ThunderCats: How the Other Half Lives

Part Three: Only a Dream

By Knight Writer

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He felt Cheetara pressed against him, her hands caressing his broad back and her breasts a soft presence on his chest. Lion-O wished he could stay there forever, inhaling the clean scent of her black-spotted blonde hair and revelling in the feel of her taut back against his hands. He knew, though, that the embrace would not last yet was filled with tingling anticipation of what would soon follow it. They parted...

Wait, he thought, what the hell?

Cheetara was looking down at him (down?) with despair in her eyes.

"I'm sorry. Not like this." The Cheetah's breasts were now at eye-level, hitching as she took a sobbing breath. "I can't with you this way."

"What?"

"Don't you see yourself?" Lion-O looked down at his own pair of breasts (why are mine bigger than hers?) and his... her... her...

Lion-O looked up in time to see Cheetara turn and dash away at a speed the Lioness could never hope to match. She took a running step forward, desperate to reach the taller woman.

Feels like I'm running through water, she thought just before an impact on her rear leg tangled it with her other leg and sent her sprawling. Unyeilding cold slammed into her from the impact as a menacing chuckle sounded from the darkness.

"Look at you," the distorted voice said. "Not a woman for a full day and running around naked as the day is long."

"SHOW YOURSELF!" she roared, flipping upright and reaching for the Sword of Omens out of reflex before realizing that she was, indeed, still naked.

"You're doing a rather admirable job of that right now," the voice replied as a form began to take shape from the dark. "Are you THAT proud of having a..."

"SH-SHUT UP!"

"A weak, helpless woman," the voice continued as the shape stepped nearer. "All you can think about is the heat in your loins." Fear ran icy fingers down her spine, the voice's owner becoming

clear a mere second before his features did.
"Get away from me." She tried for a defiant roar, yet all that emerged from her throat was a quivering squeak. Tygra was naked and... and... hard. Lion-O felt her eyes dragging down to that part of Tygra's anatomy as though a pair of hands had gripped her head and forced it down. She fought the strange force grasping her head, locking her gaze on his chest instead just in time. Or, so she thought.
"You so looked." Tygra's voice, full of something she didn't want to consider, tried to work its way into the strange feelings that roared through her. "You liked it."
"I COMMAND you to BACK THE FUCK OFF!" She screamed, yet the words lacked conviction. Her eyes felt drawn to Tygra's crotch and the heat in her stomach spiked despite herself.
"Look at yourself," Tygra said with commanding voice and gaze. "From here, being a woman agrees with you."
"Go away," she said, weakly, her knees trembling. The desires mounting inside her felt... wrong, even alien... yet seemed... right?
"That's not what you want." Tygra was within arm's reach of her, and she found herself noticing the lines of his muscles. "I know what you want."
"I'm a man..."
"With that rack?" At that, her breasts began to tingle, especially at their tips.
This is... this is WRONG! she shrieked inwardly as her body yeilded against her will and the cold floor greeted first her knees, then her back. For a horrible instant, her eyes locked onto his manhood and revulsion warred with a desire that could not have been her own...

Lion-O jerked awake with a scream fighting to escape her lips in the pre-dawn gloom of her chambers. The blankets were damp with sweat (and nothing else, she tried to tell herself) and the robe she had fallen into slumber wearing was loose and tangled about her. She sat upright, gasping from feelings and thoughts utterly foreign to her. Her heart pounded with enough force to throb at her temples and heat both repulsive and inviting churned away within her core and her... her...
"Damnit!" she shouted, still unwilling to call that part of her new anatomy by name as though it would somehow make her new form permanent. From the corner of her brain where logic had

retreated to its vacation home since the change, a message was sent to whatever had been left in charge that gave assurances that such a thing was utterly absurd. Her body read the message and sent a reply that asked about the moistness between its legs.

She lay there, torn between shame, fear, revulsion and... an emotion she refused to call desire. No. Fucking. Way. Her thoughts were a confused jumble of images and emotions that leaned one way or the other toward the intensely erotic, her nipples hard nubs against what parts of the robe covered them when another message from logic's hidey-hole reminded her of a way to overcome it all. Lion-O swept the covers clear and doffed the robe on her way to the shower where she set the water to something barely above freezing and plunged in.

What felt like barely frozen ice rained down on her back and readily doused the erotic fires that dream (nightmare) had evoked. Calm stormed Mission Control, surprised whatever had been at the helm, and booted it out before assuming control and steering her back to rationality.

The dream had been different, had felt influenced. From her new body's composition? It had always ended with her (as a him) taking Cheetara and...

