

# Transformations

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## Kapitel 19: A Royal Wedding

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"All right team, we're almost home." Keith says as they enter Altean airspace.

"It looks like there's quite a crowd waiting for us down there." Fala says.

"It'll be nice to be home again." Hothead says as they go in for a landing, just behind the castle.

"Yeah, I know what you mean." Shorty chimes in.

They all head towards Raible, who greets them before turning to Fala and Keith. "You should have been back weeks ago," he admonishes, looking between them. They both look back a bit guilty, but neither one replies. "This wedding is a huge ordeal. Your Highness, your dress is ready for you to try on. Since we are short on time, I decided that you will try your mother's dress, and we will hope it fits well enough that only minor alterations will be needed. Both of you come with me. We have a lot to discuss, and not much time. I also want a briefing of what you have been up to while you were away." Keith and Fala nod and follow Raible towards a meeting room.

"Hiroshi!" A young woman with big brown eyes and shoulder length reddish-brown hair calls out; running up to Shorty and wrapping her arms around him, kissing him briefly.

Shorty smiles and places his arms around her. "Tammy, I'm glad to see you too." She smiles up at him.

Everyone stops and turns to look at the couple.

"Um, when did Shorty get a girlfriend?" Lance quips, a bit shocked.

"I dunno." Hothead replies, "But I think I've seen her around him a few times."

"No one calls him by his real name." Lance grumbles, looking away from the couple.

Hothead laughs. "Are you jealous, Lance?"

"What?! Me, jealous? Hell no! Why would I be jealous of that pipsqueak?" Lance says a bit harshly.

"Because he got a girl before you?" Hothead offers, getting a death glare from Lance. He looks away, laughing when he spots a young brown haired woman wearing an apron, carrying a parcel, looking anxiously through the crowd and smiles. He turns to Lance, "See you later. I have someone I need to go see." He turns and heads towards the woman, "Sara!" He says, waving.

The woman turns towards his voice and smiles, "Seidō!" She says, coming over to him. "I heard you were coming back today, so I made you something." She says quietly, as she hands him the parcel.

He takes it and smiles down at her and kisses her cheek. "It looks delicious. Do you have time to come and sit with me for a little?"

She nods slightly, "I can for a few minutes. I've been really busy. I'm in charge of preparing the wedding feast, and making sure the wedding cake is completed in time for the wedding." He nods as he leads her over to the courtyard and to a bench where he opens the parcel she handed him. "Thank you for the food, Sara," Hothead says quietly.

"You're welcome. I had to do something to show you that I missed you." She replies sweetly.

Hothead smiles, "I've missed you too. How have things been here?" he asks in between bites.

"Unusually quiet," she replies. "Perhaps I've noticed it more since you haven't been here." She adds quietly, blushing slightly.

He smiles at her, "I'm glad that you've missed me. Hopefully, we won't have to leave for so long again."

"I hope not. Maybe things will be calmer now." She replies and sighs. "I should be getting back. I have a lot to do before the welcome home feast tonight."

Hothead nods, "I'll see you later then?" She nods, and he smiles and kisses her cheek, causing her to blush. "All right, take care. I'll see you this evening."

"Okay," she says brightly, then stands up and smooths out her apron before walking quickly back towards the castle.

Hothead watches her leave and sighs happily as he finishes the plate of food.

"So when did you hook up with her?" Lance says as he approaches Hothead from across the courtyard.

"We've been friends for a while." Hothead says smiling.

"Friends huh? Looks like a bit more than that to me," Lance says a little sarcastically.

A blush creeps to Hothead's face, "Yeah, friends. Maybe one day, we can be more. But not while we're still fighting."

"You sure looked like more than friends to me, especially when you kissed her." Lance says mockingly.

Hothead rolls his eyes. "You are jealous!" He laughs, getting another glare from Lance.

"I am not!" He replies a little too quickly, getting an 'I don't believe you' look from Hothead. "I just don't see how you and Shorty could get girls before me." He grumbles as he walks off towards the castle.

Raible is sitting in a small meeting room with Fala and Keith, "So, at least here we have had no sign of enemy activity." Raible finishes.

