The Driving Lesson

By Leanna

Chapter 5

Once Lion-O left the hanger Panthro returned glad he finally had the chance to be by himself to collect his thoughts. He sighed and started working on the Hovercat

“Taking up hiding again,” Cheetara said giving the panthers foot a gentle kick.

Panthro peeked out from the undercarriage of the Hovercat, “no. I’m trying to fix this blasted machine”.

“Just checking,” the cheetah said, “you missed lunch and I wanted to make sure you weren’t hiding”.

“Why would I hide,” Panthro asked going back to work on the craft.

“Hmm, let’s see… to avoid questions about what happened the other night with that lioness,” Cheetara smirked.

“Exactly why is everyone suddenly so interested in what goes on with me,” Panthro asked pulling himself out from the vehicle.

“Because we love you and want to see you happy,” Cheetara smiled innocently.

“You know how I feel about people poking their noses in my business,” Panthro frowned.

“Yes, we know. …You’re a very private man…. but we just want to help,” the cheetah nodded.

“You can help by leaving me alone,” Panthro grumbled.

“Wasn’t it you who told Lion-O not too long ago that if he wanted me then he better act on it, take a chance and take that first step,” Cheetara asked, “and that the heart knows what it wants”

The panther didn’t answer as he stood and walked over to the sink to clean the grease off his hands. “You know she was worried she had offended you in someway, when you were squirreled away in here working on her weapons ” Cheetara said as she sat on the workbench, “she hadn’t seen much of you and thought is was something she had done”.

“Of course she hadn’t done anything wrong,” Panthro finally said.

“I know that and you know that. But she didn’t know that…from speaking to her over the past month and a half, I have come to know a few things about her,” Cheetara said, “for one she’s

scared of making a fool of herself in front of you, no matter what she does she wants to please you, she doesn't want you to be disappointed in her".

A small smile formed on the corner of the panther's lips, "so you ready for the party tonight," Cheetara asked.

"What party," Panthro asked confused.

"Lion-o's birthday party," Cheetara said, "Don't tell me you forgot".

"Well I've been busy lately and I guess it just slipped my mind," He shrugged.

"Well you only have a few hours to get ready, everyone is helping Snarf set up the ballroom," Cheetara said.

"Ok I'll go up and see if he needs a hand with anything," Panthro nodded drying his hands.

"Don't forget your dancing shoes," Cheetara said as her and the panther headed up stairs.

"I don't do dancing," Panthro said as he entered the ballroom.

"Wanta bet," she smirked taking off down the hall.

Cheetara entered the busy kitchen, "Leanna do you have a formal gown," the cheetah asked.

The lioness stopped putting food in the warming tray and turned around, "umm, no, I don't, do I need one," she asked putting the empty pan in the sink.

"Come with me," the cheetah smirked grabbing the woman hand and dragged her down the hall to her bedchamber.

"I really never had a need for a formal gown," Leanna said as Cheetara pointed to a chair and walked to her closet.

"Well tonight is special," the cheetah smiled.

"Yes, I know it's Lord Lion-o's birthday," the lioness nodded, "I've been in the kitchen helping snarf and snarfer most of the day with the food".

"Well as a Thundercat you are required to dress your best," Cheetara nodded.

"I'm only in training I'm not a full-fledged Thundercat yet," The lioness said correcting her.

"As I was saying, we Thundercats must dress our best in honor of our kings birthday…. besides it's fun, and it's going to be a big party," The cheetah smiled, "and you want to look your best especially for a certain panther," she winked.

The lioness never answered, “Here,” Cheetara said taking out a black garment bag, “this will suit you perfectly,” she said unzipping the bag and taking out a strapless burgundy velvet gown.

“Oh cheetara it’s beautiful,” Leanna smiled.

“Glad you like it…it’s yours,” the cheetah nodded

“Oh I can’t take this,” Leanna said touching the velvet material.

“Yes, you can. It too long and really isn’t my color,” the cheetah winked, “and see it comes with matching shoes too”.

