THUNDERCATS™

EXODUS



BOOK AND RECORDING

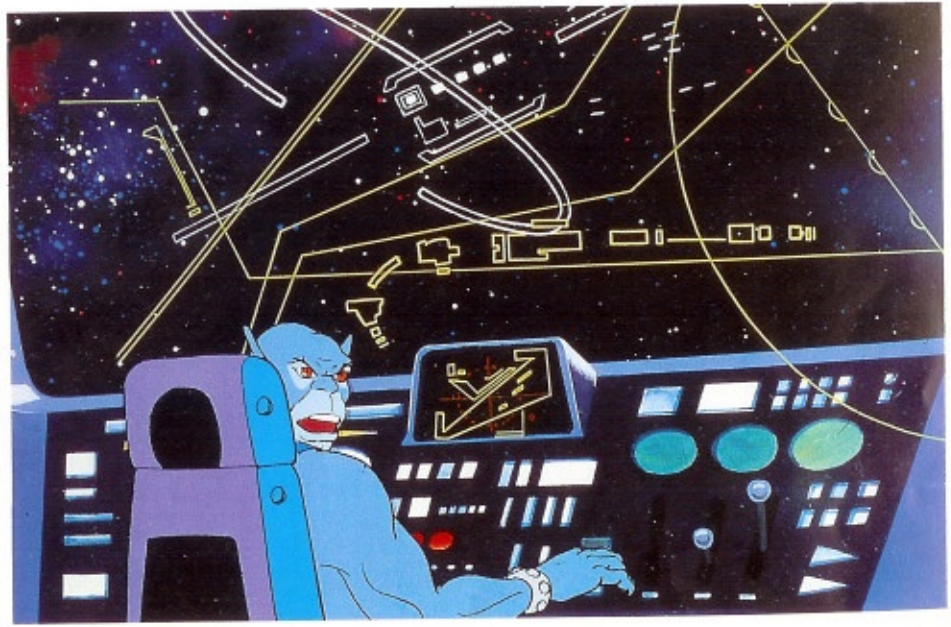
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The planet ThunDERa had only a little time left. Soon it would explode into glowing fragments and be snuffed out of the sky forever. Already its people had taken off in a fleet of starships to seek a new home in a distant galaxy.

The leaders of these space pioneers were a special race of beings called ThunderCats. With heavy hearts, they watched their doomed planet on the flagship's telescreen.

"It's finished, Jaga," said the pilot.

The chief nodded sadly. "Yes. Any moment now, Panthro."

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"Shall I awaken Lion-O?" asked another of the group.

"No!" Cheetara objected. "Why upset the child needlessly, Tygra?"

"Wake him," ordered Jaga. "If he is to rule, he must learn to take the bad with the good."

Cheetara went to the young prince's sleeping compartment and shook him gently. "Lion-O . . ."

"Whuh?! . . . Oh – Cheetara . . ."

"I am sorry to wake you, but Jaga bids me bring you to him."

"Uh . . . sure, okay . . ." Knuckling sleep from his eyes, the boy arose from his bunk.

His faithful attendant, Snarf, woke up too, snuffling and snorting. "Snarf, snarf – Hey! Where are you going? Lion-O needs his sleep!"

"He will have ample opportunity to sleep on this voyage," Cheetara replied. "For now, it is important that he join Jaga on the flight deck."





"What's up, Jaga?" the boy asked, when they reached the control room.

"Come closer, Lion-O," said the elderly chief. "Watch the telescreen."

The fiery ball on the screen exploded, rocking the ship!

"Whoo!! What was that?!"

"That was ThunDERa, Lion-O. The planet we called home."

"Th-ThunDERa?! But . . ." The little prince fought back tears – never again would he see his boyhood scenes!

Jaga put an arm around him. "Yes, Lion-O. ThunDERa is gone, but the Code of ThunDERa will live as long as you – as Lord of the ThunderCats – carry it in your heart. It will be your sacred duty to rule according to that code in our new home, wherever that will be. Justice, Truth, Honour, Loyalty . . ."

"I will, Jaga! I swear it!" said the prince. But then his voice broke. "I mean . . . I'll try . . ."

He was, after all, just a little boy.

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"Yes, I know," said Jaga. "It is an enormous responsibility for one who is not yet a man. But you are not alone, Lion-O. The nobles gathered here – Panthro, Cheetara, Tygra – even, er, Wilykat and Wilykit – will be teaching the skills you need to rule wisely and well."

"Hmm, no mention of old Snarf, I notice," the prince's faithful pal muttered sulkily. "Snarf, snarf . . ."

