation window as Pidge sat up to spoon some of the hospital goo (in some places known as food.) into his mouth with shaky hands. Watching their team mate struggling to do the simplest of tasks was painful, but they had noticed that once Pidge did manage to do something, he was able to continue to do so. It was almost like he had forgotten how to do absolutely everything, but if given a reminder, it would come back to him. Even so, Keith didn't like that glazed, half smile Pidge was wearing all the time now. Pidge had always been brilliant and sharp, now when Keith looked at him, it was to see that Pidge wasn't quite all there. It wasn't right, and it was something that a giant robot could do nothing to fix. It made Keith want to smash something. "Are you sure he said he'd been hacked?" he asked.

Daniel hugged himself and looked at the floor. "Yeah."

"Just as well I had all the codes changed and set the hangers on alert then."

"But what does being hacked even mean anyway?" Daniel scuffed his boots against the polished lino.

"You know computer hacking, right?" Daniel nodded. "It's the same type of thing just with someone's mind."

"But Pidge isn't a computer!" It was almost yelled.

"I know. That's what makes it so damaging." Keith continued observed the young man for a few moments, eyes narrowing at the discomfort shown in his body language. "Is there something else?"

Daniel took in a deep breath, gathering his thoughts. "It's just... I just don't get why they would DO it. Why? Humiliation? I suppose so, but Pidge doesn't get embarrassed over that sort of stuff, so why? To make him freeze to death quicker?" He raised his eyes to Keith's narrowed ones. "It just keeps playing on my mind."

"What does?"

Daniel pressed his hands against the glass and looked back into the room at Pidge who was laughing with delight over the red jelly as it wobbled in the dish in front of him. "Why would they have taken all his clothes off?"

(insertlinebreakhere)

Keith's blood had turned to ice at Daniel's question. "Perhaps it was both." he replied, and immediately turned and marched away to find Allura. It was something that he had not considered. None of them had. They had all ignored it because that sort of thing was beyond what they normally dealt with. But Keith should have known better. It was his job to know better. Daniel was still so innocent, of course he wouldn't understand the significance, but Keith did. It made him sick that he had missed it.

Daniel had been the first person on the scene, had found Pidge lying in a crumpled heap in the freezing control centre of that abandoned space station. Daniel had done his best to administer aid to their team mate while waiting for the rest of them to arrive. Keith remembered how he had vaguely noticed Pidge's clothes had been misaligned and undone while taking off the thermal

blanket to examine his team mate's injuries, but he had put that down to part of the process of defending ones self while getting the crap kicked out of you. And there had been plenty of evidence to show that Pidge had put up a fight. There were hundreds of holes in the walls where his Smart Stars had hit, and from the material also recovered, there had been just as many adversaries to fight off. Pidge was lucky to be alive. No, scratch that, Pidge would be lucky to recover even half of his mental capacities again after that attack. For the longest time they thought he would never even wake up.

It had not occurred to Keith that the reason why Pidge's clothes had been messed up was because Daniel had tried to re-dress him, or that there had even been a REASON for that need. Keith knew from experience that it was really hard to dress an unconscious person with help let alone all by yourself. Let alone in the freezing cold of space with virtually no life support, and with the chance that the person you were dressing had a broken neck and you could kill them with the very movements you are attempting to save their lives with. Of course Daniel would be bothered be this, it was a tactic unused by their enemies normally.

Keith turned into the room where Allura, Lance and Hunk were discussing medical things with one of the doctors. They all turned to him as he entered.

"Hacked." He confirmed, and they all winced.

"Are you sure?" Allura asked, and he nodded. "But that's good, right? At least we know he may recover. This is better than permanently brain damaged." She turned to the doctor. "Right?"

"As I was saying," The doctor pointed to images of brain scans on his computer. "There is no physical damage observable to is brain, either by injury or chemical inducement. However mind hacking does not leave physical traces."

"Man, we are so screwed." Lance said and started talking security related things with Hunk, while the doctor and Allura started discussing the known types of life forms capable of mind hacking.

"There's more." Keith interrupted, and caught the doctor's eye. "Did your lot do a kit on him by any chance?"

The doctor blinked, and shook his head. "No, there was no sign of trauma that would indicate it would be needed even with-"

"He's a Balton." Keith snapped, and the Doctor paled, before sinking into his chair muttering sacred prayers. While Allura and Lance both looked confused, Hunk made a pained noise.

"But... but...Wait, do you know, or just suspect?"

"Well from what Daniel just told me, I suspect heavily."

"But that means-"

Keith just nodded grimly.

"Do you think he knows?"

"Your guess is as good as mine, Hunk."

"Oh, my poor little buddy."

(insertlinebreakhere)

There was a huge bunch of flowers on Pidge's bedside table when Allura graced his room with her presence. He was staring at the large, bright selection of plants (that Allura thought looked like some random grab from someone's garden and not at all professionally attended), with his head cocked to the side with contemplation.

"Hello Pidge." she said quietly, and lowered herself onto the edge of his bed. "How are you feeling today?" He turned his head to blink at her and squint at her for a few moments while the cogs moved in his head. Then she saw the recognition flood through his eyes and he beamed at her with happiness. She forced herself not to tear up with the relief that recognition had given her.

"Hello Princess Allura. I feel like I am functioning approximately twenty-five percent of normal. But yesterday I was only fifteen percent, so I consider this a vast improvement. Pi is still missing, but that's alright, I much prefer using Tau anyway." And he grinned at her. "How are you?"

Allura blinked, not sure how to take his comments murmuring that she was well. She looked at the flowers. "Uh, these are beautiful, who are they from?"