“Ok this cat smells a rat,” Leanna said eyeing the cheetah suspiciously, “you just happen to have a gown and shoes in my size sitting in your closet”.

“Yep,” Cheetara grinned, “Here, go get dressed we only have about an hour,” she said handing the gown and shoes over and pushing the lioness out the door.

“Hate these blasted things,” Panthro grumbled tugging at the collar of his dark blue dress uniform.

“We only have to wear them on special occasions,” Tygra shrugged,” it won’t be so bad, it will only be for a few hours”.

“Don’t be such a crank Panthro,” Kit said coming up behind the two men.

“Wow, look at you,” Tygra smiled,” don’t you look nice”.

“Thanks,” kit smiled and spun in her light pink gown. “And may I say you two cut quite the handsome figures”.

Panthro just rolled his eyes, “Let’s go and get this over with so I can get back to work”.

“This reminds me of the grand balls on old Thundera,” Tygra said as they entered the large ballroom.

“Those were the days,” Kit smiled looking around at the many people that have arrived to honor the Thundercat leader.

“What do you know,” Panthro chuckled, “you and Kat were too young to go”.

“That didn’t mean we weren’t peeking though,” she winked and walked through the crowd of people.

It wasn’t long before the Thundercat lord arrived dressed in his finest with a very beautiful cheetah on his arm, he looked down at Cheetara who was dressed in a long ivory and gold silk

gown and smiled proudly. Her golden locks where pull away from her face and fell down her back in long spiral curls.

“You know there should be a law against having beautiful women at the Lair,” Lion-O whispered in the cheetah’s ear, “it’s very distracting,” he grinned.

“That’s why you have me to keep you on the straight and narrow,” Cheetara smiled planting a soft kiss on the lion’s cheek.

The lion put his arms around the cheetah and drew her closer as they made their way through the crowd of well wishers. Lion-O was taken back by the large buffet table filled with food that lined the back wall. “Someone’s been busy,” he grinned picking up a plate and passing it to the cheetah.

“Snarf has out done himself again,” Pumyra nodded looking over all the wonderful smelling food.

“Wait until you see the cake,” Snarfer piped up from behind the Thundercat leader.

“How big is this one,” Lion-O chuckled remembering the 6 foot one from last year. “I swear he still thinks I’m 12,” the big lion snorted.

“Aww he just cares a lot about you,” Cheetara smiled.

“I have the feeling I’ll be 70 and he’ll still treat me like a child,” Lion-o huffed.

“Oh be nice,” the cheetah giggled.

“Yeah I know, it wouldn’t be the same without snarf around,” Lion-o nodded.

“Come. Let’s go dance,” the cheetah smiled setting her plate down and pulling the big lion towards the dance floor.

“Well looks like everyone is here,” Tygra said looking around the crowed room.

“Yeah quite a turn out,” Panthro nodded looking around he wasn’t looking to see who was here he was looking for someone.

Tygra looked at the panther and smiled then tapped him on the shoulder,” you umm, looking for her,” he said pointing behind the panther.

Panthro started to turn around “I’m not looking for…” He said then stopped when he saw Leanna.

The lioness was talking with Kat and Lynx-o, she had her waist length mane bound in a fine black hair net the hung half way down her back, tiny red gems that adorned the netting matched

the deep red gown that she wore. Each gem sparkled from the light each time she moved her head.

“When you pick your jaw up off the floor, you should go ask her to dance,” Tygra smirked.

Cheetara seen the look on the panther’s face, “I done good huh,” she said looking up at Lion-O.

“Yes, my sweet you done very good, it was worth breaking into her bedchamber and finding out her dress and shoes size,” The lion winked.

“Just never tell her that,” the cheetah chuckled.

“So how long do you think it will take him to sum up the courage to go ask her to dance,” Lion-O laughed.

“Oh didn’t you know, that panther don’t do dancing,” Cheetara smirked, “that’s what he told me.

“Hmm, I think I had better change his mind,” The lion winked,” if you wouldn’t mind that is”.

Cheetara looked at him and chuckled, ”oh your terrible,” she grinned.