"There is something else you must see, Lion-O," said Jaga. "The most important part of your heritage . . ."

He led the way into the Sword chamber. "This is the Mystic Sword of Omens, and the source of our powers . . . The Eye of ThunDERa!"

As Lion-O took it from its case, the Sword began to glow! Its crossbar curled, forming two eyeholes, and the Sword seemed to grow larger and heavier until the boy could no longer hold it. It fell from his grasp with a clang!





"J-Jaga!" cried the prince. "The sword is alive!"

"Yes."

"But there are holes in the hilt, Jaga . . . and I don't see any Eye."

"The Eye sleeps until needed, Lion-O! . . . And these are not merely 'holes' you see in the hilt. Looking through these magic apertures will give you sight beyond sight."

Lion-O struggled to pick the Sword up again. "Uhh, I – eh – can't lift it, Jaga . . ."

"No, you have not the strength yet, but –" The old chief broke off to say, "Snarf, would you ask the other ThunderCats to join us?"

"Yaa – okay . . . Snarf, snarf, snarf."

Jaga went on, "– but it will not be long before the Sword feels natural in your hand."

The other nobles came in. "You wish to see us, Jaga?"

"Yes. You will all have to learn new ways as well . . . We don't know what awaits the ThunderCats in our new home, but these raiments and weapons will help protect you . . ."

Jaga opened a secret cabinet and handed out its contents. "Cheetara . . . Tygra . . . Panthro . . ."

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Each one got a new costume and special weapon. Cheetara was given a throwing stick which in a flash could become as long as she wished – Tygra a bolo whip that could curl like a steel spring around a foe's arm or leg – and Panthro received a strange fearsome weapon consisting of two bars, called numchucks, joined by a chain.

Suddenly the spaceship rocked, as if from a missile exploding nearby!

"Jaga! We're being attacked!" cried Tygra.

The old chief's first thought was for the prince's safety. "Lion-O! Remain in the Sword chamber!" he ordered.

"No! If there's to be fighting, then I should be –"

"Please do not argue! Snarf, look after him!"

"Yup, you bet, Jaga! Snarf'll keep Lion-O safe, don't worry!"

The others rushed back to the flight deck.

"Have you identified the enemy?" Jaga asked Tygra.

"Yes. They're from the Planet Plun-Darr!"

"Mutants!" gritted Panthro. "Always those blasted mutants!"

Cheetara was studying the enemy's markings. "The ships bear the insignia of Reptilians, Jackalmen, Monkians."

Tygra was surprised. "They're fighting together? As allies?"

"But – but they've always been at war among themselves!" said Wilykat.

And his sister Wilykit added, "Yeah – they hate each other as much as we hate them."

"The alliance is probably a last desperate attempt to seize the Eye of ThunDERa," said Jaga.

Aboard the enemy command ship, the three mutant leaders watched as their raiders fired again and again at the peaceful ThunDERian transports.

"Hnyah, hnyah, ha ha!" Jackalman barked gleefully. "A direct hit, S-S- Slithe!"

"Superb!" hissed the Reptilian leader.



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The ThunderCats had seen the ship behind them explode.

"We just lost one, Jaga!" Panthro reported grimly.

"The old chief spoke into his mike. "Flagship to convoy! Assume defensive formation!"

The enemy saw the transport craft obey Jaga's command.

"Whoo-Whoo – they're forming a circle!" chattered Monkian.

"A slim hope!" sneered S-S- Slithe. "We watched those ships loading via spystar transmission.

They're so packed with ThunDERian pilgrims and their possessions, they could carry little by way of armament! . . . ATTACK!!"

Ship after ship of the convoy was blasted out of the sky. The ThunderCats looked on in helpless rage.