"From father. But I thought his message was a bit strange."


Allura felt alarm run through her. "Your... father? May I see the card?"

Pidge just tilted his head to the side again and gave her a puzzled look. "Card?"

"Otherwise how do you know it was from your... your father?" She didn't mention what she knew about Pidge's family and how the only living remainders of such did not include a father.

But Pidge waved at the collection of flowers themselves. "I can only assume because They say so. Surely, Princess, you know how to read such language. I would have thought that would be essential to your position."

"Of course." she demurred. "However, I have been so busy lately that I must admit to being remiss in the practice of this one."

Pidge gave her a long, searching look  while she tried to smile innocently at him- then turned to point out each one of the flowers. "Message. Sorrow. Sorrowful remembrance. Remorse. Energy on adversity. Surprise. Sensuality. Pleasures of memory. Pleasure and pain. Warlike trophy. Mental beauty. Sweet innocence. Reconciliation. Sincerity. Forgive and forget. Sincere regret. Joys to come. Regard. Strength of character. A proud spirit. Impatient of absence. I think of you. Secrecy. Paternal error. I feel my obligation. Temptation. Impatience. Lowliness, envy or remorse. Fascination. You please all. Excitement. You occupy my thoughts. Affection. Health. . An expected meeting. Anticipation. Lasting pleasures." Pidge paused, and shook his head while Allura sat stunned and horrified. "My father is obviously a very strange man."

"Obviously."

"Either that, or someone randomly grabbed any plants they could get their hands on while on their way here, and these have no significance what soever."

They both chuckled over that, but Allura knew what was more likely. "Did you see who delivered them?"

"No. It was strange really, even the medical staff didn't see who brought them, just that they were here. I must have fallen asleep again, because I also don't remember them being brought in. I feel sorry for who ever tried to visit me. I feel kind of rude now for missing them."

"I think your visitor would have understood you sleeping through their visit. How do you know

what the flowers mean?"

Pidge frowned and looked back at them. "I... don't know. Not yet anyway. I just KNEW them when I saw them." He lowered his eyes to the blankets covering his legs, and started tracing nervous patterns on them with his fingertips. "The doctor says it's common when you've been hacked to have your memories all messed up. He said that they are still there, but it's like someone's come into your house and thrown all your belongings about. That it will take a while to clean it up and put it all back in order, but that it will all still be there. Do you think that's true?" Pidge's eyes turned up to hers with such a hopeful look that it made her heart ache.

"I hope so." She said, and enclosed him in a hug, only to pull back when he went rigid in her arms and made a small distressed gasp. "Pidge, Pidge, are you alright?"

His face was pale and she could see him trembling while he turned his head to look behind himself. "I just thought..." He shook his head, and kept his eyes low. "It's stupid."

"No it's not. Please tell me."

"I thought I saw a woman. Standing behind me." He shook his head and gave a mirthless chuckle. "How stupid, huh? I mean, you're here, there's no window where you are for me to be seeing her reflection like that. And there's no where she could have been standing anyway." He was still trembling, and Allura could see the fine sheen of sweat forming on his brow.

"Pidge," Allura said seriously, gently grasping hold of his hand. "I'm going to tell you something important. Not everything you remember will be nice."

To be continued?

Author's notes:

These meanings are taken from "The Language of Flowers", written in 1913, published in 1968. I don't know the author. Copy right is Margaret Pickston.

Adonis 🌹🌹 "sorrowful remembrance"

Apple 🌹🌹 "temptation"

Balsam 🌹🌹 "impatience"

Bramble 🌹🌹 "lowliness, envy, remorse"

Branch of currants 🌹🌹 "you please all"

Camomile 🌹🌹 "energy in adversity"

Cardamine 🌹🌹 "paternal error"

Celandine 🌹🌹 "joys to come"

Corchorus 🌹🌹 "impatient of absence"

Daffodil- regard

Flowering fern 🌹🌹 "fascination"

Fern, Garden chervil, Honesty- sincerity



Geranium (nutmeg) ❖❖“ An expected meeting

Gladiolus ❖❖“ strength of character

Gloxinia ❖❖“ a proud spirit

Gooseberry ❖❖“ anticipation

Hazel ❖❖“ reconciliation

Hartsease or pansy ❖❖“ you occupy my thoughts

Purple hyacinth ❖❖“ sorrow

Iceland moss ❖❖“ Health

Indian cress ❖❖“ warlike trophy.

Iris ❖❖“ message

Kennedya ❖❖“ mental beauty

Lint ❖❖“ I feel my obligation

Pea (everlasting)- an appointed meeting, lasting pleasures

Periwinkle (white) ❖❖“ pleasures of memory

Raspberry ❖❖“ remorse

Rose (dog) ❖❖“ pleasure and pain

Rose (full blown placed over two buds) ❖❖“ secrecy.

Salvia (blue)- I think of you

Scilla (blue)- forgive and forget

Scilla (white) ❖❖“ sweet innocence

Spanish jasmine ❖❖“ sensuality

Truffle - surprise

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Chapter 3 by Zuzanny

17 ❖❖“ 19 August 2012

Hacked

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Part 3

(insertlinebreakhere)

"We've got a problem." Allura burst into the room, causing the rest of her team mates to gather while she marched over to Keith and the control panel he was seated in front of. He span his chair around to face her.

"Only one?" Lance supplied.

"Pidge had a visitor today. His location has been compromised." She told them about the flowers and their message, and how no one saw the flowers being delivered.

"Creepy meanings." Hunk said. "I don't like it."