"I wish we could say the same." Fala says. "We have seen a lot of things while we were away, some good, and a lot of not so good things. The one responsible for this chaos is named Merla. Evidently she is Daibazaal's daughter. She says she is seeking vengeance for his death at the hands of humans, and plans to wipe out the human race, according to her."

"She has killed several people, and attacked the Calvary Command base, basically laying waste to it. We helped with the rebuilding of the base, and we spent some time visiting Captain Rider's Estate, sort of a vacation away from everything."

Raible nods, "I take it that is where you were when you realized how soon your wedding was approaching?"

Keith and Fala nod. "Yes, it was," Fala replies quietly. "We had all been fighting and working so much, that we just lost track of time, to be quite honest. If the situation

were different, I would have asked the Star Sheriffs and the dignitaries of Orb to attend the wedding. But realistically, I know they can't leave their areas unguarded, as long as Merla is still lurking about."

"Well, we have agreed on your dress, your Highness, now we need to decide what you will wear, Keith." Raible says, looking over him as he speaks.

"I figured that I'd wear a dress uniform, isn't that proper protocol?" Keith asks, looking between Raible and Fala to see their reaction.

Raible nods, "If we could get an Alliance uniform, I would say that would be most appropriate. I can look into that if you are both fine with that."

"Why not allow him to wear an Altean uniform, Raible? He has already sworn to protect this world with his life, and very nearly has lost his life on more than one occasion. He is an honorary citizen, so I feel that he should have the same rights as a native-born Altean does."

"But your Highness, he is not formally in our military," Raible states.

"How is that so? He and the other members of the team are higher-ranking than any of the other soldiers we have that have been formally trained. They all have risked their lives on numerous occasions. If it were not for them, we would all be dead or enslaved by now."

Raible nods, "You have valid points, Your Highness. I am just trying to follow proper procedure that is all. I mean no disrespect to either of you."

"If needed, I will give all of them suitable military titles before the wedding. It is probably long overdue anyways." She turns to Keith who has been sitting quietly listening to the exchange. "Do you have a preference, Keith?"

Keith shakes his head, "I don't care what I wear, as long as we get married, Fala. If Raible feels a regular alliance dress uniform is appropriate, then I'll see if I can acquire one. Or if you feel it is appropriate for me to wear an Altean uniform, I will wear that. I just do not want to dishonor your traditions."

Lance is out walking near the outskirts of the castle, not paying much attention to anyone. A young woman is sitting along the shore of the lake; she looks his direction and stands up in greeting. "Lance!"

He turns in the direction of the voice, his hands still in his pockets and takes in a breath, "Noriko" he says quietly. He heads to where she is waiting.

"I heard you had arrived today." She says quietly as he approaches. She sits back down, and a small black cat hops into her lap, nuzzling her hand as she pets it.

Lance comes and sits beside her and notices the cat. "I don't remember the cat from before."

"She's new. I named her Akuma. She showed up a couple of months ago. I suppose you can say she adopted me." Noriko replies.

He studies Akuma, "Does she have two tails?" He asks a bit surprised.

Noriko nods, "Yes, evidently a birth defect, she seems okay otherwise. She was a bit malnourished when she first showed up, but she is healthy now."

Akuma climbs up into Lance's lap, nuzzling his arm. He reaches out and scratches her head. "She seems friendly."

"She is. I don't think she'd hurt anyone or anything." Noriko replies proudly.

"Well, if you ever come to the castle, you'd have to keep her confined. There are resident mice there that have run of the place." Lance says, chuckling at the surprised look. "They are considered heroes."

Noriko laughs. "Heroes? Seriously? How does that work?" She asks amused.

"Well, let's just say that they are not ordinary mice and leave it at that. If I tried to give you a detailed explanation you would probably try and have me committed for being insane." he adds dryly.

She laughs and sighs, looking out at the lake, "You've been gone a long time. I thought maybe you found a reason to not come back...or were injured or killed." she adds quietly.

Lance looks at her for a moment, "You actually noticed how long we were gone?"

Noriko nods, a blush creeping to her cheeks. "Yes, I noticed. You're the only person who ever takes time to just talk with me. Most people tend to stay away from me after that, incident."

