

Up On the Rooftop by Otlal3

Story Notes:

I don't own Voltron, it's characters, or settings.

Snow had fallen all night and into the day. A few intermittent flakes journeyed slowly from the clouds above, swinging lightly in their descent until they silently landed atop the depths of sparkling crystals. No wind awakened the dormant flakes into dancing swirls across the sky and over the hills and valleys of Earth's surface, for the storm was winding down and a newly crisp and starry night was taking hold. All was still and the white ground glistened under the emerging sparkle of distant stars as a subtle pink glow embraced the pitch of the moonless night.

The cold air filled Allura's lungs with each breath and a muffled crunching of snow under foot reached her ears. It wasn't her own feet shuffling in the snow, for she sat atop the wide shoulders of her teammate Lance. He shifted his weight from one foot to another and Allura glanced down at him as she reached for the frozen eave of the old house. She groaned when her mittened fingers started to slip from the precarious lip of the roof. At the sound of her struggle, Lance heaved her a few inches higher in the air and she latched on more securely. Allura was feeling utterly ridiculous and once again looked down at Lance, unsure of how she was expected to hoist herself onto the roof.

"It'll be worth it, Princess. I promise," he said with a lopsided grin.

"If you say so, Lance," she responded with a sigh. With hands repositioned, Allura prepared to heave herself up and over the eave with all the strength she could muster. But in the instant she started to move upward, a powdery avalanche of cold snow showered down upon her, coating her face and settling into the crevices where scarf met skin. She could feel the delicate crystals melting against her skin and rolling down her cheeks, but the powder was too thick to completely melt away and she could see nothing at all. Allura opened her mouth to curse Lance for the insanity of his idea to "check out the view", but she only coughed as powder filled her lungs rather than air. Still clinging to the eave, Allura was relieved when a pair of hands grabbed her arms and lifted her to the solid, snow-covered roof.

Lance was no longer shouldering her, and Allura felt a gentle hand wiping away the snowy mask from her face as she knelt in place, afraid to move. She blinked heavily, her eyes once again adjusting to the dark night, and focused on the smiling face in front of her.

"Keith," she spoke softly, his name gliding off her tongue with familiarity.

"I am so sorry, Princess. The avalanche was my fault. I wasn't paying attention. Are you cold?" he asked, removing his glove and wiping the biting dampness on her cheek with his thumb. Allura's heart pumped slightly faster as his warm touch heated her skin and brought a fever of color to her cheeks.

“A little. What are you doing here, Keith? I thought you were in meetings,” Allura asked as she looked away from his smiling eyes. The team had been sent to Earth for a series of diplomatic summits at Galaxy Garrison. The boys were excited to be on Earth during the Christmas holiday and Allura was thrilled to share the experience with them. But as usual, Keith had been pulled into impromptu conferences every evening since their arrival, and Allura figured this night would be no different.

“No way was I going to spend Christmas Eve in meetings. And I wanted to show you something,” Keith responded, his hand still caressing her cheek. When he suddenly realized his lingering touch, he stood up, gently urging the princess with him.

“But Lance...” Allura started as she looked down where her friend had been only moments before. He was no longer there.

“...had a hand in all of this,” Keith finished.

“Oh. Should I be worried then, Captain? Or should I say, would Nanny be worried?” Allura teased with a grin. She felt no fear over her captain’s vague intentions. Her trust in him ran deep and she was just happy to be near him, but Lance’s involvement left her with a slight unease.

“Heheh. Um, I hope not. Take my hand. It’s slippery until we get to the Widow’s Walk up top.” Keith smiled back at her, his heart nearly exploding out of his chest at the evening’s prospects. He had been waiting a long time for the perfect moment, and he could wait no longer. This he knew and shared with Lance who, like any best friend, had planted the seed for this night.

Allura accepted Keith’s hand, but felt a yearning for his skin to once again be next to hers and to feel the gentle stroking of his hand on her face. She longed to strip him of his bulky winter coat and to see and feel the strength of his muscles. She needed to feel his arms around her, his strong chest and protective arms blanketing her with warmth and the heat of... the heat of... something for which her propriety had no words. Allura shivered at the strength of her feelings and she felt Keith squeeze her hand.

“Almost there,” he said quietly. He had wondered if it was too cold to follow through with the evening, but Lance had insisted their princess was no wimp. He was right of course, but Keith paid very close attention to her manner, not wanting frostbite or hypothermia to ruin the night.