Keith immediately span back to the computer system to access the hospital security cameras, scrolling back through the last couple of hours from all angles, and muttering how Pidge was so much better at the computer stuff than he was. He selected the cameras for all the entrances leading to Pidge's location, as well as the central desk, and set the screen to view them all at once. Very quickly he noticed a problem with the time coding. "That's interesting." Everyone crowded around to peer at the screen. "Exactly one hour is missing from all these shots."

"An hour?" Lance piped up. "What times between?"

"It starts just before Daniel and I went to see him," Keith said.

"And ends just after my visit with him." Allura added.

"Strange that." Keith pondered out loud. "We know that the flowers were delivered some time between our visits, so why delete that much?"

"Maybe you guys saw someone, or maybe saw something that would help identify this guy?" Lance suggested.

Both Allura and Keith thought over their visits, but couldn't think of anything that stood out.

"It doesn't matter." Keith announced. "Pidge's position and the security here has been compromised. We need immediate evac."

"What about his injuries?" Hunk asked. "Can we treat them ourselves?"

"I will talk to the staff here." Allura said. "If we need to, I will request one of them to come with us." And by request, they knew she meant demand.

"Right. Lance, go check the transport. Hunk, guard Pidge. I'm going to keep an eye on security here. Communicate through coded channels only. Evac to the castle ASAP. Clear?"

They all scurried to do their jobs.

(insertlinebreakhere)

Pidge looked around him with wonder as he rode in the transport into the castle grounds. His face pressed to the window to look up the tower walls as they entered the gates, seeing the flags at the tops of the great spires flapping in the wind. Their colours were bright in the clear blue sky. The grounds of the castle were green and well kept, everything looked perfectly normal and beautiful and just what a castle out of a fairy tale should look like. But even though the walls were built with large blocks of grey stone, Pidge knew there were weapons and scanners hidden all over them, and that there were hidden traps all over the place, ready to fry intruders. "Because I

put them there." He whispered out loud.

"What?" Hunk asked, seated across from him.

"Nothing." Pidge presented the man with a bright smile, and Hunk went back to looking out the windows in a highly distracted way... that made Pidge think he was looking out for imminent attack. Pidge had noticed all his team mates had been behaving like that actually. All tense, and sharp and looking at every single person near them as though they were a threat. Pidge didn't like it. "Hunk," he asked. "what's going on? I know I am cleared to leave the hospital, but what has you all freaked out so much?"

Hunk tried to laugh it off and changed the subject. Pidge frowned, but decided not to pursue the subject... for now.

(insertlinebrakhere)

The cadets were standing in wait for them in one of the castle's many formal lounges. Pidge wasn't allowed to enter until Keith had gone through every single room before him, and closed all the voluminous purple velvet curtains. Once again Pidge didn't like it, but apart from narrowing his eyes, he said nothing. Not that he could have said anything at that moment anyway. Walking from the transport bays to the interior of the castle was taking all his energy as it was. By the time they had made it into the lounge, he was shaking and his heart was pounding so hard that he felt like he had just run a marathon. Hunk ended up taking his arm and guiding him to one of the overly fluffy and formal couches which he sank into with a sigh.

No one relaxed until they were all finally in the room, and Keith had locked the doors behind them. After that, Allura was busy ordering where the medical supplies were to go, and for food to be brought. The cadets were all chattering away with the older members of the team. Pidge didn't care. He hadn't realised quite how much just that much walking had washed him out until he found himself being gently shaken awake... with his head on Hunk's knee and Hunk's fingers running through his hair. And really, with those magic fingers relaxing him in such a manner, who could blame him from falling asleep?

"Gotta eat something, Little buddy." Hunk was leaning his head down so Pidge could hear it through the chaos that was the cadets and their interaction with his team mates.

"Do I have to?" Pidge whined. "Tired."

Hunk snorted. "Yeah, I know. But you gotta take your meds with food, so up you get."

(insertlinebreakhere)

Pidge could barely keep his eyes open during the meal, and only managed to get a few spoons of soup down before leaning precariously to the side of the chair. Only Hunk being seated next to him stopped him from falling completely off the chair. Hunk had to shake him awake again so that he could take his pills, but then he was listing again. Hunk exchanged a glance with Keith, who nodded.

"Come on, Little buddy, lets get you off to bed."

Pidge made a small noise of agreement, and not long after that Hunk actually lifted him into his arms and was carrying him out of the room.

Keith, Lance and Allura gave the cadets sharp looks that quickly cut off any snickers at that display.

"Drills. In lock-down mode." Keith ordered the cadets, who groaned, but stood to obey.

"What's their problem?" Larmina snarked while they walked the halls.

"Yeah, what did we do to deserve lock-down mode?" Vince whined. "It's like they hate us all of a sudden."

"No," Daniel said quietly. "It's because of Pidge." At the stunned looks of his fellow cadets he passed them and entered the drill hall. "If something can injure Pidge this badly, it would rip US to shreds."

(insertlinebreakhere)

The blood curdling scream had everyone scrambling from their own quarters and down the hall, weapons blazing and ready. Hunk was the first one in the room, and found Pidge sitting upright in his bed while he screamed, and immediately was by his side trying to find out what was going on, but could find no injuries and no intruders. Someone actually switched the light on, and the screaming stopped, but Pidge continued to sit staring into the air with an expression of horror, his mouth hanging open, panting heavily. Tears streamed down his face.

"Pidge?" Hunk hedged while carefully laying a hand on his shoulder. A shudder ran through Pidge's body, and his head lolled to the side to look up at Hunk with dilated pupils. Hunk wasn't sure he was actually even awake.

"Balto. Gone. All my people. Dead!"