"That wasn't your fault, Noriko. You just were in the wrong place at the wrong time. I'm glad that I was able to help you get out of that situation." A long silence ensues, "Are you still working in the village?" She nods. "Good. No one gives you any trouble at the school?"

"No. I suppose no one else wants the job, so they are happy to let me have it, as long as it keeps me from having to ask for support from the other citizens. It also gives me a place to live." Noriko replies.

Lance nods, "I'm glad you are doing well. You look like you are doing better than when I last saw you." She smiles at him and he smiles back before looking back towards the castle and sighs, "I guess I should head back in to the monotony of the castle."

"Will I see you again?" Noriko asks hopeful.

Lance smiles, "Maybe tomorrow. I'll try and walk this way after dinner. Perhaps I'll see you then?"

Noriko smiles, "I'd like that."

Lance stands up, "Then I'll see you tomorrow. Good night, Noriko."

"Good night, Lance," she replies.

Lance turns and walks back to the castle, looking back once at the figure sitting peacefully by the lake, he then heads inside the castle, towards the common room. The door opens and Lance sees Shorty and the girl from earlier, Tammy, scoot apart quickly, a slight blush on their cheeks. "Back already, Moody?" Shorty asks a bit quickly, as he straitens up a bit more.

Lance smirks, "A bit too soon for your liking eh, Shorty?" Shorty opens his mouth to speak, but Lance holds his hand up. "Don't even try; you'd just dig your own grave." He turns to leave, "Oh, and a word of advice, I wouldn't choose a public area if you want to be alone." He winks at them and walks out, chuckling to himself at the pair's obvious embarrassment.

A week goes by and everyone is busy with preparations. Fala has designated that the other members of the GoLion crew have uniforms made similar to the ones they wear in battle, but made from a nicer material and with the Altean crest on them, to designate them as 'dress' uniforms. So the guys are busy with fittings and practicing the duties they will have at the actual ceremony. Hothead is going through the kitchen when Sara stops him, "You look tired, would you care to take a break with me?" She asks shyly.

He smiles at her. "Sure. Let's get something to eat and we can go sit in the courtyard. I know you've been busy and could use a break." He takes a basket as she finishes packing it and they head out together into the courtyard. They sit and are enjoying lunch when a small black cat with two tails comes up.

"That's a strange looking cat." Sara says as the cat comes up and rubs against her. "It

seems sweet." She says petting it.

"I've never seen a cat with two tails before." Hothead says. "I wonder where it came from." He says aloud looking around for any clues. Suddenly a woman comes around the corner looking worried. "Have you seen a small black ca-" She stops as she spots it. "There you are, Akuma." She says scooping up the cat. "I hope she didn't bother you."

Sara shakes her head, "Not at all. She seems like a sweet little cat."

Noriko smiles, "She is. She's a bit small, but very friendly."

"Why does she have two tails?" Hothead asks.

Noriko shrugs, "I'm not sure, that's just how she was when she started hanging around me. I figure it's some sort of birth defect, the poor thing."

"It doesn't seem to bother her, so I wouldn't worry about it. At least it makes her easy to tell apart from the other cats around here." Sara says.

Noriko nods, "You both work at the castle; I was wondering if you've seen Lance around today."

"You mean Moody?" Hothead replies getting an amused look from Noriko. "He was out close to the lake a while ago, I don't know if he's still there," he finishes.

Noriko smiles, "Thank you for the information. I'll go and see if he's still there." She nods to both of them and hurries off, carrying Akuma in her arms.

"Lance has a girlfriend." Hothead says amused.

"What's wrong with that?" Sara asks.

"Nothing, I just think it's funny. He was grumbling the day we came back because Shorty had a girl waiting for him and he didn't." he replies.

Sara laughs. "He doesn't seem that..."

"Jealous?" Hothead offers.

"Not exactly the word I was looking for...petty is a bit closer to what I was thinking." Sara replies.

"Ah, well, trust me; we call him 'Moody' for good reason," Hothead replies.

Sara shakes her head, laughing, "And just what is it that the others call you?"