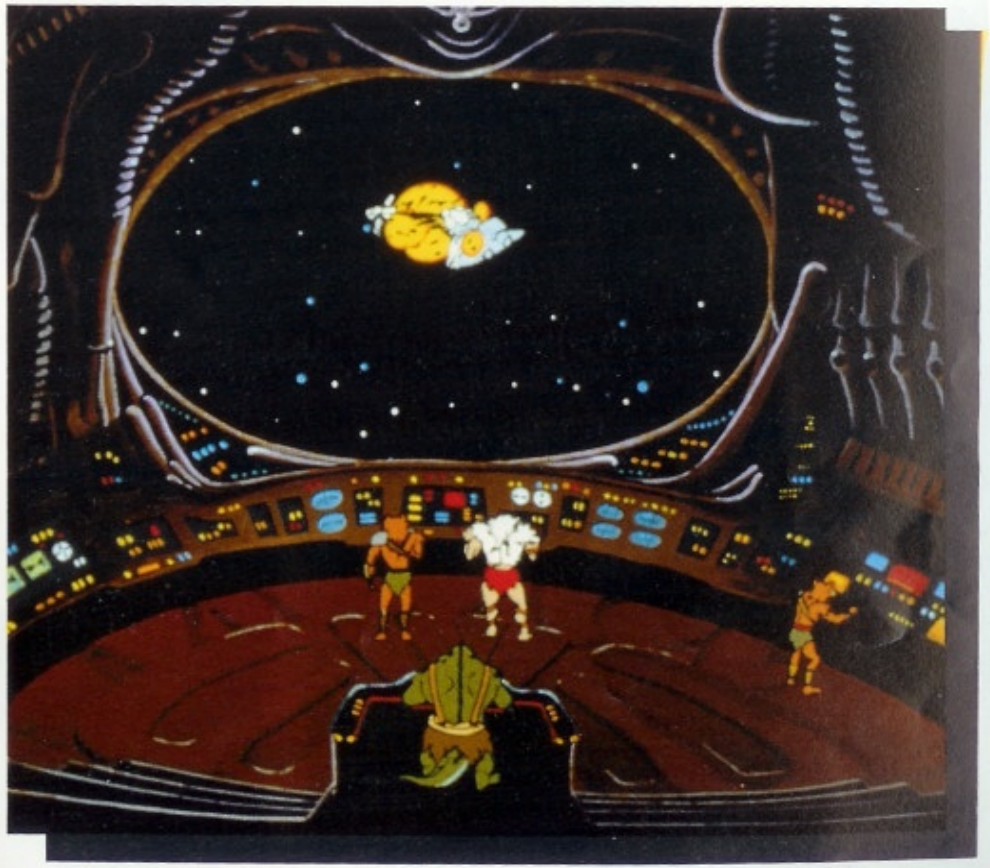
"We're losing them, Jaga!" Panthro. "We're losing all our ships!"

"Except for ours," said Cheetara. "We haven't taken a single hit!"

"No," Jaga replied. "They know that the flagship would be carrying the Eye of ThunDERa. They won't risk losing it!"

Zap! The ship rocked slightly. Then again as the ThunderCats heard another zap! – and another!

"Grappling rays!" exclaimed Panthro. This meant that the mutants would soon try to board the ThunderCats' flagship!



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As the enemy craft drew alongside, S-S-Slithe formed his Reptilian warriors into a boarding party. "We won't need you for this!" he hissed at his allies. "My Reptilians and I can handle it!"

"Heh – heh – hnyah, hnyah, hnyah! So that you can possess the eye of ThunDERa yourself, S-S-Slithe?" Jackalman barked back sarcastically. "No way!"

The other mutants crowded forward, and the boss Monkian blasted a hole in the ThunderCats' ship with his raygun.

A warning siren whopped! "We've been breeched!" said Panthro.

"Stand by to repel boarders!" cried Tygra, and the ThunderCats leaped into action!

Cheetara moved so fast she was just a blur. The enemy swordsmen tried in vain to cut her down.

They couldn't even keep Tygra in sight. "Now you don't see me – now you do!" he mocked, using his power of invisibility. His fists seemed to come smashing at the mutants out of nowhere!

Panthro was a master of ThunDERian martial arts. With his flips, chops and kicks, he seemed to be everywhere at once – each move taking out another enemy fighter!

Panthro roared with laughter. "If you guys were as mean as you are ugly, then maybe you'd be trouble!"

Young Wilykat and Wilykit had their own way of repelling attackers. Wilykat used one of his powder pellets to blind them with a cloud of smoke. Wilykit used one of hers to send them into violent sneezing fits.

Meanwhile, Jaga was fighting off three mutants at once with his skilled swordsmanship. "Where is your leader – that wretch S-S-Slithe?" he demanded contemptuously.

The Reptilian was leading a frantic search for the precious Eye.

"Nothing back there," Jackalman reported. "Any luck at your end, S-S-Slithe?"

"No . . . What's in there?" He pushed open a door.

"It would help if I knew what the Eye of the ThunDERa looked like," said the Jackalman. "Have you ever seen it?" he asked, following S-S-Slithe into the Sword chamber.



"Yes! . . . Yes-s-s! . . . And there it is – embedded in the hilt of the Sword of Omens!"

Lion-O gripped the Sword bravely, but it was too heavy for him to lift. Snarf tried to snarl ferociously at the invaders. "You'd better get right out of here, or you'll have Snarf the Fierce to deal with! Snarf, snarf!"

S-S-Slithe chuckled. "And what manner of laughable creature is this?"

