

**The Curse of the Third Eye** by Lionora  
Chapter 20: Deception

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Princess Allura went to her room after a day of planning and practicing for the next defensive action of Arus. At last her blue lion was completely restored and she was happy that she had been airborne with it. She felt a little bit more confident that this time they would be victorious over Doom. She hoped that the information that she had given Coran and Keith would prove useful when the attack commenced. She had maintained Prince Lotor's help anonymous because she knew that Keith would disapprove of her having contact with someone from Doom, specially it's crown prince. She had noticed that Keith didn't trust or like Prince Lotor at all. Keith had made many comments about his dislike towards the prince every time that they had a meeting. It made her sad because she really cared for both of them very much. Both were so protective towards her that it really moved her the way they treated her. She just hoped that she would never had to make a decision between them. Will all these thoughts in her mind, she got prepared to go to bed.

She wondered if she would see the prince tonight in her dreams. She was looking forward to it, because that meant that he would have a little peace of mind. She had seen how dark was the place he was in and she couldn't imagine herself in such a dreadful place for more than one hour. How could he stand to be alone in the darkness for so long? No wonder he reflected so much misery in his eyes. She just hoped that soon he would be free again and that that evil demon would stop being a threat to all of them, only then they could have peace at last.

Soon she had her head on her pillow and was transported to the place where all minds find solace in dreamland.

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Prince Lotor had been looking through the crystal all the spectacles that Masserath had been participating in the arena. He had witnessed the most dreadful of executions and fights where Masserath had been starring. Masserath sure enjoyed himself whenever there was pain, suffering and a lot of violence.

Lotor had known about these situations all of his life. He had lived the pain of tortures, the suffering and the violence since he was a kid. And even though he would approve of those measures some times at war; if he were to choose a way of life, he would rather live in peace in a prosperous kingdom with someone to love at his side. He couldn't help but think of his princess. He still had to find out why she looked so much like his mother. It was like they were two drops of water. They couldn't be related...they were worlds apart, but eventually he would have to find out about that.

He looked at the crystal and it was starting to get dark, it seemed that Masserath was going to his dreamless state...at last. He kept waiting for some hint of light in it. He didn't have to wait much. He saw a very bright sky and a lake. He moved toward the crystal as fast as he could. He helped himself out of the darkness almost in a hurry. He was feeling more desperate of getting out of that darkness as everyday had become more torturing for him to be inside of his mind with just the terrible voice of Masserath as his only company. He felt that if he would have to keep inside that darkness for much longer he would loose his sanity and his will to continue living.

He walked looking at all directions and at the edge of the lake there she was, sitting and staring at the

peaceful water. He approached her calling her name. She looked at him and smiled.

"Prince Lotor...how you've been?"

"Do I have to answer that question?" he asked kneeling beside her. "Well, under the circumstances all I can say is that I have been in much better conditions...I'd rather know how you have been.." he said with that sad and desperate look in his big eyes.

She frowned and shook her head, "I'm so sorry that this is taking so long...I wish there was something else that I could do for you"

His eyes softened while he told her, "The only thing that you can do is try to keep safe. If Masserath gets what he wants, nobody will be safe. He plans to conquer all the Denubian Galaxy, he wants to kill Haggar, my father...and even conquer the Drule Empire. I don't know what kind of demon is he, but he is dangerous and very powerful." He was shaking his head when he mentioned the last part as if he was remembering something.

"Don't worry, prince Lotor." She said touching the soft back of his hand. "Remember what my father said, soon help will be here."

He shook his head, "Sometimes I feel that it's not soon enough. Everyday that goes by that I have to stand Masserath's terrible presence in my mind, it just churns me not to be able to stop what he is doing. I feel so helpless"

"Soon, all of this will be over." She said trying to calm him. "And you'll have your life back, just hold on a little bit longer". Allura noticed that Prince Lotor seemed to be more restless than the last time she had spoken to him as if something had him scared.

He looked at her hand touching his and he grabbed it with both his hands. And while he was looking down, she could see a single tear running down his cheek. She didn't see him cry but that single tear made her heart ache, for she could see that he was suffering but she couldn't help but feel sorry for him.

Then he spoke softly: "Thank you Princess, for you have been the eye in the middle of my storm, I might have lost it a long time ago if it weren't for you".

"I have done nothing really...you..." she started to say.

He interrupted looking at her, "Oh but you have...you listened to me and sent the message...at least I have hope"

"Anyone could've done that, it's no big deal," she said shaking her head slightly.

He then sat closer to her and told her: "Allura, when this is all over and I get to be free...would you consider...being my bride?"

