Trials

Chapter 5

By Aria Moonsinger

“If you did get under them with me; we both know what that would lead to.” she said. “I can't help the way I feel; Jolene, you and the children are my world now. I love you and them and I wouldn't trade the three of you for anything in the universe.” he said. Jolene placed her left hand on his right cheek briefly; then withdrew it, then said, “Lion-O I love you too and so does Bruce and Janae and we all are happy to have you and the other Thundercats in our lives. We wouldn't trade all of you either; but even though you'll be on top of the covers, do you really think you should tempt yourself?” “You're worried about my desire for you; I'm glad that you're aware of what you do to me, but I made you a promise and I fully intend to keep it.” he said. “Okay let me put it this way; should you really be tempting me, what I do to you is what you do to me.” she replied. Lion-O smiled then took Jolene into his arms and kissed her.

“I won't loose my resolve and I won't let you loose yours.” he said, then he picked her up and layed her down on the bed and covered her with the sheets and bedspread. Grabbing the coverlet; he layed down next to her, on top of the covers and covered himself with the coverlet. Jolene snuggled up against him and again he had his arm drapped over her. “Lion-O?” Jolene said, “Hmm?” he answered. “Snarf said that I wouldn't know what trial I'll have with you until I face you; is that true?” she asked. “Yes and don't think of asking what type of trial I'll have for you; I'm not certain about that myself right now, but I'll know it when the time comes.” Lion-O said. “Oh.....yawn, okay.....Good night Lion-O, I love you.” she replied as she drifted off to sleep. “Good night my precious one. I love you too.” Lion-O said and kissed her on her forehead, then he too fell asleep.

In the morning; Lion-O and Jolene ate a light breakfast, once she was dressed they parted with a kiss and Jolene took off for the Jungle of Darkness. Three hours later as she saw the jungle looming ahead of her; she saw Wilykit and Wilykat waiting outside of it. “Kit, Kat Ho!” Jolene called. “Jolene Ho!” called back Kit. I thought I was going up against Lynx-O, why are the two of you here?” Jolene asked. “We're here to let you know that somewhere in the jungle Lynx-O is waiting for you; it's up to you to find him...” answered Kat. “You won't be able to see in the jungle, but you can use your gift to try and find him.” added Kit. “What happens when I do find him?” Jolene asked. “You'll have to try and make it out of the

jungle first.” replied Wilykat. “Great, so as soon as I enter the jungle my trial begins.” she asked. The twins nodded 'yes'. Titling her head in agreement she said, “I best get started then.”she entered the jungle and heard the twins yell, “Good Luck!” 'I'm going to need it.' Jolene thought.

Once the darkness of the jungle had surrounded her; she extended her senses, unlike in training she didn't need to close her eyes. The darkness it self was like a blindfold. She remembered her last training session with Lynx-O; he had her find where people had been, a type of psychometry he called it. She knew he wouldn't make it easy for her; so she knelt down and tried to 'feel' with her empathic ability which direction he took. Concentrating; she felt animals, then she felt it. She crawled a few inches and felt his essence again; she touched a nearby tree and could feel that he too had touched it, “He would've taken it slow so he wouldn't bump into anything; but I can't be too slow otherwise he just might try and get out before I find him.” she thought aloud.

She wasn't aware of the passage of time; but two hours had past, he had led her on a merry chase. Finally she found where he had been waiting for her. His ear twitched when he heard her approach. “Well young lady; you have finally found me.” said Lynx-O. “Now all I have to do is find my way out first.” Jolene said. “That may not be as easy as you think it will be Jolene.” replied Lynx-O. “I don't understand.” she said. “Prepare yourself.” he replied then launched himself at her. Jolene was knocked to the ground with a thud.

“Uh..damnit. I shouldn't have dropped my guard.” she cursed. Then she was up on her feet and extended her senses just in time to dodge his fist. She 'felt' with her ability where he was and swept his feet out from under him. “Oh...” then she heard a noise like a melon hitting a rock. “Lynx-O?” she said, but there was no answer. She extended her senses and felt his energy; the image in her mind was that he was laying on the ground. She knelt down and found his leg; patting up his body she stopped when she got to his head. “Lynx-O please say something.” Jolene pleaded, but still no response. She touched his head and felt with her fingers something sticky. “Oh God, please still be alive.” Jolene prayed. She moved her hand to his chest and felt the rise and fall of it. “Thank the Lord in Heaven, Lynx-O you need to wake up.” she said. “Uh...what happened?” the elder thundercat asked. “I swept your feet out from under you and you hit your head. I don't know how bad, but there is blood.” Jolene said. “I need to get you out of here.”

“Are you certain that I am injured?” asked the lynx and hit her in the chest with his forearm; knocking her backwards to where she was laying down. Before she could clear her head; he had her pinned. “Do you yield?” he asked. “No!” she said and raised her legs; wrapped her left leg in front of him and using the strength in her legs, pulled him off of her and pinned him. She held his right arm and pulled until she heard him yell. “Do you give up?” she asked. “Thundercats never give up so easily.” Lynx-O said and raised his legs over his head and managed to free himself. Jolene scrambled to her feet and using her empathic ability; felt him crouch and launch himself at her again. She dodged; but he caught her with his claws, drawing blood from her left arm.