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"Think I'm funny, do ya?! Snarf, snarf!"

"Snarf! No!!" cried Lion-O as his faithful old friend leapt at the Reptilian's throat!

Jackalman triggered a net-gun! Poor Snarf was caught and hurled across the room, but he staggered upright. "Where are they?! Lemme at 'em! Snarf, snarf! . . . All of 'em!"

S-S-Slithe ignored him, saying, "Now, boy – give me the Sword!"

Lion-O growled, "You shall not have it while I live . . ."

"That would suit me just fine . . ." S-S-Slithe hissed.

"Hynah-ha-hnyah, hnyah!" barked Jackalman. "The cub threatens us? He can hardly hold onto that Sword, much less lift it!

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Lion-O knew they were right. But suddenly his whole body seemed to vibrate. A thrum of power came from the Sword, growing louder and louder! The Eye opened with a brilliant flash and terrifying roar!

Next thing Lion-O knew, the Sword was lifting in his hand. Its blade glowed with a fiery red light as it whirled around and around above the young prince's head!

"Wh-hoo-what's happening?!" quavered Jackalman.

"Back! Get back!" warned S-S-Slithe.

Panic seized them as the Sword whirled ever closer. Hissing and yelping, they scrambled to the door.

"Back to the ship!!" S-S-Slithe cried to his raiders.

In moments the enemy cruiser was in full flight!

The ThunderCats hurried to check on the young prince. "Lion-O! You're not hurt?" asked Jaga.

"Nah! Snarf took a few lumps, but I managed to hold 'em off!" the youngster boasted.

"You did it with the Sword?!"

"Well," Lion-O admitted sheepishly, "the Sword kind of did it for me."





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The other ThunderCats laughed in relief. But the situation was bad. With their ship's navigational system damaged, they had no chance of reaching the distant galaxy they had chosen for their new home.

Panthro tuned the video screen. "See this puny little sun? I've run a galactic scan for atmospheric compatability and this blue planet – the third one out – gives me a readout of 96 percent."

The young prince looked puzzled. "Atmospheric com – com –"

"That means we could breathe the air, Lion-O," said Tygra.

"Even so, it – it's light years away! Cheetara complained.

Wilykat made a face. "Oh – yechh! We'd have to make the trip in the – suspension capsules!

Even worse – while the others hibernated, one ThunderCat would have to stay awake to pilot the ship manually. Jaga had chosen this duty for himself, knowing he was bound to perish long before they reached their new home. He brushed aside all their protests.

"Enough! I am by far the oldest of you. Even though the suspension capsules slow down the aging process, some aging does take place. Even in suspension I could not live long enough to complete the journey, so let's not have any more talk. Enter the capsules!"

Months and years went by. Jaga steered the ship bravely until he became too old and feeble. "I . . . can't go on . . . I pray . . . The Robot Pilot . . . can take it . . . from here . . ."

His trembling fingers reached out to press the Robot Pilot button. Then he slumped over the controls.

Long afterward, the ThunderCats' ship plunged into the Earth's atmosphere. But its landing rays failed and it crashed in a jungle, spilling objects all over. Among them were the suspension capsules—and one broke open.

Slowly Snarf climbed out, rubbing his head. "I just knew I wasn't going to like this—snarf, snarf!"

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But what had happened to the young prince?! "Lion-O! Lion-O!!" Snarf shouted. He ran around, peering into the other suspension capsules until he saw the face he was looking for. "Lion-O? . . . It's him! Snarf, snarf, snarf!"

He ripped the other lid open. "Wake up, Lion-O! It—it's me! It's ol' Snarf!" he cried, licking the boy's face.

"What are you doing, Snarf? Get away!" Lion-O tried to sit up and bumped his head "OWW! What th—Oh . . . the suspension capsule . . . But how did it get to be so small?"

"I was really worried, Lion-O!" said Snarf, hopping about excitedly. "I was sure it was all going to turn out—"

But the prince was too puzzled to listen. Everything seemed to have shrunk compared to himself! "You look a lot smaller too, Snarf! What's going on?! . . . And my hands! Look at the size of them!"

He walked over to a pond. His reflection in the water showed a tall, strong young man.

Then Jaga's voice came echoing back in his memory: "Even though the suspension capsules slow down the ageing process, some ageing does take place . . ."

And suddenly Lion-O realized, "Why, I've grown!"

Snarf was rooting around in the wreckage. He came running up, holding the prince's space teddybear. "Look what I have for you! Snarf, snarf!"





"Oh—what's this, Snarf? A toy? . . . Good grief, I'm too big for toys, can't you see that?!"