"Hothead," He replies, grinning widely.

"You know what? I don't want to know." She smiles and looks off towards the castle.

Lance is leaving the lake area, looking a bit disappointed when he hears someone call his name. He turns toward the voice, perking up a little as he sees Noriko running towards him, carrying Akuma in her arms.

"Hi, Lance." she says as she reaches him, trying to catch her breath.

He smiles at her as she sets down the cat, "Hello Noriko. It's good to see you again. I was hoping I'd run into you today."

"You were?" she asks, looking at him a bit embarrassed.

"Yes, I was. I wanted to ask you if you'd like to be my date to the wedding." he says trying to hide his nervousness.

A blush creeps onto Noriko's cheeks and she looks down. "I'd be honored," she replies barely above a whisper.

He takes his index finger and lifts her chin so she's looking at him, "I'm glad you agreed. If you need me to help get you anything, let me know."

She nods, "I will, thank you," she replies quietly.

"How about you come to dinner with me this evening?" Lance asks. "I could meet you here and bring you in to meet everyone."

"Um, sure. But how should I dress? I don't have many fancy things." she mutters a bit embarrassed.

"What you have on is fine, Noriko. This isn't a formal dinner or anything. It's just the crew and a few guests," Lance replies. "I figure if you come to something less formal, maybe you won't be as nervous at the wedding."

Noriko nods, "That makes sense. Would it be all right if I brought Akuma with me? She's a good cat, and I'll keep her confined. I don't like leaving her at the schoolhouse all alone."

Lance nods, "I don't see a problem with it, as long as she's confined."

"Thank you, Lance," she says and smiles at him.

"No problem," he looks back towards the castle. "I'd better get back. I'll meet you here around 16:00?"

"16:00?" she asks confused.

He chuckles, "Sorry, old habit. It's the same as 4 PM. We tend to use military time," he replies.

"Oh, okay. I'll be here," she replies.

"Good. I'll see you then," he leans down and kisses her cheek, causing her to blush, he smiles at her and heads back towards the castle.

That afternoon, Lance meets up with Noriko and they enter the castle together. She looks around wide-eyed, "This is amazing!" She says as they walk through several corridors.

He leads her to a door where you can hear several voices coming from inside, "This is where we're gathering until dinner. Are you ready to meet a lot of people?"

She swallows nervously and nods slightly, "I think so." She says as her hands nervously stroke Akuma in her arms.

He places a hand gently on her shoulder, "You'll be fine. They are all very nice, I promise."

"Will the um, Princess be there?" she asks a little more nervously.

Lance nods, "Of course. But she's very nice. If you forget someone's name, don't worry, no one is going to tease you. I think you will like this group," he says reassuringly.

She takes a deep breath and nods, "Let's go then."

He nods and opens the door and they enter. Several people stop talking and look up to see Lance and Noriko enter, her cat held in her arms. She smiles nervously at the group. "Hi guys," Lance says.

"Hey Moody," Shorty says as they enter the room, the door closing behind them.

"Who's your friend?"

"This is Noriko. She works at the school in the village outside the castle." Lance replies.

"Hello," several of the group reply at once. She nods in acknowledgment. Lance leads her over to Keith and Fala. "Noriko, this is her Highness, Princess Fala, and her soon to be husband, Keith."

Noriko curtsies to Fala, "It is an honor, Your Highness." she says sounding astonished. Fala smiles to her, "It is nice to meet you, Noriko." she looks at the cat, "That is an interesting cat you have there. Does it have two tails?" she asks curiously.

Noriko nods, "Yes, Your Highness. She has two tails. She is very friendly; I hope my bringing her isn't a problem. I have a leash for her, so I can set her down while we eat. Otherwise, I'll keep her in my arms. I have heard about your mice, and I don't want to cause any trouble."

"I told her it would be all right to bring her cat in, Princess. With the stipulation that

she be confined, so if there is a problem, let me know. She did ask before bringing her," Lance says, looking between Noriko and Fala.

Fala nods, "That is an amenable solution. Thank you for thinking of the safety of our mice. That is very kind of you."