“That’s why you love me,” he grinned and walked towards the lioness.

“Good evening,” Lion-O smiled and nodded to Kat and Lynx-O, “and why are you not out on that dance floor my dear,” The lion asked looking at Leanna.

“Maybe I haven’t been asked,” The lioness smirked.

“Now see that’s just a shame,” Lion-O said shaking his head, “Seems to me that you owe me a dance”.

“Do I,” she asked giving him a questioning look.

“Yes, you do, remember our bet, if I won you owed me a dance, if you won I was to win you the biggest prize at the burble festival,” he said,” Now I never did get my dance,” He smirked holding out his hand.

“Now see what happens when you wait to long,” Tygra said as Lion-o lead the lioness out on the dance floor.

“So,” The panther snorted, “she’s a unbound woman”

“Exactly my friend,” Tygra nodded and patted the panther’s shoulder, “and looking like that, she may not be by the time the night is over”

Panthro never said anything as he watched the lioness glide across the floor in Lion-O's arms. The lion leaned down and whispered in Leanna's ear, what ever he said she found funny because she threw back her head and laughed. An uncontrolled growl formed deep in the panther's throat. Lion-O glanced up as the panther walked… No stalked towards them, with a not too happy look on his face.

"I think your real dance partner has just arrived," Lion-O whispered to the lioness and kissed her cheek, "have a good time my dear," he smiled and nodded as Panthro came up behind Leanna.

"Never let this woman out of your sight," Lion-o winked and left and went back to the cheetah.

"Lion-O said I owed him a dance where I lost a bet," The lioness smiled, "A word of advice…. never make a bet with that lion," she nodded

"That I learned along time ago," Panthro smirked and held out his hand," May I," He bowed slightly.

The lioness grinned and took his hand.

"Who said that panther don't dance," Lion-O smiled cockily watching as the big panther drew the lioness into his arms and started moving across the floor.

"So no jumping off cliffs tonight I hope," Leanna smirked looking at the panther.

"Only if you were falling off one," he grinned.

"Well I guess I had better make sure to stay clear of them then," The lioness smiled.

"What kind of perfume is that," he asked," it smells nice".

"I'm not wearing any," she smirked," I'm allergic to the stuff…what you smell is just soap, water and me".

"Well," he said taking in her scent, imprinting it to memory," it's still nice".

"Hey Tygra I dare you to go over and ask Leanna to dance," Lion-o smirked.

"I'm not that stupid," Tygra snorted, "I want to keep all my body parts thank-you".

Lion-O just chuckled and grabbed the cheetah's hand, "let's go try out some more of this wonderful food".

Panthro looked down at the lioness and suddenly found it warm, "let's go get something to eat," he said putting his hand on the small of her back, she looked at him and smiled as he led her over to the large table of food.

Just as they reached the table, the doors to the ballroom opened and in came Snarf wheeling in a large 7-foot birthday cake that was at least 5 tiers high. Leanna turned quickly to look, “by Jaga, do you think that big enough,” she chuckled.

“That’s Snarf for you,” Panthro laughed and went to move but found that the sleeve of his jacket was stuck on something, “what the…” He said looking down, when the lioness had turned around the clip on the back of her gown and caught on his sleeve.

“Leanna,” he leaned over and whispered,” we sort of have a slight problem”.

“What,” she said looking at him confused.

“I’m stuck on the back of your dress,” the panther smirked.

The lioness’s face lit scarlet,” oh no, see I can’t do anything right,” she groaned.

“Now now,” Panthro said what Cheetara had told him,” We’ll wait until Lion-O cuts his cake then we’ll go get unstuck, don’t worry about it,” He smiled.

After Lion-O cut into his cake he noticed the lioness and panther sneaking off, “Looks like we’ve lost a couple of guest,” He whispered to Cheetara. The cheetah smiled as she spotted the two sneaking out onto the balcony, “I say it’s about time too,” she grinned.

“How did you get stuck,” Leanna asked as the panther stood behind her and tried to remove his sleeve from the clip.

