

To Know Is Not Enough by Otlal3
Chapter 4: Welcome to Arus

The next evening Commander Waters arrived on Arus. Coran, Keith, and the Princess greeted her. Lance watched from afar, intrigued by the new commander, but a wave of discomfort subdued his excitement.

“Welcome, Commander.” Princess Allura said the uniformed woman before her. The pleats of her official garments made her appear very angular, but her shoulders were certainly broad for a woman. Her hair was pulled back in a tight braid and her amber eyes were etched in tiny laugh lines. Keith wondered to himself why such a credible pilot was not higher in rank than him at her age, but numerous metals she wore on her breast severed the thought.

“Thank you Princess. It is an honor to meet you, and to serve you and your people.” The commander bowed her head in response.

“It is Arus who is honored, Commander. I must apologize for the lack of celebration at your arrival, and for the absence of the team. You must understand that this is a solemn occasion for us, and your arrival marks the loss of our revered Captain,” Allura said as she nodded to Keith who stood beside her.

“Captain, sir!” The commander’s attention went directly to the man who stood before her and she saluted.

“At ease, Commander. We’re not quite so formal here on Arus,” Keith said as he noted streamlined posture of his replacement.

“Captain, it is an honor to be filling in for you during your absence. You are legendary throughout the Academy, and if you’ll forgive me for being so bold – the girls still swoon over your picture in the Hall of Names.

“Oh, interesting. Well, swooning won’t get them through the Academy, that’s for sure.” Keith replied, his cheeks hinting at his slight embarrassment. “Commander, this is Coran, the Royal Advisor to Princess Allura, and to her father King Alfor before her. He is a member of the team, just as much as any one else.”

“Coran, it’s a pleasure to meet you.” The commander shook Coran’s hand and slightly bowed to the stately man with the brown moustache and furrowed brow.

“Welcome, Commander. Your quarters have been prepared and the royal guard will see you and your belongings to the room. After you are settled, we will serve dinner in honor of your arrival. The Captain and I will make certain the rest of the team attends this dinner.” Coran nodded to Keith, as the group started walking into the castle.

“Your hospitality is very kind. I look forward to settling in.”

“Commander, after dinner, I would like to discuss privately some of our SOPs and quirks in our systems. Would you have time for that?” Keith asked.

“Yes, sir. I look forward to it.”

The dinner table was unusually quiet, although the whole team was present. Lance greeted his new commander with eyebrows raised. From his watching post at her arrival, he had not clearly seen the evidence of age on her, but now it the errant strands of gray hair in her sleeked military quaff was enough to tell him she was older than he. They made small talk, discussing the traditional jokes and high jinx of the Academy. Keith watched them, barely touching his dinner. Hunk and Pidge politely greeted their new commanding officer, but remained quiet throughout the meal, not partaking in the discussion. They were nervous, and it showed in their subdued nature.

After dinner, Pidge and Hunk excused themselves, and Keith interrupted the discussion that had not ceased between Lance and the Commander. “Waters, we really need to discuss some things before the evening is through. Would you mind accompanying me to the conference room?”

“Yes, sir. I am eager to get started,” the Commander stood up. She nodded to Lance and followed Keith out of the dining hall.

“What a delightful dinner. It was good to meet the team. I certainly hope Pidge and Hunk warm up to me as Lance has.” The Commander was mostly talking to herself, and Keith acknowledged this by remaining quiet.

Upon entering the conference room, the two officers sat across from each other at a table and sipped coffee brought in to them by the kitchen staff. After assuring they were alone, Keith started to discuss the details of operations around the castle, and particularly with Voltron. An hour passed before Keith paused to see that he still had the Commander’s attention.

“Commander, tomorrow I will put you in the Black Lion and you will use all of the information I have given you tonight. But before we are through here, we need to discuss the members of the team. I want to start with Lance. He will test you. I know he has welcomed you more readily than the other members, but don’t be mistaken, he has his duty and he will see to it that you keep to yours. I know he is second in command, but he could easily captain this ship. The problem is his temper.”

“Captain, with all due respect, I have read the profiles of each team member. I am fully aware of the Lieutenant’s temperament as well as his skill.” The commander’s response to the sudden lecture on the team caught Keith by surprise.

“Yes, I’m sure his file is very entertaining, but I believe there are plenty of other things not captured in there.” Keith paused to look at the Commander, who simply conceded with a nod. “Lance is a prankster and a bit rebellious. Lately he has been testing me, questioning my authority. He will do the same to you, do not doubt that. And do not hesitate to discipline him. This has been a bit of a challenge for me, as he is my friend, but I trust that you will see to it he remains humble, and I guarantee you his loyalty. He is a champion pilot, but a risk-taker. Keep watch over him, and he will always have your back.

“Hunk is a gentle giant, and a master mechanic. He understands the principles of mechanics dating back centuries, but I am sure that is in his file. What you probably don’t know is that he loves children and food. He would die to protect the innocence of a child, and he might even die for a piece of heavenly cheesecake. No matter, he is a principled man with a gruff exterior, but a soft interior. He is very protective of the team and will put himself at risk for any of us. His front is to blast into battle head first without a thought on strategy. Sometimes this is called for, but be mindful as this behavior has gotten him into some sticky situations.

“Pidge may appear to be a child, but he is on the verge of being a man. He is a brilliant mind and can program any rogue computer into submission. He still has some childish tendencies, which perhaps is why Hunk and Pidge are so close, but he ultimately is a superb pilot and his innocence makes him incredibly trustworthy. I believe he would risk his life for anyone, animal or human.

“Princess Allura is a great pilot and a compassionate leader. I know she would die for her people, as they would die for her. You must not let either happen. Your duty is equal parts protecting the people of Arus AND protecting the heir to the throne. No harm must come to her. Coran and Nanny would like to see the Princess removed from her position as pilot, as they feel it interferes with her royal duties, but the Princess will have none of it. And neither will I. She has earned her spot on this team, and her removal could be disastrous to its morale, and to that of the people of Arus. Not to mention it would break her heart. She is very spirited, and will put up a fight should this notion be discussed. Believe me, she will fight.

“I believe that is all I can tell you for now, Commander. Please know that these are not just pilots. They are my friends, and my family. Their safety is of the utmost importance. The Alliance has faith in your abilities to protect the people of Arus, and therefore so do I. But it is more than that. You will become a member of a team unlike any you have experienced. When you are part of Voltron, your spirit will meld with that of the team. Although there are five pilots, you move as one, in space and in heart. Don’t doubt the power of this.” Keith sighed as he recognized what he was leaving behind, but his military training snapped him to his duty. “Okay, Commander. I trust you will have a good first night on Arus. Please feel free to let me know if anything is not to your liking.” Keith rose from the table and walked to the door.

“Captain, I think I understand what you are saying and I look forward to flying tomorrow,” the Commander said as she followed Keith out of the room. “Good night, sir.”

“Good night, Commander.”