The feelings began to creep back in and she turned her face up into the icy jets of water.

Tygra had never been a part of those. Was it this body, or was Mumm-Ra having more of his fucked-up idea of fun? Lion-O turned her face from the spray, wondering if there was any real difference. She snapped her legs closed when the cold water ran down a rather intimate part of her rear to freeze a sensitive part of her front yet she stayed in to methodically soap and wash herself. There was no way she'd let any evidence of that dream, wherever it had come from, remain on her.

She emerged from the shower an indeterminable time later and nearly wiped steam away from the mirror before realizing she had kept it almost as cold as the peak of Hook Mountain. The same strange face greeted her, a mask of calm over suppressed emotions. This attack was personal in a way that she had never considered possible, yet she still kept a calm frame of mind while ignoring that her lips were a shade blue. She brushed out her hair, studiously ignoring those thoughts, until another and much less avoidable biological imperative made itself known. Lion-O looked at the toilet, then herself, and groaned.

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Cheetara walked towards Lion-O's quarters, groggy from broken sleep and lack of coffee. She drew up short when the now-female Lion-O stormed from her quarters and nearly bumped into her.
"You seem... What happened?"
"Seat. Down," she said, biting off each word. "NOW I get it." Cheetara stared in confusion for half a second before suppressing a laugh.

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Lion-O, clad in a different robe, sat at the breakfast table. She fought the multi-faceted battle of keeping her sleeves out of her food and ignoring the open stares from WilyKit, Snarf, and WilyKat while eating. Pumyra, staying in the Lair until further notice, dug into her cantaloupe half with a spoon while shooting only darting glances.
"More bacon?" Snarf asked meekly, walking up with a tray.
"I'm full," she said, meaning it. She had eaten as much as her now-smaller stomach would allow.
"Thanks, Snarf." Her former nursemaid trotted away without a glance. Lion-O picked at the remains of her breakfast, her hunger suddenly gone with the last concrete traces of her dream.
"So, Lion-O," Tygra said. "I think we should head to the Treetop Kingdom as soon as possible."
Her spine gave an involuntary jolt. "Um... Don't you have other things to do?"
"I beg your pardon," Tygra said before finishing his eggs, "but your..."
"Maybe Cheetara could drive instead?"
"I'd be happy to," she replied.
"Well, if you're sure," Tygra replied.
"Thank you." Lion-O went back to her breakfast, refusing to think about the fading details of her dream yet was unable to eat another bite. "I'm gonna get dressed now." Without further preamble, she rose and made her way to the corridor which led to her chambers.

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In the shadows of Mumm-Ra's tomb was a sight none had ever beheld before.
Mumm-Ra was face-down on the floor before the cauldron, laughing hysterically and pounding

the stones with his gnarled fist and been at it for the better part of an hour.
"By... By the PIT!" he crowed as the gales slowed gradually to mere breezes of laughter. "To think such a thing would shake him that badly!" The magics which affected dreams were limited, especially so when the recipient possessed no psionic abilities and the spell was used on the Mortal Plane rather than in the realm of dreams. He had been limited to just the images and emotions in Lion-O's psyche and the responses of his new - and rather shapely - female form. But, Mumm-Ra had been clever.
It had been a recent dream, of him taking Cheetara to his bed and letting nature take its course. A simple reminder of his new body had made his dream self acutely aware of it and of a budding fear that the woman he loved could not return it due to said body.
And then, things had gotten... interesting.
It had been meant to be a dream of being violated by not just a man, but the man who was his second in command. The strong positive emotions associated with Tygra would have made it most horrible, or so Mumm-Ra had thought. He hadn't even considered that the change had put his foe smack into the middle of her newly-reconfigured mating cycle and, unfamiliar with the drives of her new body, those urges had taken command and his own mindset had been nearly drowned out. To have been taken by Tygra would have been bad enough. To have enjoyed it against her will would have been, perhaps, the ultimate degradation.
And it opened up realms of new possibilities.
"Mumm-Ra," the Ancient Spirits of Evil called out, their mingled voices filled with the concern one expresses when addressing the wildly insane.
"Just... Just a moment, my masters." Mumm-Ra got his hands and knees beneath him and, certain the hilarity was done for the moment, pushed up to his feet. "I haven't been this entertained since... ever!"
"We are pleased that you have been sufficiently amused. Now, how does further our own goals?"
While he had been watching and re-watching the dream he had twisted in Lion-O's mind a plan had formed which he presently told his masters about. "EXCELLENT!" they roared. Dust rained from the ceiling at their triumphant cry. "We are MOST pleased with you, good servant!"
"Your praise delights me," Mumm-Ra replied with a sincerity that reflected his nature; false and empty.
"What aid will you require of us?"