Hunk pulled Pidge into a hug to let his sob against his shoulder, patting him gently, while looking back to the doorway at Allura and Keith who shared troubled expressions. "It was just a bad dream." Hunk tried to sooth him, qand even started rocking him back and forth.

"I saw it. My planet. Everyone. It's all gone. Oh my God, Chip!"

"Chip is alive. So is everyone else. It's just a really bad dream."

Pidge pulled back and actually grabbed Hunk by the lapels. "You DON'T. GET. IT!" Pidge growled angrily. "I SAW it happen! I SAW my planet destroyed. That was NOT just a bad dream, Hunk. I watched while it happened, and there was nothing I could do about it!" Then he burst into more sobs.

"I know Little Buddy. I know." Hunk looked back at his gathered team mates, begging for help with his eyes.

"It's true the original Balto was destroyed." Princess Allura spoke softly, and entered the room. "But it was fully evacuated before that happened and a new Balto had been built. Everyone is safe and well, Pidge. Even Chip." She sat on the edge of the bed while she spoke. Pidge pulled away from Hunk to look up at her through red eyes.

"How can you be sure everyone got off? With all those nukes, how can you really be sure everyone got off? And even if all the PEOPLE got off, what about all the animals, the knowledge, the history that's been lost?"

Allura ran a hand through his hair and he shivered. "We can't be sure, not really." She admitted. "We can only hope, and trust the information we received from the Baltan government about it. Remember I told you some of the things you would remember would not be nice?"

Pidge nodded, trying to suppress his tears now.

"This is one of them. But it's okay now. Things are better now."

"Promise?" Pidge's voice reminded them all of the eleven year old child they had first had on their team many years ago.

"Promise." Allura smiled at him, and after a few moments Pidge lay back down, his eyes flickering closed.

"Sorry," Pidge breathed when both Allura and Hunk stood to leave.

"No problem, little buddy." Hunk smiled back at at him from the doorway. "If you need anything, let me know."

Pidge didn't reply, his breathing slowing as he returned to sleep. Hunk turned the light off and together the rest of the team walked towards the lounge.

They did not see the ox eye daisy lying innocently on the bedside table.

Author's notes:

Ox eye daisy  " A token

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Chapter 4 by Zuzanny

19 Aug 2012-08 Sep 2012

Big thanks to Matt, Katti, and to Sempai Michael for their help with this chapter!

Hacked

by Zuzanny

lionette AT mailcity DOT com

part 4

(insertlinebreakhere)

Then...

"Can I ask you something?" Daniel had asked from the co-pilot seat, ignoring Pidge's not-so-subtle instructions to take his feet off of the control panel.

"You can always ask." Pidge had said, eyes never wavering from the stars in front of him as he piloted the ship.

"Why did Keith decide to send me with you on this lame maintenance ride? I can already see this is going to be bor-ring."

"Boring, huh? So you haven't noticed how even the most mundane missions can turn out to be dangerous, life threatening and even fatal to us?"

"You know what I mean."

Pidge paused before answering. "Do you want the truth, or an answer that caters to your ego?"

Daniel crossed his arms and turned his head to look at the wall opposite Pidge. "I want the truth."

"It's because you're a dickhead," Pidge told him easily, almost like he was discussing the weather. Daniel bristled at that, but Pidge continued as though he hadn't even noticed. "and Voltron Force is too important for your constant pissing contests."

"You can't talk to me like that!" Daniel raised his voice in offence.

Pidge turned his head and gave Daniel a narrow eyed look that promised pain and death. "Oh really?"

"You have no authority-"

"Do you even know who you are talking to, Cadet?" Pidge spat the word, and Daniel's mouth snapped closed. "I AM the Pilot of the Green Lion. I have been a fully fledged member of Voltron Force since I was 11 years old. I am the one responsible for the security network keeping the galaxy safe, and I am a NINJA. If I chose to space you out here, not only would no one ask any questions, they would accept any excuse I were to give as truth without needing to investigate"

"You wouldn't! You wouldn't do that!" Daniel shrieked with the first real fear of the real reason why Keith may have sent him out with Pidge after all.

"Wouldn't I?" Pidge asked, back to that casual tone, but now Daniel could hear the dangerous edge to it.

"You're not a murderer."

Pidge snorted. "Is it murder when you are at war? When you are doing what needs to be done to remove a very real threat to the life of your team? You just don't GET it Daniel. You're continual insubordination and outright disrespect for the chain of command will get us killed one day, if it doesn't kill you first. Either you pull your head in and start following orders while you still can, or you will be removed. It's that simple."

"So you're telling me Keith sent me here with you so you could space me? Great. Thanks a lot."

"No," Pidge returned his attention to piloting. "not this trip anyway. This is just punishment for you being a brat."

Daniel didn't really remember actually doing the attack, but he did remember the sudden, overwhelming rage, then he was on the floor blinking through dancing stars up at a standing Pidge. A standing Pidge with raised eye brows and a particularly unimpressed expression on his face.

"Your attack is sloppy." Pidge said, extending a hand to help Daniel stand. Daniel glared and reluctantly accepted the hand up, grimacing at the pain in his sternum from Pidge's strike to his chest, and rubbing at his backside where he had hit the ground. He could tell he was going to bruise in both places. Pidge stood in a relaxed yet defensive stance a few feet away from him. "Try again."

Daniel shook himself off and straightened his shoulders. "You're crazy."

Pidge's mouth tilted into a small smile, and stood calmly waiting.

With a cry Daniel charged at him, swinging a punch at his head. Pidge easily stepped to the side, caught his wrist to twist it behind Daniel's back, tripped him up, and sent him sprawling. "Again." Pidge ordered.