Introductions are made around the room and they all talk for a while until the food is served. After dining, they all return to the sitting room and talk for a while longer. Noriko starts feeling tired, so she whispers to Lance who nods, and they excuse themselves from the group and he walks her home.

"Thank you for inviting me, Lance. I had a lovely evening," Noriko says.

Lance smiles, "I'm glad you came. I hope they didn't overwhelm you."

She shakes her head, "They all seemed very nice. Everyone was nice to me, even the Princess."

"I told you they were. Even if we bicker amongst ourselves at times, we are a very accepting group of people," he replies. They arrive at the entrance to the schoolhouse and she stops turning to face him.

"I really did have a good time. I hope we can see each other again soon," she says.

He leans down and kisses her briefly and nods, "I'll see you tomorrow. I'm not sure when, but if you aren't by the lake; I'll come and find you. Good night, Noriko."

She smiles and nods, "Good night, Lance." She turns and goes into the schoolhouse, the door closing behind her.

Lance walks back to the castle, and is passing the sitting room when Hothead comes out, grinning at him. "What?" Lance asks.

"She's cute, Lance." he replies.

Lance shrugs, "I know. What's your point?"

"I just think it's funny," Hothead replies.

"What's funny?" Lance asks, getting annoyed as he walks down the hallway trying to be left alone.

"That not so long ago, you were complaining because you didn't have a girlfriend. Now suddenly you do," Hothead states as if it were obvious. "She seems like a sweet girl, try and not screw it up." he adds a bit tactlessly.

Lance glares at him, "I happen to really like her. I don't plan on screwing it up, as you so eloquently put it," he replies annoyed.

They stop outside of Lance's door, "How did you two meet anyways?" Hothead asks curiously.

Lance sighs, "She was involved with some bad people a while back, and I happened to be out walking and heard her scream for help. I went to where I heard some commotion and saw three men trying to hurt her," he replies. "I don't just mean beat her either, if you get my meaning," he adds a bit coldly before continuing normally, "Anyways, I fought them off and she escaped with some bruises and cuts, but otherwise she was fine. A lady I knew in town was looking for help at the schoolhouse, so I got her hired on there. She seems to be turning her life around. She's really nice, so I thought I'd ask her to be my date to the wedding. I brought her to dinner tonight, so she wouldn't feel as overwhelmed at the wedding."

Hothead nods, "It sounds like you probably saved her life, Lance." He says seriously. "She seems shy, so it was probably a good idea to let her meet the rest of us before the wedding."

"I figured maybe meeting you in a more informal setting, you might not scare her off," Lance says with a hint of sarcasm.

"Yeah, we tried to behave. I could tell she was nervous." Lance nods and Hothead continues, "What's the deal with the cat? I thought it was a little odd that she brought it with her."

Lance shrugs, "She said she doesn't like to leave it alone in the schoolhouse. It was abandoned, so maybe she is afraid it would feel abandoned again if she left it alone for a while." Hothead nods. "It was well behaved, so I suppose it's not a big deal. The Princess didn't seem to mind."

"I don't think she did. The cat seemed to like her too. I just can't get over the two tails. I still think that's strange," Hothead adds.

"Well, I figure it's fitting," Lance says quietly.

Hothead looks to him curious, "How so?"

"Well, in a way, they are both sort of outcasts. She is because of her past and the cat because she has two tails. Maybe they are made for each other," Lance replies.

Hothead laughs, "What's scary is that it makes sense."

The wedding proceeds as planned, everyone meeting afterwards at the reception. Shorty and Tammy are sitting towards the edge of the crowd, watching several people dancing. "Don't you want to dance, Tammy?" Shorty asks her.

She shakes her head, looking down, "I can't dance," she mumbles.

He smiles and places an arm around her, "Neither can I. So why let it bother us? It looks like a lot of them are just faking it, so I doubt anyone would notice us."

She looks up at him and smiles weakly, "I'll go out if you want me to, if it's a slow song. I'd probably hurt myself during a faster song."

He laughs, "You and me both!" They sit quietly watching other people dance until a slower song is being played and they make their way out to the dance floor. They start mimicking other people's example and swaying with the music.