Allura opened wide her eyes and her mouth...she was speechless.

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Cossack was in his room, sitting down before his desk. He had been looking at some papers before him. He couldn't concentrate much in them. During the day he had made significant inquiries and he had found out that witch Haggar had been staying at the king's chambers. And tonight was no exception. Some guards had seen when she was escorted from her lab unto the king's room. It was a great chance to try and sneak into her lab. Tonight was the best moment to do it. He knew that no guards were escorting the witch's den. They were too afraid to even get near her chambers. Doomites were extremely superstitious and Haggar had been feared since she had been King Zarkon's advisor for so many years. But Cossack would have to use that fear to his advantage and sneak into that room and take that damned mirror.

So he dressed in dark clothes and covered his head, he got out of his room when he knew that no personnel would be around the halls. He silently walked hiding himself from bystanders or guards just to be sure there were no witnesses that could point him out by being out of his room at late hours. Soon he was in the hall where the witch's lab was located. He didn't have to hide from anyone because there was no one around that area. He put his ear to the door and he could hear no one inside the lab. He tried the lock but it was closed. But he remembered his lock picking years when he was young so he used his talent to open the lab's door. He smirked when he heard the lock door open and silently he entered the room. He quietly closed the door behind him. He felt so uncomfortable by being in that place. He felt his heart pounding hard in his chest and his breathing had gotten fast and short.

He had to put his hand to his face, for the pestilence of Haggar's different potion ingredients invaded his nose. There was poor illumination in the room but as he had great night vision he wasn't bothered by it. He just kept looking at all directions, so nothing would take him by surprise.

Then he heard a noise. He took out his sword carefully. When he looked to the place where it came from, he felt something blue jumping towards him. As he heard a ferocious mew and saw the blue little shape jump at his direction, he hit it with the hilt of his sword. Then he saw Coba fall to the side and turn to look at him with its bright eyes and showing his fangs. As the cat was slightly wounded by the hit, Cossack took advantage and hit Coba in its head leaving it seriously hurt and unconscious.

Then hurriedly, Cossack looked toward the walls of the den and on front of a stone bed he saw something covered hanging at the wall. He went to it and uncovered it. It was a very strange mirror. He covered it again, slipped it down and hurriedly ran towards the door. He carefully looked to see if there was no one around and soon he was running towards the darkness of the castle's halls.

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Princess Allura didn't know what to say to the prince's sudden proposal. She didn't want to hurt him but she just wasn't ready for marriage yet. There were so many things to consider. Besides she didn't love him like that, she cared a lot for him but she just wasn't prepared to take such an important step and with her kingdom's enemy. It was just too soon and not right. She would have to turn him down as nicely as she could. So she turned her face from him looking upon the lake; which had suddenly grown agitated.

Prince Lotor noticed the disturbance in the dream as if her mind was becoming a whirlwind of thoughts. But kept looking at her in the hopes that somehow she would accept his proposal.

She started saying: "Prince Lotor, I am honored by your proposal, but now..." she stopped to seek for the right words. "I can't get married right now...I'm too young and Arus' laws don't allow me to be married until a certain age, which I have not reached yet..." she made out the last part. She hated lying but there was no other way of turning him down in a nice way. She looked at him hoping that he would buy it.

He didn't hide his disappointment so he asked: "And how much time will it take you to be that certain age?"

She said nodding: "Oh, like three more years..." Then she studied carefully his expression.

He stayed serious and after a while he said: "I will wait three years for you...But at least give me hope that you will accept me, once I am free again." She sighed and said:

"We should focus on you getting free, and then we will talk about everything else. Don't you think?" she slightly smiled at him.

He lowered his head. "Yeah, maybe you are right...besides I am worried about Masserath's powers..." he said with a disturbing grimace.

"Powers?" she said quizzically.

"Yeah, he has some strange hold with invisible forces, I saw those forces the day I was possessed. Masserath uses them... you see, today at the arena...one of those invisible forces killed a robeast. Everybody thought the robeast died because Masserath kicked it, but I saw through the crystal how a

dark shadow attacked the robeast and choked it to death. He commands dark shadows that cannot be seen with the common eye" His grimace reflected true fear.

"Shadows?" she said unsure, it just sounded too creepy to be true.

Prince Lotor put his hands on her shoulders and looked straight at her eyes: "Princess Allura, just promise me one thing..."

She looked scared at him: "What?"

"That whatever happens, never get near Masserath, if during this next raid you get to see my body, just run as far away from it as you can and don't look back. Don't let him get you."

She felt a strange shiver taking all over her body.