With a growl Daniel sprung at him, and literally found his butt kicked before his face impacted on the floor.

"Again."

"You're a freak!" Daniel shrieked.

"And your technique is abysmal. Again."

After several more times of Daniel impacting with the floor, or wall, or Pidge's foot or fist, Daniel sat in a pile on the floor, panting heavily and wiped blood from his split lip with the back of his hand. Pidge was completely unruffled and still standing in his relaxed stance, waiting for Daniel to continue.

Instead Daniel looked down at the floor. "What do you want?" he quietly asked.

"For you to wake up and be teachable." Pidge replied, equally as quiet. "For you to learn that you are not the centre of the universe. That in order to gain the power you so desperately desire that you fling it away from yourself, you have to LEARN to be responsible. Now, have you had enough, or do I need to put your head through the monitor as well?"

"Enough." Daniel whispered, then dragged himself from the floor to curl up in his chair to nurse his bruises. "I'm sorry."

Pidge inclined his head and returned to the pilot chair, flipping the controls to take the ship off of automatic. Daniel shrank a little inside when he realised that he also didn't remember Pidge having time to switch to autopilot before being attacked, and if it were anyone slower to react their ship most likely would have crashed or be completely off course by now. "Can I ask YOU something?" Pidge asked after a few moments of there being no sounds in the cockpit except Daniel's heavy breathing.

Daniel shrugged but didn't say anything.

"Why ARE you such a dickhead? I mean, you are obviously talented enough to get in the top three of the academy, why are you trying to throw it all away?"

Daniel remained silent, which could have been petulance or could have been genuine self examination. Pidge shrugged to himself and contented himself on watching the stars and being in his own company. He had plenty of practice being alone out here. Sometimes he got his best inspiration while heading to or from routine equipment checks like this one anyway.

But less than two minutes of silence had passed before Daniel blurted out "Well you taught me, Dad." and with that Pidge spun around and smacked Daniel up the side of the head. "Try again with the truth or your face will meet the monitor."

Daniel gasped and clutched his head, panting from the sharp pain even that light tap had given him and said with caution, "Okay, I'm really sorry, please don't hit me again. I might be at the top three but you don't see the other two fighting for attention, or the best jobs, or to be included when it comes to entering a battle with evasive manoeuvres, do you? But for me its all I can do, at least I get noticed this way... and okay maybe not for all the best things, but can you honestly tell me I would have been your first choice for this trip out to do even a simple maintenance run?"

With That Pidge interrupted abruptly, "Daniel, you have so much potential buried under all that attitude. Do you think I would waste my time trying to get through to you if I couldn't see it? Just do your best, and stop trying to compete with everyone else. Put your back into the tasks you are

given and give your best result no matter what. Fame is fleeting, and it won't be long till those two are tested and find out if they have the inner resilience to stand up to the challenge or not. If they do, great, but if not, you will, and all the other crap in-between will have been worth the battle."

(insertlinebreakhere)

The next time Pidge turned on the auto pilot was to demonstrate one of the many kata he ran through daily. Daniel watched in fascinated awe as Pidge's body moved in a liquid dance through all the perfectly controlled moves, strikes, kicks turns and rolls that the kata contained. Daniel realised he could imagine exactly where the opponents would be, and the injuries they would have fallen with. Some of the intricate movements showed Daniel that they wouldn't have survived, or would have had limbs broken. At the end of it, Pidge stood in the centre of the space, feet together and hands at his side, and bowed. Daniel clapped. It had been beautiful to watch.

"Will you teach me?" Daniel asked.

Pidge smiled and inclined his head. "Of course." And Daniel felt his heart soar.

(insertlinebreakhere)

Now...

Pidge's blood curdling screams brought everyone running for the the third night in a row. As usual, Hunk was the first to arrive, and switched on the light. This time it was to find Pidge standing pressed rigidly against the far wall of his bedroom, frantically whispering gibberish to himself. Hunk literally vaulted the bed to reach out to the smaller man and pull him into his arms. The others all watched from the door way while Pidge's wide, terror filled eyes darted about his room as though he was seeing completely other things. He continued his frantic whisperings even though Hunk was stroking his back and rocking him, and murmuring that everything was ok. Eventually he slumped, exhausted and breathing heavily, in Hunk's arms.

"You okay now, little buddy?" Hunk asked quietly. "let's get you back into bed." Pidge slowly turned his head, pressing his cheek against Hunk's shoulder. No one from the door was able to hear what Pidge then said, but they saw Hunk's back immediately straighten, and he spun, keeping Pidge against the wall, and turned his head to take a serious look at all the corners of the room. Then, still keeping protectively in front of Pidge, Hunk slowly lowered himself to check under the bed. Seeing Pidge's increasingly distressed expression, Princess Allura drew her staff and stepped closer to the bed tilting the edge of it to be able to lift the bedding. Keith drew his sword, and Lance his guns, both standing ready. Slowly Hunk reached out his hand towards the hanging blankets, then together with Allura, flipped them up to expose the empty floor under the bed.

Pidge made a relieved sound, and slid down the wall in a heap. Hunk knelt beside him trying to coax him back to his feet and back to bed.

"What the hell was that all about?" A very ruffled Larmina snapped from the hallway outside. "It's like dealing with a child. 'Monsters under the bed.' Feh!" The older crew members shot her dirty looks, which had her stomping off to her own bed in a huff.

"Want me to stay?" the other cadets heard Hunk ask. Pidge nodded solemnly and then was willing to slide back under the blankets. "Okay, I'll be right back." Hunk stood to leave, and Pidge's hand flashed out to grab his wrist, terror again flashing through his eyes. "Hey, I need to go get some of my own stuff, you know. I'll be right back." Still Pidge wouldn't let go.