“How did you get up here, anyway?” Allura asked, pulling Keith out of his silent evaluation of her well-being.

“Well, the house is abandoned for a reason. There’s no staircase to the second storey so I had to literally climb the beams and rafters to get up here. Believe me - your way was much easier.”

“And just how are we going to get down? Is that man who flies with reindeer giving us a ride?”

Keith laughed heartily at her combined foresight and holiday naivety, then gave her a gentle nudge with his elbow. “Let’s cross that bridge when-“

“Oh, Keith,” Allura interrupted with a gasp. She had stopped mid-step as they crested the roof and was awed at the expansive view before her. Just beyond the stretch of houses nestled in the trees below, a bowl of high-peaked mountains jutted into the shimmering sky like spearheads to the heavens. Both pilots had touched the stars in those very heavens before and now they were mere pinholes on a backdrop to Earth with all its folds and valleys covered in a frigid blanket of white.

Keith loosened his hold and stepped behind Allura, his hands instinctively falling to her shoulders where his grip steadied her against the steep pitch of the roof. He silently admired the princess whose rosy cheeks were so close to his own. An unexpected gust of wind funneled up the roof and pushed her against him, her sweet smell infiltrating his weakening sense of decency. As a tendril of yellow hair escaped from under her hat and tickled his nose, Keith tenderly tucked it behind her ear and whispered, “Beautiful, isn’t it?”

Allura nodded, her wonder at the scenery suddenly secondary to the awareness of Keith’s proximity. And in that moment, as life below lay dormant, the young man and woman each silently fought the urges that made them both feel so alive.

Keith once again took Allura’s hand and led her along the angle of the roof to its highest section, a plateau surrounded by a fragmented wrought iron fence no higher than their thighs. Allura stopped in her tracks as the Widow’s Walk came into view.

“Keith, what have you done?” she calmly asked. This section of the roof had been cleared of snow except for several mounds at the edge where lighted candles perched. Two blankets were folded in the center next to a large thermos of what Allura imagined to be Lance’s decadent hot cocoa.

“Lance did most of this, but I insisted you be comfortable.” Keith smiled as they stepped through an opening in the fence and onto the Widow’s Walk. “Princess, would you care to have a seat? The show will be starting soon.”

“The show?”

“It’s OK. Have a seat and you’ll see.” Keith snapped open one of the blankets in a quick motion and laid it on the cold roof, prompting the princess to sit. When she was settled, he draped the other blanket over her shoulders and sat down next to her.

“Lance’s Famous Hot Cocoa for you, Your Highness?” Keith asked as he reached for the thermos.

“Sounds lovely!” Allura responded as she nestled deeper into the blanket.

He poured a share of the hot cocoa into the thermos cup and carefully handed it to Allura. Eyes wide with anticipation, she blew at the surface of the liquid, sending swirls of steam to evaporate in the cold air. Her lips rested on the edge of the tipped cup and she slurped noisily. Her

shoulders hunched as the warmth settled into her whole body and a content sigh escaped her.

“Good?” Keith asked, admiring her quietly as he kicked at a rogue chunk of hardened snow.

“Yes! Delightful! But where’s yours?”

“It appears we have only one cup. I’d rather you have it.”

“Absolutely not! I’m not enjoying this without you, Captain. We’ll share. Here,” Allura responded, her bulky mittens surrounding the cup now in front of him.

Keith smiled graciously and took the offered vessel. He saw the sharp edge to Allura’s stare and he dared not cross her by insisting she keep it. It wasn’t worth the argument that was bound to ensue. He had been on the receiving end of her stubborn streak before and was fully aware of his own stubborn nature. The combination often had the two locking horns simply because neither was willing to budge. But tonight was about more than their fiery friendship. For Keith, it was about her - the woman sitting so close to him who shared his passion for peace and harmony, the woman for whom he had crossed the galaxy to protect, the woman who stole his heart. Tonight was about giving her the gift in his heart.

“Allura? Do you have a Christmas wish?” Keith asked as he sipped the cocoa and handed it back to her.

“Hmm. If I had my druthers, I would like nothing more than every night on Arus to be like this. For my people.” Allura turned to Keith and finished her thought as she matched his stare. “For us.”

Keith stopped breathing and stared into the orbs of crystalline blue set so perfectly in her glowing face. He was mesmerized as their matching breaths condensed into puffs of white, intermittently hiding her rosy cheeks and delicate nose in a fog that quickly lifted into the sky.