“I think it may have happened when you turned around to look at the cake,” he said,” this isn’t working”. The more he tried the more tangled he got.

“If you have too you can break the clip so it won’t rip your jacket,” Leanna said turning her head and looking back.

“No, I wouldn’t do that,” he said and stood and thought a moment. “I know,” he said moving so he was stand directly in front of her. “This may do the trick,” he nodded and put his other arm around her waist and leaned over her shoulder so he could see what he was doing. The lioness bit her lip as she was pressed against the panther’s broad chest; she looked up at the stars and tried to think of something else as she felt his warm breath on the bare skin of her shoulder. “I’m sorry about this,” she said quietly.

“It’s ok,” Panthro said pulling his head back enough to look at her, “no harm done. It could happen to anyone,” he smiled.

“I seem to have a knack for getting myself in trouble,” she smirked, “or at least causing trouble for someone else”.

“So I noticed,” he chuckled,” I’m only kidding,” he smiled. He leaned over once again, “umm would you mind moving your hair out of the way for a minute”.

“Ok,” she said and reached up and move her hair to one side out of the panther’s way, “better,” she asked.

“Yes, thank-you,” Panthro nodded and looked over her shoulder trying to ignore the soft skin of her neck and was only a few millimeters from his face.

“How’s it going,” she asked tipping her head back a little out of his way.

Every instinct in his body screamed at him to sink his sharp short fangs into her neck and claim her as his. He had to suppress a growl as her scent filled his nostrils. He closed his eyes for a moment in an effort to calm himself, “fine,” he said his voice low and deep.

After a few quiet moments he finally managed to free himself without damaging her dress or his sleeve, “there,” he finally spoke.

“It didn’t rip did it,” Leanna asked noticing that Panthro wasn’t moving.

Panthro looked at her, “no,” he said quietly, keeping his arms around her waist, “Leanna I..” he started to say but stopped.

“What,” she asked looking into his amber eyes.

He couldn’t stand it any longer, he had waited long enough, he had her in his arms and he never wanted to let her go, his hand slid slowly up her back until he reached the back of her head, “aww, the heck with it,” he said and he pulled her closer and crush his mouth against hers in a kiss that made the lioness go weak in the knees.

“They’ve been gone quite awhile,” Cheetara said looking towards the balcony doors.

“Ahh, see I told you if they disappeared we would know what happened,” Lion-o Winked, “I seen the look in that panther’s eyes, I’ve only seen that look when he is looking after his metal baby”.

“I dare you to go out and see if everything’s ok,” Cheetara chuckled.

“No way. I would rather take on a whole hoard of mutants unarmed and with one hand tied behind my back and blind folded, then interrupt anything that maybe going on behind those door,” Lion-O snorted.

“Well looks like you won’t have too,” The cheetah smiled as the doors that lead to the balcony opened and the pair tried to sneak back in unnoticed.

“Is it just my imagination or does that panther have a silly grin on his face,” Lion-o snickered.

Later that evening the party started to wind down, people started to leave, Lion-O and the cheetah had retired to their bedchamber for the evening. All that was left to do was to clean up.

“Great party Snarf,” Bengali nodded, “We can stick around and help with the clean up before we head back to the tower”

“That would be appreciated,” Snarf smiled, “It will take me all night to get this place spotless again, not to mention cooking breakfast in the morning,” he said standing on the end of his tail as he stacked the dirty plates.

“It would save a lot of time if you used paper plates, “Bengali said as he grabbed a broom.

“Paper plates,” Snarf snorted and his fur bristled, “for my Lion-O…never,” he huffed and turned to stack a nearby cart with dishes to be taken back to the kitchen.

As the other thundercats went to their rooms, Panthro walked Leanna back to hers; the pair had spent the entire evening together, dancing and talking. The big panther would smile every time he thought about that kiss they shared out on the balcony; it took every ounce of will power and strength he had not to go further. He felt the fiery spirit behind those dark green eyes, he knew under that tall slender frame lay the heart and power of a lion.