"How about I stay with you while Hunk gets his things?" Lance suggested.



Pidge examined Lance's face for a few moments, before giving a single inclination of his head and releasing his grip on Hunk. Hunk gave Lance a thankful little nod and, after a meaningful silent communication with Keith and Allura, they all left taking the cadets with them.

Lance sat on the edge of Pidge's bed purposely not making sarcastic comments about how Pidge had pulled the blankets right up about his face like a little kid, or how big his eyes were right then. "So..." He drew it out awkwardly, while looking around Pidge's room, trying to think of something meaningful to say.

(Insertlinebreakhere)

Keith and Allura followed Hunk into his room where he quickly gathered his own pillow and blankets together. Daniel and Vince were standing out in the hallway.

"He said there was someone in his room." Hunk said in a low voice. "That he was paralyzed and they talked to him, and then hid under the bed when we came in. From what I could make out, what ever was being said wasn't particularly nice."

"But it was just a dream, a nightmare even." Allura said. "There was no one there."

"Hmm." Hunk grunted, neither agreeing or disagreeing, but pushed past her to leave again.

"I don't like it." Keith said when Hunk was pulling his stuff back through Pidge's door and Lance was waving goodnight to Pidge and headed in their direction. "I'm going to check security again."

"I'll join you." Lance said far too cheerfully for that time of the early morning.

Allura, Daniel and Vince watched them head towards the central security room. Allura sighed tiredly. "Let's go back to bed."

(Insertlinebreakhere)

Pidge watched every move Hunk made with wide eyes, and was silent as Hunk prepared for bed. Hunk turned on the bedside lamp before turning the main light off, and then motioned for Pidge to shift over so he could climb in beside him on the side closest to the door.

"Want me to leave this light on?" Hunk asked once under the blankets. Pidge nodded his head. "Okay." Hunk took in a deep, slow breath, lay on his back, and closed his eyes. He could feel the heat that was Pidge close by, and the blankets shook from Pidge's nervous shivering. Hunk cracked an eye open to look at Pidge who was now sitting up, and reached out to his friend. "Come here."

Slowly, like a wild animal, Pidge shifted close and lowered himself to Hunk's side. Once he lay his head on Hunk's shoulder, Hunk curled his arm around him to bring him closer. But Pidge stayed tense enough to shake.

"Relax." Hunk whispered, "I'm here." and he reached across with his left hand to stroke fingers through Pidge's hair. Pidge made a small noise, then with one last shudder, went limp. Hunk continued stroking Pidge's hair until his breathing slowed and he was really asleep, the he groaned and covered his eyes with that arm trying to block out the light

Under the bed, completely missed by all eyes, lay a blue salvia.

To be continued...

Blue salvia  "I think of you."

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Chapter 5 by Zuzanny

12 September 2012- 16 September 2012

Thanks again to Matt for helping out!

Please let it be known that I don't particularly like ANY of the cadets. I have found all their characters irritating, and seriously, if they are the best replacements for the current Voltron Force, the universe is so screwed.

Hacked

by Zuzanny

lionette AT mailcity DOT com

Part 5.

(insertlinebreakhere)

Pidge came to awareness with snug warmth spooned against his back and draped around his chest. Gentle breathing stirred his hair and tickled his neck, sending tingles throughout his body. He shifted slightly, and a sigh was sent through his hair and the arm draped over him tightened. A large, warm hand slid over the skin of his ribs before relaxing back into sleep. Pidge's eyes snapped open at that, blinking back against the sun streaming through the gap in the curtains, and he tried to remember where he was and why he would be lying next to someone in such a manner. His head hurt a bit, but not as bad as he expected after having a night of binge drinking. The hand drifted lazily down his front to rub slow circles in his belly, sending his heart racing in something he wasn't sure was panic or-

"Stop thinking, little buddy." Hunk's sleep-stained voice rumbled in his ear, again sending something like tiny electric shocks all through his body. "Just relax. You had a hard night. You're safe, and can go back to sleep if you want."

Pidge rolled over so that he faced his larger team mate, who still had his eyes closed and was breathing in a relaxed manner. Pidge had to admit he was relieved to see that Hunk was clothed, and after some self examination, so was he. His pyjamas had just ridden up and exposed his mid rift. Pidge let out a breath then bit his lip, still watching Hunk's relaxed repose.

"Hunk?"

"Hmmmnn?"

"What happened? Why. Why... Why are you? Why are we?" Pidge felt himself blushing and unable to finish the sentences. Hunk chuckled, then rolled onto his back, reaching his arms up over his head to stretch.

"You had another night terror last night." Hunk explained. Pidge lowered his eyes in shame.

"Oh."

"Yeah, real doozy this time."

"I don't remember." Pidge said quietly.

"Probably just as well."

"Is... Did I... wake all the others?"

"Yeah."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't need to be sorry. Me being here seemed to help. I don't mind. Sleep is sleep no matter where it's done. How are you feeling this morning?"

Pidge hesitated just a moment, but that was all that was needed for Hunk's laser eyes to zero in on him. "My head hurts a little." He admitted sheepishly.

"I'll get your your pills." Hunk rolled out of his side of the bed, his bare feet slapping against the floor while he walked across the room. Pidge felt... cold... now that he was alone in his bed, and shifted over to snuggle in the spot Hunk left behind. Hunk chuckled as he watched Pidge curl up like a kitten, and collected the pills from their spot on the bench and a glass of water. He stopped mid stride back to the bed when his eyes fell on something out of place almost hidden out of view. It was only now that the sunlight was beaming down and highlighting it that Hunk noticed it. He placed the pills and the water on Pidge's bedside table and bent to scoop the object up from under the bed. Pidge sat up to put his glasses on and take the pills, then frowned when he saw the wilted blue salvia sprig Hunk was turning curiously about in his hand.

