

Love, unconventionally.

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Author's Note: The rank's used in this article are from the Canadian military, except for the Commander rank on which I made a mistake, so it represents the rank of Lt Col.

<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/phoenix-writing>

From Chapter Twelve

So I say
Thank you for the music, the songs I'm singing
Thanks for all the joy they're bringing
Who can live without it, I ask in all honesty
What would life be?
Without a song or a dance what are we?
So I say thank you for the music
For giving it to me

- ABBA, *Thank you for the music*

Chapter Thirteen

Keith looked around, confused, startled. He was standing in a hospital room, looking at himself. He scratched his head a moment, trying to keep calm, and to not totally freak out. After a few moments, another figure appeared. He looked a lot like Keith, but a lot older, not necessarily in his looks, but his eyes told a story.

“Where am I?” Keith asked the figure.

“The hospital, what else does it look like?” The older man replied.

“But I’m looking at myself.” Keith looked confused.

“Yes, you are. You are in a coma. You were injured when your ship was attacked.” The man revealed.

"The Aeon was attacked?" Keith asked, astonished.

"Is that the name of your ship? Huh, curious thing. In my day they weren't nearly as advanced... it took a long time to build ships back then" said the figure.

"When was your time?" Keith asked, curiously.

"It seems like a millennia ago now, but I was the first Pharaoh of the Empire." The figure looked squarely at Keith.

Keith looked a bit awestruck. "No, you're shitting me."

"Why would I want to do such a thing? I was the first Pharaoh. As will you be." The red man revealed.

"It's kinda hard for me to be the first Pharaoh when you were the first. Title's taken." Keith said smartly.

"You would think that, wouldn't you? I never said you would be the first Pharaoh of the Empire. You will be the first Pharaoh to have a male consort, a male equal. This may well bring balance to the Empire." The man said.

"I hate to break it to you, but we already have balance." Keith replied, wondering where the old man had been.

"Rubbish. The Leffe hasn't passed a law in over a year. While it's being kept quiet, many member worlds are talking of war – with each other. You and your Queen can prevent it, but only if you do it together. The monarchy was meant to be a duality, you can restore peace. Why do you think your ship was attacked?" The figure asked Keith.

"Wrong place at the wrong time?" Keith queried.

"The sooner you realize that there is no such thing as coincidence, the better off you will be. When you wake up, ask your father to tell you the story of the legendary warrior. To save you wondering, that was me, but I'm sure he can tell you a lot more, and he has more time than we do." The first Pharaoh said.

"But... but... what if I never wake up to ask him?" Keith asked, as the man turned, to start to head out of the room.

"Oh, you'll wake up. Soon I imagine. Before you do, you'll be visited by 3 ghosts..." a pause, and then a laugh, "I'm just teasing you! There won't be any ghosts. But you should tell Jason what I have told you. You will both need each other. And if your father refuses to tell you the story, tell him that Old Cranky told him to shut up and start telling the story." The man grinned.

"Who's 'Old Cranky'?" Keith asked of the figure, who by now had left the room, and disappeared.

Still not woken up yet, Keith walked around the hospital in his dream figure. He saw Jason

sitting next to his bed almost every waking moment. When he left his room, he saw his parents sitting worried either in the waiting room, or the hospital's cafeteria. Although his parents rarely ate there, as the royal taste testers refused to eat the garbage that they produced.

He found a bench in the hall that was empty, and took a seat. It was next to Lt. Saunderson who was stationed outside his door. Keith respected the Chancellor, and his brother, the Minister of Social Change, but the old man was right. The Leffe (parliament), hadn't passed a law in over a year. They were too bogged down in micromanagement. His father being the age he is, refused to step in and order them to do their jobs, and wouldn't dissolve the leffe for not wanting to disgrace his old friend.

He let out a sigh. As he did, loud bells went off in his room. He rushed back to see what was going on.

"Code blue! Get the crash cart!" called one doctor as his body was suddenly surrounded.

Keith could have sworn the old man said he was going to wake up, but looking at things this way, he doubted the old man. Of course before he could finish the thought, he was pulled back into his body.

The doctor turned to look at the Queen. "He will live, your Majesty. And the even better news that I promised, is that he is now out of a coma. He is simply sleeping."

Jason looked at the doctor, "Thank you for saving his life." The Queen beside him offered the doctor a quiet smile.

Jason looked over at the Queen. "Is something wrong, your Majesty?"

"Jason, please. You don't need to call me that. Mom is fine. Or if you insist, you can use 'hey you'." The Queen smiled, as did Jason.

"To answer your question, I will be fine. I was worried for my son." She turned, quietly walking down the hall, leaving Jason alone in the room with his lover.

Jason looked over at Keith, and walked over to the bed. He leaned over, and kissed Keith's forehead. "Sweet dreams."

For the first time in a few months, Jason left the hospital to go find a comfortable bed.