She hissed at the pain it caused; “Now I have the scent of blood to follow along with sounds of your movements.” Lynx-O said. “With your head wound; that puts us on equal ground.” Jolene replied. She felt again that he was preparing to lunge at her again; she moved just as he launched himself at her, she took off running. She hoped that she was going in the right direction to get out of the jungle. “Taking off so soon?” asked Lynx-O as he ran after her.
“I have to get out of the jungle first; Lynx-O, and I'm going to.” called back Jolene; but her attention was who was behind her, not what was in front of her and she collided with a tree.

It knocked her back; “Ah shit.” she said as she fell on her backside. She shook her head to clear it and got back up. She smelled blood; but she wasn't sure if it was her own, or Lynx-O's. She extended her senses and took off again; this time concentrating on what was in front of her. Lynx-O knew he was beside her from her scent and movements and threw himself sideways into her; sending her into another tree. “Crap!” she yelled then heard his footfalls running away from her. She took off again; but she tried to lift her left arm. She couldn't; her shoulder had been dislocated. She couldn't think about that now; she had to catch up to Lynx-O and beat him out of the jungle. She extended her senses; trying to ignore the pain in her shoulder, she barely managed to find where he was.

When she caught up to him; she used an old football move and tackled him, then she got up and took off. She was so intent on winning; she didn't notice that she knocked her shoulder back into place. She could hear him coming up behind her; but the darkness was turning lighter, she was close to the edge of the jungle. Lynx-O was right on her heels when she burst through the trees and out of the darkness. She stumbled because the light blinded her; but she was out first. “You did it; you made it out first.” she heard Kit say. Jolene held up her hand to her eyes; unable to focus her them. “You gave me quite a run

for my money; as they say.” Lynx-O said. “Can you guys wait until I can see; I can't focus.” Jolene said as she sat on the ground. “Here Pumyra gave us these for you to put on after you got out of the jungle.” Kat said and handed her what looked like sunglasses. She put them on and was able to focus. She saw Lynx-O had on his head what looked like purple juice.

He took off his insignia and handed it to her. “Congradulations Jolene.” Lynx-O said. “Thanks; but I would have to say, you gave me a run for my money.” she replied. Lynx-O smiled and the three thundercats bid her good bye and she took off for the next checkpoint.

She arrived at the checkpoint near sundown; she entered the tent and saw the table set for two, the full sized bed in it's usual spot. Lion-O wasn't in the tent though. 'I wonder where he could be?' Jolene went over to the bed and picked up the strawberry colored night gown; 'Lion-O must have gotten this for me. I love the color.' she thought with a smile on her face. She took off her tunic and after giving herself a sponge bath from the water basin; she put the night gown on. While she was brushing her hair; Lion-O entered the tent, he watched her brush her medium length, auburn hair. The color of the night gown complemented her skin and hair color. Lion-O cleared his throat to announce himself; she turned to face him and greeted him with a smile. The strawberry color made her eyes look teal instead of blue.

“I love the gown...” she said, “The color suits you.” he replied. She blushed and resumed brushing her hair. Lion-O walked up to her and embraced her from behind. “Tomorrow you face Tygra; you've done so well, I'm very proud of you.” he told her. “I have to admit Red; I've gotten farther than I thought I would.” she admitted. “Are you hungry?” he asked. “Famished.” Jolene said and placed the brush down on the small table near the bed. They sat at the table and had a pleasant dinner. Then when they went to bed; again Lion-O slept above the covers.

In the morning; Jolene woke before Lion-O and prepared her mind for the coming trial. She knew she should have taken all night to prepare; but didn't think she could've concentrated enough with Lion-O so close. She didn't want to wake him; even though she wanted to say good bye to him before the trial, she kissed him on the lips then stood there looking at him as he slept. 'To think after we wed; I'll wake up next to him for the rest of my life.' she thought as she caressed his forehead. He stirred and she instantly felt guilty about touching him. 'Stupid, haven't you learned men don't like to be touched. Especially if they're asleep.' she silently chided herself. She shook off the thought; she couldn't believe Lion-O would

be anything like Darren, especially in the matters of intimacy. She dressed, took a few bites of toast and a gulp of hot coffee and left for the Swamp of Laughing Lilies.

When she reached the swamp; she saw Tygra and said, “Tygra Ho!” and he resonded, “Jolene Ho! Have you prepaired your mind?” “I believe so.” Jolene answered. “Very well; I will warn you, before this trial is over you will face your greatest fear.” Tygra explained. Jolene merely nodded. “Then let's begin.” Tygra said and he disappeared. “He certainly doesn't waste time.” Jolene said to herself.

As she made her way through the swamp; she noticed how the lilies in the water kept following her. When she would stop; they would, when she moved they followed. Jolene shook her head and said, “That has to be Tygra's doing. He's making me see the lilies moving and following me.” Jolene continued on her way out of the swamp; until she saw the lilies gathering together to make one giant lily. “Now I know that's Tygra.” she said as she dodged a lily vine that tried to knock her down. “There isn't a giant lily; it's not real, it's not real...” she chanted until the image was gone. “Enough warming you up; now for the game.” Tygra said and disappeared again. Jolene just stood there; looking at the spot Tygra had stood in and said, “Oh I'm in deep doo doo this time.”