

The Curse of the Third Eye by Lionora
Chapter 9: The Fallback

The faces of the members of the Voltron Force and the rest of the castle's personnel went from confusion to awe when they saw the drule soldiers and officers just leaving the castle. But their astonishment went wider when the prince's personal guards started untying them. Prince Lotor approached the shocked princess and bowed to her before telling her in human language:

"Princess Allura, it seems my father and I have not reached an agreement over the results of this battle. I will not risk my personnel over such controversies. Therefore I have taken the decision to leave your planet so you can continue using your defender Voltron from a robeast that is headed here sent by my father."

Keith interrupted the conversation: "You're leaving just like that?" The prince turned to look down at him annoyed of his impertinence and asked: "And you are...?"

Keith answered: "Keith Akira, captain of the Voltron force".

The prince looked at him unimpressed and said: "Well, captain Akira, things didn't turn out quite as expected. As a soldier you should know that unexpected outcomes are to be dealt in a convenient way. Even if this was not the original purpose of this mission, it is my duty to take drastic steps upon disagreeable terms with my father."

Keith then asked: "Disagreeable terms like what?"

"Upon your Princess Allura," The princess gasped; then the prince added: "My father wanted me to deliver her to him, I disrespectfully disagreed. Now I have to confront him for my defiance."

Now Coran as a diplomat asked cautiously: "Your highness, why would you disagree on delivering the princess to your father?"

The prince looked annoyed: "Personal reasons not worth mentioning at this moment. Now, I suggest that you get ready, your lions may be damaged but not enough to form Voltron. The robeast is almost here. My soldiers and I will leave you now so you can defend your planet."

Now the prince looked at Allura and nodded his head saying: "Farewell, princess." The prince turned and started to head his way.

Then the princess blurted out: "Wait!" Keith looked at her quizzically and didn't hide his annoyance on her addressing the prince.

Prince Lotor suddenly stopped and looked at her. Allura went to him and said with concerned eyes: "But what will happen to you with your father?"

The prince moved his head to the side curious about her motives to be concerned about his fate. But he didn't ask her because he noticed when Keith approached the princess and put his arm around her shoulder in a protective manner while giving the prince a menacing gaze.

Prince Lotor interpreted the captain's intention and just slightly smirked at her and said: "I will probably deal with my father in a very violent way." And just to bother the captain, he winked at her and added with a flirting smile: " But I appreciate your concern, I hope to see you again someday." Then Prince Lotor turned and headed toward his ship. In his way, he saw at a considerable distance, the man with the crown looking at him again. He could swear that the man nodded at him before disappearing. He shook his head and got into his ship.

Captain Akira slightly closed his eyes in annoyance noticing the prince's flirt with Allura. But Allura smiled and thought that the prince was quite attractive for a drule and that she also hoped that she could see the prince again; after all he seemed to be more reasonable than his father. Besides, she was amazed that the prince would defy King Zarkon because of her. She wondered what could his personal reason be for not delivering her to his father.

Meanwhile, the robeast reached Arus at the same time that Prince Lotor's ship was leaving. The Voltron Force was ready to give a fighting welcome to the robeast when it was deployed.

King Zarkon was trembling with rage on his throne when witch Haggar notified him that the Prince had abandoned his post before the robeast arrived at Arus consequently facing another defeat against Voltron. Not only the Prince defied him openly in front of his officers by disobeying a direct order, he freed the prisoners who ultimately cost him another victory against his enemies. The prince would be charged for high treason for his acts against the throne therefore he would face execution.

While the king was in conversation with the witch, she begged the king not to kill the prince. She convinced him that she could still have a good use for him. King Zarkon was reluctant at first, so fierce was his anger against Prince Lotor; but the witch used all of her convincing statements plus a spell to alter the king's state of mind as to avoid the prince's execution. If the prince were to be executed, she could not fulfill her dark purposes with him. So the only outcome she could achieve was to convince King Zarkon to punish severely the prince and then, hand him to her.

In the castle of Lions, Coran held a meeting with the Voltron Force. As they all sit around a table, Coran started talking.

"I wish to address you in regards of the recent events that nearly cost us our precious freedom. Right now, what I can tell you is that we were really lucky this time."

"You can say that again..", added Hunk.

Coran added: "As a recapitulation of these events, we found out that commander Yurak was executed presumably by Zarkon, and we have a new enemy that proved to be more dangerous and aggressive than Yurak ever was in the time he was leading the attacks against Arus. The Prince of Doom defeated us fair and square and if his father's forces aren't here right now; it is because he left Arus willingly when he disagreed handing the princess to his father for his own reasons that we completely ignore."

Lance added: "May I add, that he mentioned defying his father...that could imply that he could be facing a death penalty...I don't think he will ever come back again. King Zarkon's gonna fry him, the guy's so bad, I bet he won't even have mercy on his own son."

"Do you think King Zarkon could be so evil to murder his own flesh and blood?" Pidge asked.

"I would bet my whole Alliance pension on it..." answered Lance.