“Are you warm enough, Princess?” Keith resorted to a simple question rather than say everything right then and there, but an unfamiliar sensation of anxiety permeated his thoughts. *What if she laughs? What if she says no? What if I am about to ruin our friendship? What if she banishes me from Arus?* He knew these were irrational thoughts, but they were powerful enough to discomfort.

“Barely. I’m more concerned about you without a blanket. This is plenty big enough to share, Keith,” she stated, raising the blanket like a wing and urging him closer. “I don’t bite.”

It’s not you I’m worried about, Keith thought to himself as he nudged closer to the princess. As Allura draped the blanket over his shoulders, his hand relaxed behind her, allowing more room for her to move in to his warmth. They each pulled at their corner of the blanket, tightening the cocoon, and their bodies pressed together. Keith’s shoulder was behind her and he twitched slightly with surprise when she let her head fall back onto him.

“Better?” Keith asked, his voice barely audible through a stiffened haze of self-control.

“Mmm-hm.” Allura’s response was quiet too and she felt torn by the urge to fall asleep in her captain’s embrace or drive toward a passion she could sense quaking in her very bones.

As she nestled incrementally closer to Keith like a kitten in search of familiar warmth, Allura heard a symphony of lively music from the village below. She smiled, knowing that these people on Earth were enjoying their festivities, as the village suddenly became more alive with light. She lifted her head and scanned the horizon, and to her delight, houses and avenues were lighted from the very outskirts of the village inward, in perfect synchrony with the festive music. As the joyous tune reached its crescendo, the village center came alive with reds and greens sharing angles and arcs with white roofs and tall trees, all streaming up to a giant crystal star of shimmering blue-white perched on the tallest tree.

“Oh, magnificent! It’s so beautiful! I’ve never seen or heard or witnessed anything like it, Keith!” Allura exclaimed, clapping her hands at the performance.

“Pretty cool, eh? They’ve been doing it for centuries, and from what I hear it gets better and better each year. I imagine it’s pretty spectacular from the air,” Keith responded with a smile.

“It was perfect from here. Perfect. Thank you so much, Keith.”

“You’re very welcome, Princess.”

“I’m happy we got to see it together.” Allura coyly stated. She was careful to keep her gaze on the twinkling lights and not at Keith, afraid he might see just how happy she was.

“Me too.” Again, words escaped him.

“So tell me, my fearless Captain... what is your Christmas wish? I told you mine.” Allura rested her head on his shoulder again and smelled the musk of his skin mingle with the sweetness of hot cocoa on his breath.

“Um...” he fumbled.

Do it, you chicken - Now!

Keith lifted his arm and draped it around the princess, pulling her gently closer to him. She didn’t resist, and with that he dared speak.

“Allura... I’m not sure how to express what it is I wish for. But...” Keith bit the tip of his glove and quietly slid it off his hand. With a deep breath, he lifted his fingers to her face and carefully touched her as though she would break at the slightest movement. His fingers grazed the softness of her cheek and stroked down to trace her jaw line. When he reached her chin, he lifted so their eyes met and he witnessed the faintest smile turning at the edges of her lips.

“Keith, what is it you wish?” Allura’s eyes pierced him and Keith felt intoxicated as they held each other’s stare. Allura shifted her head slightly closer to his, her smile inviting and warm.

“Allura.” It was all he could bring himself to say as he tilted and met her lips with his own. He drank her warmth as their lips parted and tongues met briefly. Keith shuddered as they lingered in the kiss, his bones shaking with adrenaline. He could wait no longer and he pulled away. “My wish is to grant yours, Princess. To be there for you through everything. Not as your captain, but as... as... Crap! I sound like a fool, I’m sorry Allura.”

“No Keith. You know what you want, and so do I.” Allura threw her arms around him and drew him into a deep kiss. He pulled her to him in a fierce embrace, their enthusiasm sending them backwards into the pile of snow. Allura landed soundly on top of Keith with a grunt and their lips came apart into broad smiles. As they giggled into the night air, Allura placed her forehead against Keith’s and closed her eyes. “My Christmas gift to you, Captain is to tell you that I’ve always been yours. My heart, my breath, my laughter, my tears... my love... they belong to you.”

Keith placed his hands on Allura’s face once again and gently pushed her away so that he could clearly see her eyes. She stared back at him and watched as his brow furrowed with determination. “Allura, someday I will give you your Christmas wish. I promise. For now, all I can give you is this night... and me.”

Allura smiled. She knew he would keep his promise. “Merry Christmas, Keith.”

“Merry Christmas... my love.”