"I think of you." Pidge recited.

"Hmm?" Hunk looked back at him.

"That's what that flower means. I think of you."

"It was under your bed." Hunk said calmly, not at all betraying how disturbed he felt. Pidge just frowned more.

"That's weird. How did it get there?"

"Dunno." Hunk shrugged, then purposefully hid the flower behind his back smiled broadly. "Time to get you some breakfast!"

Pidge groaned, but submitted to Hunk's cheery goading to get him out of the bed. He was changing his top and brushed his arm against his own chest. "Ouch!" Pidge yelped with shock.

"What is it?" Hunk was instantly by his side, looking him over for injuries. Pidge stood there topless, staring down at his own chest, rubbing at the tender spots with confusion and alarm.

"I think I must have slept funny last night." Pidge told him with bemusement. "I seemed to have bruised myself."

"Could be some of the bruises just coming through now. Let me have a look." Hunk pushed Pidge's hands away to lean close and look at his chest. "I don't see any bruises. Where does it hurt?"

"Um... here and here." Pidge indicated to the area around both of his nipples.

Hunk gently ran his fingers over the soft skin there, backing off when Pidge hissed. "You got some swelling there, I think."

"Do you think I caught a virus or something, and my lymph nodes are... going crazy?" Hunk

faintly agreed with the "or something", and Pidge then ran his fingers up and down his neck. "My neck is fine though. But it could explain the head ache."

"Your head hurts because your brain has been rattled around in your skull. But you never know what bugs are waiting out there in space, and you did get awful cold. I say you get checked out just in case."

Pidge pulled on a loose top and giggled to himself. "Yeah, that would be my luck, catching some strange mind altering, highly contagious space-flu."

"Could be worse. Could be space worms."

"Space worms?"

Hunk nodded seriously. "Yep. They float in the space dust and hatch on your skin to burrow into your flesh and eat you alive."

"There is no such thing!"

"Is too."

"Is not!"

"Is too. Same with space crabs, space monkeys and space slugs."

"Space SLUGS?!"

"Yep, they lay in wait on the belly of your craft until you come out to check the engines, and then, SPLAT! They land on your head and suck your brains out. Almost like the legendary Drop Bears in Earth really."

"You're so full of it." Pidge playfully slapped Hunk's arm and walked out into the hallway, heading to the dining room for breakfast.

"And you love me anyway!" Hunk called after him just as Daniel came out of his own room. Pidge didn't look back, he just waved his hand in a manner that could have been him flipping Hunk a bird, or just swatting a fly. Hunk chuckled to himself and waited for Daniel to approach.

"Tell Keith... Tell him I couldn't find the librarian, but I found the page ripped from the book exactly where we were told it would be." Hunk said under his breath, handing Daniel the flower.

Daniel thought that was a very strange thing to be telling Keith, especially since they didn't actually have a library that contained books with pages that could be torn out let alone a librarian, but he shrugged. "Where are you going?" he asked as Hunk started to walk after Pidge.

"Where do you think?" Hunk grinned back at him. "To get some breakfast of course."

(Insertlinebreakhere)

Keith looked positively exhausted when Daniel found him in the control room staring at the computer screen. Daniel dutifully passed both the flower and the message along on, and took a step back when Keith started cursing and swearing so colourfully and with such venom in his voice that Daniel was worried Keith may strike out at him. But Keith didn't. Instead he continued to swear at the computer for several minutes before he stopped to lean against the desk and buried his face in his hands. "This is driving me mad!" he groaned. "I can't find anyway trace of this creep, it's like he never existed."

"Sort of like... a ninja?" Daniel suggested, not really following what Keith was talking about.

Keith glanced back at Daniel at his comment. "Hmmm..." he started typing again, setting up computer searches that sent the information on the screen scrawling. "Or a team of them." Keith's voltcom lit up with an incoming call. "Go." he answered it.

It was Lance's voice on the other end. "The page is clean. The book is blank."

Keith immediately replied, "The page was found torn from the book and screwed up on the floor. Can't find the librarian."

There was a slight pause before Lance was back on air. "I'll keep looking for her and let her know you wanna chat."

"Acknowledged." Keith signed off muttering to himself "Now all we need is a Ro-beast attack and this day will be perfect." Then he let out a long sigh and turned to observe Daniel. Daniel stood stiff and awkward, not sure if he should be concerned about the scrutiny or not.

"Sir?" he hedged when Keith didn't seem inclined to stop.

"You've been..." Keith's eyes narrowed slightly, and there was a suspicious edge to his voice. "remarkably well behaved over the last few days. Why?"

Daniel looked down at his boots. "It's kind of embarrassing." Daniel admitted after a few aborted starts.

"In what way? And it better not be a Larmina-catching-you-naked type thing."

Daniel blinked at Keith, wondering if something Larmina-related had actually happened to him, and made a mental note to himself to ask her if she had ever seen Keith naked.

"Nothing like that." Daniel assured him. "Just that I hadn't told you. While we were in transit something happened."

"Yeeesss?" Keith drew it out.

"Well... It's just that Pidge and I... talked." Daniel rubbed the back of his head remembering the impact of Pidge's hand there.

"Uh-huh." Keith wasn't convinced.

"With fists." And Daniel told him about the "conversation" Pidge and he had had. By the end of it Keith actually chuckled.