"This is nice, Hiroshi," Tammy says her head on his shoulder.

He holds her closer and nods, "I think so too." They continue for a while, watching other people as they come and go on the dance floor.

Lance and Noriko dance close to the couple and Shorty smiles at Lance, who doesn't seem to notice him. "Glad to see you're having a good time, Moody," he says causing both Lance and Noriko to look in his direction.

"I could say the same about you, Shorty," Lance replies. "I figured you'd be off to someplace secluded by now," he adds with a smirk.

"Lance, that's not polite," Noriko scolds him while trying not to smile at the other's obvious embarrassment.

"What? He knows I'm only teasing him," he replies trying to sound innocent.

She shakes her head and laughs, "Don't try and sound innocent. You act just like some of the siblings I have at the school."

Lance fakes a hurt look, getting a laugh from Noriko, "I'm not buying it," she says shaking her head.

He grins and kisses her cheek, "Okay, I'll try and behave."

She smiles, "That's all I ask."

"Are you having a good time?" he asks her quietly, watching her face for a reaction.

She nods and smiles, "Yes, thank you. Oh, and thank you for allowing me to leave Akuma in your room. I know she would have been a handful with all of these people, even on a leash."

"I thought that would be a suitable compromise. I know you don't like leaving her alone in the schoolhouse," he replies.



The festivities continue and Hothead and Sara are out in the courtyard. They are sitting on a blanket, a large spread of food laid out before them.

"I can't believe you went to all of this trouble, Seidō," Sara says smiling. "How did you get this much food and I not notice you with it?"

He looks to her and smiles, "I had a little help from some of your staff," he says quietly.

"Oh?" she replies.

He nods, "I told them that I knew you don't care for crowds, so they arranged to have a basket in a specific location while I occupied you on the dance floor. Then all I had to do was pick it up on our way out here."

She looks at him and smiles, then sits up and kisses his cheek. "That's very sweet of you. Thank you," she says as she sits back down beside him.

They sit quietly and talk for a while, eating some of the food they had laid out.

Keith and Fala are finally walking back to their quarters, both barely able to move after all of the dancing, and moving about talking with the guests. The sun is nearly up when they get to their room, he lets her enter first, then follows behind her, both of them flopping down onto the bed in total exhaustion. Keith starts laughing and Fala turns her head and faces him, looking amused. "What is so funny?"

Slowly he manages to turn so that he's facing her and manages to stop laughing, "Well, you know what everyone is going to assume, right?" Fala nods and he continues, "I don't think either of us could as tired as we are."

She looks at him for a moment and laughs, "You know what, you're right. I'm not even sure I can get back up off this bed to change into a nightgown and get out of this dress," she says sounding completely wiped out.

Keith looks at her sympathetically, "Would you like me to help you change, Fala?" he asks quietly. "I know you have to be tired."

She nods slightly and he slowly gets up and then offers his hand to her. He helps her change, and then changes himself before getting into bed beside her; she turns and snuggles against him, quickly falling asleep. "Goodnight, Fala," he says before allowing himself to drift to sleep.

A few months pass, with the crew acting as they normally would; going on patrols, practicing with the upgraded lions, and dealing with the political aspects of court life. Most of the crew is gathered in the common room talking one afternoon when Shorty comes in, Tammy close behind him her hand intertwined with his. Everyone looks up as they enter, the conversations ceasing. "Oh good you're all here," Shorty says looking around the room. "I wanted everyone to be here when we told you," Shorty begins quietly, a blush creeping onto his cheeks. "Tammy and I are officially engaged," he says, a big smile on his face.

Fala stands up and comes over to them, hugging them both. "I'm very happy for you. Congratulations to you both."

"Thank you." The couple stammers.

"Can we see the ring?" Fala asks happily.

Tammy nods and timidly holds out her left hand, displaying the white gold ring, with a large diamond, in the middle of a circle of emeralds. Lance, Hothead and Keith all come over to see the ring.

Lance lets out a whistle, "You must have sold your soul, Shorty."

Shorty shakes his head, "I've been saving for several years." He replies proudly.

"For her or just in general?" Lance says sarcastically.