His old friend was crestfallen. "Snarf! I guess you'll just always look little to faithful ol' Snarf!"

The mutants' space cruiser came zooming down from the sky. Snarf gaped in dismay. "Lion-O!! Look out!" he cried. "The mutants are back! Snarf, snarf!"

Landing rays flashed from the spaceship. A moment later, S-S-Slithe and his partners were teleported down. Lion-O and Snarf ducked behind some bushes as they swarmed over the wreckage.

"Mutants?" Lion-O frowned. "They look like—I don't know—like I should remember them . . ."

"They're real bad, Lion-O! Oh, I just knew we hadn't seen the last of that bunch!" Fearful and jittery, Snarf wriggled backward, deeper into the underbrush. "OWW! Mmm—what the gol'darn—?!"

He turned to see what had jabbed him.

It was the Sword of Omens—lying against a log, with its point aimed right at his back! "Lion-O! Look!"

"Shhh! . . . Good grief, Snarf, what's the matter with you?! We're in big trouble here and you bring me another stupid toy! Get away!"

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The mutants were ransacking the ThunderCats' spaceship.

"Search carefully!" hissed S-S-Slithe. "The Eye of ThunDERa must be in the wreckage somewhere!"

"Whoo-whoo—over here!" the Monkian chattered. "One of the ThunderCats is still in his capsule! . . . And—and—uh—here's another!"

Snarling with excitement, the Jackalman began hacking at a capsule! The other mutants joined in.



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An alarm bell rang in Lion-O's memory. "Those capsules—I—there's something important about them somehow—something inside them that—let me see—something that—"

Suddenly he remembered! "No! Stop!!" He cried and charged out at the mutants.

"Hnyah, hnyah, hnyah! And who is that?" snarled Jackalman.

"What does it matter?" leered S-S-Slithe. "The question will soon be 'Who was that?"

Lion-O fought wildly, and Snarf tried to help, but they were outnumbered. The prince was hurled back into the jungle shrubbery!

His hand felt something—the hilt of the Sword that Snarf had tried to show him. The Sword began to glow—and Lion-O jerked as if from an electric shock!

He picked up the weapon, frowning. "This Sword, I—I know this Sword . . . It's—oh—can't remember—it's . . ."

A misty figure appeared, saying, "Lion-O . . ."

"J-Jaga?! Is it really you? . . . You're still with me?"

"I will always be with you, Lion-O. Pay heed, for it is your destiny that you hold in your hand. The Eye of ThunDERa—the source of the ThunderCats' power!"

"Yes—I remember . . . sight beyond sight . . ."

The crossbar curled and Lion-O peered through the Eyeholes—then thrust out the Sword at arm's length. It was growing bigger—and the Eye was glowing brighter!

"THUNDER—THUNDER—THUNDERCATS!" cried the prince. A bolt of lightning shot up from the Eye, and Lion-O roared, "HO!!"

The sound awoke his companions. They flung off the lids of their capsules and sprang out ready to fight!

The mutants quailed in fear. "Th-The ThunderCats! They're—they're loose! Ooh! Ooh!" chattered the Monkian.

"Ri-i-ight!" chuckled Panthro, dealing blows right and left. "We're going to loosen your bones for you!"

The ThunderCats drove the enemy back! Suddenly Cheetara saw a new figure join the fray, swinging his mighty Sword. "Tygra! Look who's joined us!"

"Well, well . . . Grown some, hasn't he?!"

The mutants fled in panic. "Back!" hissed S-S-Slithe! "Teleport yourselves back the ships!!"

But the ThunderCats knew they had only gained a short breathing spell.

"The mutants will never rest until the Eye of Th[illegible]" said Panthro.

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"That will never happen! I'll see to it!" bragged Lion-O!

"Hmmmph! Get him!" joked Wilykat. And Wilykit giggled, "Ha-ha . . . one tiny skirmish and he's suddenly a superhero!"

Panthro smiled tolerantly. "Now, now . . . He did pretty good for his first time out."

"He did indeed!" said Tygra. "And a fine figure of a ThunderCat you've grown up to be, Lion-O!"

"And so handsome, too," Cheetara added.

"Snarf didn't do anything, of course! Just found the Sword, that's all! Snarf, snarf."

Panthro squared his shoulders. "Now we'll have to go about seeing if we can survive in this place!"

"We will survive—and create a mighty new Empire!" Lion-O declared, plunging the Sword of Omens into Earth's soil. "I, Lion-O, Lord of the ThunderCats, proclaim it!"

Then as the others laughed and clapped him on the back: "Uh . . . with your help, of course."



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