He sighed as they came to the lioness bedchamber door, he didn’t want the evening to end and there was still so much he wanted to say. Leanna reached out and touched the doorplate and her door quietly slid open. “Well I guess this is goodnight, “she said turning so she was half way in the doorway and facing him.

He just looked at her and nodded, he reached out and ran the back of his hand gently down her soft cheek. The lioness placed her hand over his and turned it over, closed her eyes and rubbed her cheek against his palm purring softly. “You don’t have to go, “she said in a low voice. He just looked down at her as she took his hand and pulled him into her room.

The big panther growled and pulled her against his chest as his other hand went to the back of her head, when their lips touched it was like a bolt of electricity surged through them. He picked her up with one arm around her waist and carried her further into the room, when he set her down on her feet; he reached up and tugged at the net that held her long ebony tresses.

Without parting the lioness ran her hands up the panther’s broad chest and unclasped his jacket, running her hands up and over his massive shoulder slipping the jacket off and tossing it aside. Once her long mane was free from it’s bonds Panthro grabbed a handful and pulled her head back slightly and nuzzled her neck grazing his sharp teeth up the side of her neck up to her ear lobe. He could feel her breath and pulse quicken as he gently bit down just between her neck and shoulder.

Leanna hurriedly began to unbutton the white shirt that he had worn under his jacket.

After a few buttons she just used her claws to rip it open," I'll fix that later," she whispered breathlessly in his ear. "It's an old shirt anyway," he smirked as he found the zipper of her gown. The panther slowly slid the zipper down, Leanna part from him long enough to allow the gown to slide off her body and pool at her feet.

The panther gazed at her light honey color body, the feral in him looking at her with a predatory hunger. He quickly grabbed her and picked her up and carried her over to her bed and laid her down, his hand slid down her leg and pulled off her shoes.

The next morning at first light the quiet lair was starting to wake and the feline resident migrated down to the kitchen to a wonderful smelling breakfast that Snarf had prepared. As the ThunderCats sat around the table talking about their plans for the day, Lion-O noticed that there were two of his fellow teammates absent from the breakfast table.

"Where's Panthro his food will get cold," Snarf whine standing on the end of his tail as he dished up food on Kit and Kat's plate.

Lion-O just shrugged, "maybe he went down to the hanger to get an early start on the hover cat. You know how he hates leaving things unfinished".

"With out breakfast," Snarf snorted, "He never misses breakfast".

"Well you know him half the time he gets busy we have to remind him to eat," Cheetara said.

"Well he better not blame me if his food gets cold, "Snarf huffed," I go to the trouble of having a hot meal ready and he can't show up to eat it," Snarf mumbled as he took the cart back into the cooking area.

Panthro slowly opened his eyes; the first thing he saw was a mass of black hair, the lioness was still in the same position she was when they fell asleep, he lifted his hand and moved a lock of hair from her cheek cause her to stir slightly, instead of waking she just nestled herself closer. The big panther smiled and glanced over at the clock," Holey Thundera," he half shouted bolting upright, nearly tossing the sleeping woman off of him causing the lioness to automatically dig her claws in his chest, the panther let out a yelp, "huh..What's going on," she said looking around confused by his sudden out burst.

"We're late," Panthro said nodding towards the clock "we should have been up two hours ago".

"Oh crap" Leanna exclaimed quickly moving off the panther's lap and getting tangled in the sheets in the process. The panther quickly jumped out of bed and retrieved his clothes," you can't show up wearing those," Leanna said as the panther dressed.

"Damn…you right, I better go back to my room and change," he said as he hurriedly put on his shoes and ran out the door, the lioness just sat there shaking her head, "and I though that cheetah moved fast," she chuckled. She untangled the sheets from her legs and was about to get up when Panthro came bursting back in, "Forget something," she asked as she stood.

“Yes,” he nodded and walked over to her and wrapped his arms around her and kissed her, “good morning beautiful”.

“Well good morning to you too,” she grinned. As he let her go and headed for the door again, then he stopped and turned back, “one more,” he said as he kissed her again,” I really have to go now,” he grinned and bolted through the door.