The princess added: "I don't know you, but maybe the prince is not as evil as his father..."

"Princess, why would you say such a thing like that?" asked with annoyance Keith.

"Well, he could've handed me in to his father, but he didn't. He must have had a good decent reason for not doing so..." responded the princess.

"Decent? I doubt it...maybe it was because he wanted you for himself, and didn't want to share you with his father," said Keith.

"If that is true, then why didn't he take me with him anyway? He could've done that..." asked Allura.

"Obviously, he has to go back and face his father...and like Lance says...probably execution..." Keith added, "Princess, I wouldn't trust anything that comes from Doom...I know you like to seek the good in everyone, but nothing good comes from Planet Doom...ever"

The princess looked disappointed and added, "You're probably right...but I still feel that there is more to all of this..." she paused and kept thoughtful.

Keith added, "Princess, don't fret yourself about this. (He looked at all present at the table) Listen to me team, we have learned a lot from this experience and even if we were fortunate this time, we will be ready so that this does not happen again."

Coran added: "You're right Keith, we will repair the lions and make them stronger and we'll contact the Alliance to have them notice all that happened today. We will avoid any similar attacks that could ever jeopardize our future."

All of them nodded at Coran's words. But still, deep down Allura felt unsure... something told her that there was something different in the Prince of Doom and she honestly wished with all heart that he could face and survive his father's unavoidable wrath.

At the flagship where Prince Lotor was seated on his commanding chair he received an incoming message from King Zarkon. He breathed deep before receiving the message. King Zarkon's angry face appeared at the ship's monitor.

"So, you decided to leave the scene and flee like the coward you are."

"Don't talk nonsense, you know that I am no coward. I took this decision to protect your soldiers, they have no fault in this quarrel. This is between you and me." The prince answered with a frown.

The king pointed at him and said, "You are damn right, you insolent brat! You are the one responsible for me losing Arus again. You freed the prisoners, damn you! Voltron destroyed the robeast and it is all your fault! You are so going to pay for this."

"Then, why should I return back to you? I could just go and never return back to Doom." The prince asked.

"Yeah? And where would you go?" the king asked annoyed.

"I am not that stupid to tell you...But there are many places in this universe where I could be far away from the likes of you." spat the prince.

The king looked at him menacingly, "I have ways of finding you no matter where you go. Even if you go to the end of the universe, I will find you and break you wherever you are. You cannot hide from me. I will not allow it. Besides, the witch that you hate so much has convinced me of not killing you, at least not yet. So I guess that you owe her your weak and pitiful life..."

"I do not owe her anything, and if you want to kill me...then go ahead. Better dead than living a hell life with you as a father." Said defiantly the prince.

The king made fists with his hands and said, "I do not feel generous with you at all. You do not want a hell life but that is the only life that you will have from now on...and I will make sure that you won't defy me ever again." Then King Zarkon cut the transmission.

Even if the prince knew now that his life was not in immediate danger, he knew that his father's punishment would make him wish that he could die nevertheless. His father's tortures could be severely cruel and that fate is what was expecting him as soon as he landed on Doom.

Cossack arrived to tell him that there were rumors running around the soldiers and officers of the fleet that were making the environment uneasy and prone to mutiny. The strongest rumor was that all of the soldiers would face execution for rebelling against the king. Prince Lotor was annoyed with these news so he ordered the commanding center to open a channel to all personnel in his flagship and all ships heading back to Doom.

The prince pronounced his message as follows: "This is Lotor, Crown Prince of Doom and I am addressing to you all because you may feel that you have betrayed my father's orders in this battle. But the truth is that as high royal commander of Doom's armies all responsibility for this fallback is only mine and mine alone. You are valuable soldiers that fought bravely, followed my orders and brought a great victory today. Yes, we were victorious and do not let anyone tell you otherwise. The decision of letting go of planet Arus, was mine alone; you had nothing to do with it. And I alone will face my father's punishment for my defiance. Just keep assured that my father will not risk his future by eliminating the most valuable and brave army in all the Denubian Galaxy. It is most probable that after we reach Doom, I will never command this army again, but I can only tell you this...it has been a great honor serving and fighting with you...even as brief as it was...you did a great job and I am proud of you...just always

remember that." The prince made the signal for cutting the channel.

The environment on all ships returning to Doom was of silent reverence and thoughtfulness. And fortunately, all rumors ceased after the prince's message was aired to all of the fleet. Somehow, the message got through and all of the officers knew that the prince's message was truthful. As royal commander he would have to face the penalty alone, just like Yurak did before him. The king would not be a fool as to loose all of his army for a decision that only one person made.

As the ships approached Doom, Prince Lotor looked at the planet getting bigger in the ship's monitor. Then he saw the gypsy-pirate gazing at him with a menacing look from one of the many shadows in the ship's bridge. He wasn't scared but knew that his punishment was decided once he reached his father again. But he would fight until the end. Maybe this was his mother's warning all along. Sometimes he wished that he could join her in the spiritual realm. But he would embrace his destiny whatever it was and he would not break that easily. He was still a soldier after all...