Shorty glares at him, "For Tammy. I've known for a couple of years that I wanted to marry her."

A blush creeps onto Tammy's cheeks and Fala gets in-between Lance and Shorty, "Okay you two. I will make you sit in separate corners if I have to." She says as she glares at Lance.

"What? I was just asking." Lance retorts.

Fala shakes her head and looks apologetically at Tammy, "You'd better get used to their bantering, they act like this constantly. Don't be afraid to bang their heads together, sometimes it does come to that." she adds laughing as Tammy looks at her a bit perplexed.

"I'll try and remember that, Your Highness," Tammy replies quietly, hiding a smile.

Fala nods, "They are like brothers, they fight with each other, just don't let someone else pick on them, or they are the others most fierce allies. It can be amusing at times."

"So, when are you thinking of getting married?" Fala asks.

"Well, my mother wants us to wait until after next summer, so that I'm a true adult," Tammy replies.

"Oh, I see," Fala replies. "You know, that'd be close to when our coronation is, wouldn't it Keith?"

Keith nods, "I believe so." he replies.

"Coronation?" Hothead asks confused.

"I thought you were already Queen," Lance adds equally confused.

Fala shakes her head, "I have the title, since I am of age and married, but to be proper, we cannot be officially crowned for one year after our marriage. It's to help ensure that the heir didn't marry to just get the title. It's been that way for as long as anyone can remember. It's supposed to help protect the royal line from impropriety."

"Ah. I suppose that makes sense," Lance replies.

"So, that would put your wedding close to the same time as our coronation, wouldn't it, Shorty?"

"Yes, it would, Your Highness. I don't want to impede on your day, so just let me know when it would be an acceptable time, so that we may begin to work on the arrangements," he replies.

"Why not do it all on one day?" Lance suggests.

"Would that even be possible, Fala?" Keith asks curious.

Fala shrugs, "I personally wouldn't have a problem with it, I don't know how Raible would feel about it. He's the one who's up on all the court protocols and such. If you are truly interested in trying to get married on the same day as the coronation, I will gladly ask Raible and see if we can work it out somehow."

Shorty looks to Tammy, who has been sitting quietly beside him, her hand tightly gripping his, "What do you think of the idea? Please be honest. It is something we don't have to rush to decide on."

Tammy looks around the room, glancing at each of the rooms occupants before letting her gaze rest again on Shorty, "Honestly, I think it's a good idea. I don't personally want a large wedding. I'm not a person who likes large crowds, so if we could maybe do a small ceremony a little bit after the coronation that would be fine by me. That is of course if my mother is also amenable to the idea."

Shorty nods, "Good answer." He turns to Fala, "Could you look into the possibility of the plan with Raible and let us know what he says, then once we know that, we can

talk to your mother," he says turning his attention back to Tammy who nods in agreement.

"Then it's settled, I'll go and talk to Raible this afternoon and get back with you," Fala says as she stands up from the chair she had been sitting in. "Now, if you will excuse us, we have a few things we need to take care of, including talking to Raible." Keith stands up as she does and takes her hand and they leave the room.

Lance chuckles as the door closes.

"What?" Hothead asks.

"Nothing. I think I'm going to go out for a while. I'll be out by the lake if anyone needs me," Lance replies standing up and walking towards the door. "Oh, and congrats you two," he adds as he leaves.

Hothead gets up and stretches. "Yes, congratulations, I am happy for you. Now, I'm going to go see about finding a snack," he says walking towards the door.

"Yeah, a snack. You're going to go see Sara," Shorty replies a big smile on his face.

"Seeing her just makes the idea better. So what if that is my motive? It's not like you have room to talk, Shorty," he replies laughing.

"I think it's sweet and I'm happy for you. Maybe you'll get brave enough to ask her before too long," Shorty adds as Hothead blushes and heads out the door without another word.

Tammy laughs, "I can't believe you said that to him!"

"What?" he asks innocently.

"You embarrassed him," she replies.

"Oh, he's tough. He'll be fine. Would you like to go out in the lion?" he asks pointedly changing the conversation.

"Sure. Let's go," she replies as they stand up and head for the door hand in hand.