"There is no need for you to exert your mighty wills, my masters," he said. "I thank you for your generous offer, and I shall keep it well in mind. For now, I have need of a more... mortal ally."
"As you wish, Mumm-Ra," they rumbled, the eyes in the statues fading from crimson to obsidian. They knew he had meant one he could kill once the inevitable double-cross came into play. Unfortunately, his bondage to them had no escape and his servitude was eternal. It rankled him to no end that he had found nothing to indicate he could turn the tables. Yet.
"Alluro," he called as he trod to the edge of the cauldron. The image of the Lunattak appeared at once, shirtless and seemingly asleep amid the toussled bedsheets. "I did not need to see that," he muttered before calling Alluro's name again.
"What do you want?" he asked, his voice thick with sleep.
"For you to come to the Black Pyramid at once."
"Given my current disposition, I really hope that doesn't mean what it sounds like."
"Do not trifle with me, alien." Mumm-Ra's words seethed with anger at Alluro's impertinence. "I am in no mood for your sarcasm."
"What could be so damned important that you'd wake me up this early?"
"How would you like to help me in breaking Lion-O's will into shards so numerous that none could piece it back together?" Alluro's eyes fluttered open. "Warp his mind until he cannot tell his right hand from his left?"
"Sounds like an ambitious weekend. However, my talents are rather limited to implanting suggestions and suppressing will."
"I only need your ability to create a link to another's mind. Before you ask what is in it for you, allow me to tell you something." By the time he was finished explaining the curse had had placed on Lion-O, Alluro was sitting upright and fully alert.
"How in the great bloody fuck did you do that?!"
"I have done that and more, but I have need of your ability to truly destroy Lion-O. So, are you interested?" Before the question had fully left his lips, Alluro had dressed himself.
"I'll be there as soon as I can!"

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"Now that we have the room to ourselves," Pumyra began after the dishes had been collected and

the twins had departed, "there are some things I feel need to be brought up."
"All ears," Panthro said. "What about Cheetara?"
"I can fill her in when she and Lion-O get back, but I think she'll notice some of what I think might happen." The other gathered ThunderCats remained silent, expectant gazes locked solely upon her. A shy person by nature, her tenure as a healer on Thundera had given her the ability to overcome that barrier in regards to discussing matters related to her profession. "I'm concerned about Lion-O's mental state as this continues."
"Specifically, how he... she..."
"For now I think feminine gender pronouns might be best, Tygra."
"Very well. How she reacted at the mention of me accompanying her to the Treetop Kingdom?"
"It was like you'd goosed her," Panthro added.
"Has Lion-O ever shown any male homophobic behaviors?" Pumyra asked. Both men shook their heads in the negative.
"Lion-O knows me," Tygra said, his voice betraying bewilderment. "H... SHE knows I would NEVER take advantage like that!"
"I think that's something we can drop on Mumm-Ra's doorstep," Panthro said to him. "She wouldn't so much as look at you, and she looked like sleep hadn't been easy."
"Okay, we can put that aside for now," Pumyra said. "What I'm concerned about is how her now body will affect her mind."
"Hormones," Tygra said at once. "Complete with being in the most urgent phase of the female reproductive cycle." Tygra, she thought, could dry out even a desert with the way he spoke. She squelched that rather uncharitable thought.
"Yes, that is a part of it."
"Just lay it out for us, Pumyra," Panthro said with worry clear on his face.
"Lion-O has grown up male," she began, "with male values taught to him and from a male point of view coupled with the influence of male hormones."
"And now that the balance of his hormones has see-sawed to the female side..." Tygra began.
"Yes. Lion-O still has the mind of a man, but it's under the influence of a woman's hormones. I don't see any problems in the short term, but the longer his male psyche deals with female drives and the challenges of BEING a woman... I have no idea what kind of damage Lion-O could endure."

"How hard can it be to be a woman?"

"Ever seen one in the grip of PMS, Panthro?" Pumyra asked archly. "Imagine someone who was born and raised a man dealing with that."

"Oh."

"Yeah. Oh. Her new balance of hormones and new bodily processes are gonna affect her sooner or later and I'm not at all sure Lion-O will be able to cope. You've all known her longer than I have. Has she ever been so caustic before?"

"I was chalking that up to the rude surprise," Panthro replied. "If someone changed me so fundamentally, I'd be pretty pissed off myself."

"I agree," said Tygra. "I don't see a new body chemistry affecting Lion-O so soon. But," he placed his hands on the table, palm-down, "we have to find a way to reverse this. Soon."