"Good on Pidge."

"This thing is," Daniel said quietly. "I don't think I had ever really realised how serious all this was before. And now..." He looked at the wall. "I'm afraid. I don't think I've ever been afraid before. And... I'm sorry."

Keith stared at him like he had just turned into a penguin with giant pink bunny ears. "Remind me to have Pidge deal with all the deviants from now on." He said to himself.

"Sir?"

Keith shook his head and stood. "Doesn't matter. Come on. Let's get some breakfast."

(InsertLineBreakHere)

Keith and Daniel passed the open ballroom on the way to get some breakfast, and heard Pidge grunt. They poked their heads in through the doorway and found him barefoot in the middle of the the polished floor, running smoothly through some kata moves. Every now and then he would kick or strike and either grunt or ki-ai with it, with each strike having that audible snap from his clothing that came with perfect control. Pidge saw them in the doorway, finished the sequence of moves, then drew his feet together and bowed with his fists at his sides.

"Should you be doing that so soon?" Keith asked when Pidge padded over to them. Daniel noticed there was a flush to Pidge's skin and that he was actually panting. Pidge just shrugged at Keith's question.

"I spent the last few weeks flat on my back and my muscles have wasted." He explained. "I need to get my fitness back."

Keith lay a hand on Pidge's shoulder. "Just don't over do it , ok? I don't want another case of hospitalisation over a strained big toe."

Pidge let out a delighted cackle that continued on into belly laughter which made Daniel wonder if yet again Keith was making references to events that had actually happened. Keith was also grinning. Pidge wiped a tear from his eye. "Don't worry, I'll be extra careful of my toes."

Keith patted his shoulder then looked about the gym. "So where's Hunk?"

Pidge flashed his teeth again. "As if I would part him and his One True Love." Both he and Keith continued to chuckle over that. Pidge turned his eyes to Daniel, smiling with genuine warmth at him. "Come back after breakfast and I'll run through some moves with you, if you want."

Daniel grinned back with excitement. "Thanks!" Then Keith waved goodbye and herded Daniel off towards the dining room so they could eat as well.

(InsertLineBreakHere)

Hunk was at the table with Vince and Larmina, and unlike the cadets, was working on shovelling piles of food into his mouth as fast as he could. The cadets were talking quietly to each other, and very casually eating. Keith went straight to the coffee to get a cup, while Daniel helped himself to toast and sat beside the other cadets, telling them all about how Pidge was going to teach him some ninja stuff after breakfast. Larmina just about choked on her orange juice.

"Pidge?" She spluttered incredulously. "Teach? YOU? HA! As if he would. As if you would want him to! He's such a GEEK! Being afraid of the dark. Ha." The table went silent and still as all occupants stared at Larmina.

"Shut up Larmina." Daniel warned her. "You have no idea what you are talking about."

Larmina rolled her eyes at him and took another spoonful of her breakfast. "Oh DO tell, since you are THE font of all knowledge around here."

Daniel glanced at Hunk who had yet to restarted his shovelling again, and who held a dark scowl in Larmina's direction. Keith also had visibly stiffened at her outburst.

"I think you should take yourself back to bed," Vince was the one who spoke up first, much to Daniel's surprise. "before you embarrass your self further. You're obviously so tired you're not

thinking straight."

Larmina just scoffed nastily and went on to say some very derogatory things.

"Larmina!" Keith snapped. "Enough!"

Hunk abruptly stood, knocking his chair over in the process. Larmina's eyes widened at the violence held behind his eyes. "I don't care how closely related you are to Allura," Hunk growled out. "you better hope you never find yourself in Pidge's position 'coz I sure won't be helping you." He leaned forward and pointed at her, making her shrink back. "You disgust me." And with that he swept out of the room.

Larmina stared open mouthed after him, then turned to look haughtily at Keith. "Are you going to let him talk to me like that?"

"Yes." Keith hissed at her. "In fact I commend him for his restraint. I suggest you follow Vince's advice and return to your rooms. In fact stay there until further notice. Understood?"

"But-"

"NOW CADET!" Keith roared at her.

Larmina fled the room with tears in her eyes.

After she was gone, Keith sank into a chair opposite the two wide eyed youths who were sitting ram-rod straight in their chairs, and continued drinking his coffee. Wisely, they returned to their breakfasts and remained silent.

(InsertLineBreakHere)

Pidge was still in the ballroom when Daniel and Vince had had enough of the tense atmosphere in the mess hall. They wandered in and found Hunk seated with his back pressed against the wall just inside the door, eyes intently fixed upon their lithe team mate. Pidge was running fluidly through forms that were far more advanced than those Daniel had seen before, but didn't seem to have noticed them yet. Hunk gave them a short nod, then turned his attention back to Pidge, making no protest when they sat down to his left.

"He makes it look so easy." Vince whispered in awe.

"You should see him with swords." Hunk replied, a small smile replacing the scowl he had worn just moments before.

"He would so wipe Larmina's butt in combat." Vince said.

Hunk agreed. "Totally."

Daniel said nothing, just continued to watch Pidge's controlled and actually quite beautiful movements, imagining that one day he himself may be able to do the same.

Then Pidge suddenly froze mid spin, stood upright, and slowly turned his head to look behind him. He fell into a defensive combat stance, low to the ground, raising his Voltcom to his face. "Daniel," he spoke to it, making Daniel sit up straight yet confused as to why Pidge would decide to use the voltcom to communicate with him rather than just talk directly. But his blood ran cold as Pidge drew a hand full of live smart stars and continued, "call in all Lions. We have many, Many hostiles."

To be continued...

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