

ThunderCats: How the Other Half Lives

Part Two: Adjustments

By Knight Writer

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Wall-eyed and still reeling from her first gynecological examination, Lion-O sat staring into space as Tygra called the hastily-called council meeting to order. The sun had nearly set, casting reddish-gold light into the spacious chamber in which the ThunderCats sat. The experience had been... interesting, she determined and decided to leave it at that.

"Pumyra," Tygra said, waving a hand in the healer's direction.

"Of course. From all the data I have gathered on Lion-O's condition..."

Condition, she thought sourly. *There's* a freaking euphemism!

"...I came to the conclusion that, somehow, Mumm-Ra has turned the Lord of the ThunderCats into a healthy and fully functional female."

"I came to that conclusion a few hours ago," Lion-O retorted. "Is there a way to reverse this?"

"This is the first case of spontaneous gender switching I've ever seen," Pumyra replied. "I have no idea how that water could do something like this. If I hadn't seen it myself, I'd have never thought it possible!"

"Mumm-Ra must have a cure," Panthro snarled. "I say we pay a visit to his pyramid."

"He might also have more of that water," Lion-O said. "He obviously didn't know what it would do to me, and I don't want to think of what it could do to any of you." Much as she hated inaction, she knew that to confront Mumm-Ra without a plan would put all the ThunderCats in danger. "There's a chance that the people of Third Earth may know something about that water."

"That may be so," Cheetara added. "After all, Willa led us to the Geyser of Life."

"Then tomorrow morning, I'll make for the Treetop Kingdom. Lion-O, will you accompany me?"

"I don't much like being seen like this..."

"Like this?" Pumyra asked with a raised eyebrow. "What's wrong with being seen as a woman?"

"The fact that I'm a man, maybe?"

"Not at the moment."

"And you'd know that rather well."

"Enough!" Cheetara exclaimed. "For the moment, Lion-O, you **are** female in body despite how you may feel in mind."

"I know, I know," she said in a tight voice. "It's just so... different!"

"It must be a huge adjustment, Lion-O," Tygra said. "We will do all in our power to find a way to reverse this. In the meantime, we will also help in any way we can to acclimate you to your current form."

"Two of us are experts at being women," Cheetara added with a wink, her voice gentle.

"Sure," Lion-O said flatly. "I need a shower. I call that the meeting be adjourned."

"Seconded," Panthro said.

"Very well. Council adjourned." Lion-O was the first to leave, hips swaying fetchingly beneath the undergarments Cheetara had provided.

"Now that Lion-O's no longer present," Pumyra said, "there are other matters which need to be addressed."

"Such as?" Cheetara said without feeling. She knew.

"Lion-O's reproductive cycle."

"What about it?" Panthro asked.

"Lion-O's new body is at the latter part of the female reproductive cycle," Pumyra said. "He... She... oh, Lion-O could experience severe desires to copulate."

"So?" Panthro said. "It's not like any of us will take advantage."

"Of course not," Pumyra came back. "But the female sex drive, particularly at this stage of the cycle, can be rather intense."

"You don't mean Lion-O's gonna start hitting on us?!" Panthro asked, wide-eyed and incredulous.

"I don't know. His mind is still male. I have no idea how he'll handle female drives. Also, I don't have a clue how he'll tolerate menstruation."

"Looks like we're in for a rough period," Tygra said, his voice low. The collective groans and gaping stares of the ThunderCats hit him like a slap in the face. "The sooner we find a way to change Lion-O back, the better," he continued quickly, embarrassed.

"And if we can't?"

"Then, Cheetara, we do what we can and hope for the best."

Horror beat at her mind in ever-rising tides of madness as Lion-O leaned forward, one trim arm braced against the wall of the shower as hot water rained down on her new form. She found herself wishing that the steaming jets would wash away her female form and leave her in her true body. Soapy suds ran down her firm breasts and trim stomach with the spray of the shower, revealing what was now her body.

This **isn't** my body! she thought in outrage.

The constant restless gaze she could barely repress at council, and the strange desires that were making themselves known gave lie to that thought. The needs of the flesh were all too familiar to Lion-O as a man. As a woman, however, she was finding those drives to be far more intense, even demanding, than she had thought possible. The fact that she was now alone had dulled the feelings somewhat brought little comfort.

"It's just this stupid body," she muttered as the soap washed away and the shower ended. "That's all it is." On stepping out of the shower, she refused to look down at herself as she trod to the mirror and wiped clear the condensation on its surface. Her gaze locked on her reflected face as she grabbed a handy towel and rubbed herself dry.

Different face, she thought as the soft cloth soaked up excess water. Okay. I can handle the face. Its job finished, the towel was sailed toward the nearby hamper and she laid hands on a drier one. She focused on the strange face which stared at her from the glass. Crimson hair which hung down to her shoulders rather than nearly horizontal as her mane once stood. Eyes, those were mostly the same. Aquiline nose. That's new. Full lips, softer jawline and cheeks. Lion-O took a deep breath as she stepped back from the mirror before looking down at what she had gained from that water.

"This isn't my body," she growled as she wrapped the towel about her waist. A frustrated groan escaped her throat as she undid the towel.

Okay, I can do this, she thought as the towel pressed in on her breasts when she tied the knot. Two steps later, her efforts were defeated and the towel bunched at her feet. Lion-O looked down - deliberately avoiding the apex of her legs - at the circular bundle of cloth which refused to cover her.

"Oh, forget it," she growled as she stomped out of the bathroom. "It's not like anyone's gonna... ooOOHH! COLD!" Lion-O shivered, covering herself as the much cooler air of the bedchamber raised goosebumps on her flesh. She hadn't bothered with the temperature of the water - the hotter the better to undo the tension in her muscles - and likewise hadn't considered what

walking about unclothed would result in. Once again thinking that being female was for the birds, she padded across the spacious sleeping area to her closet.

"Grrrr...." Tunic after tunic hung suspended from the rack, each one far too voluminous for her slighter frame. Lion-O's eyes tracked down to the row of boots which stood in line on the floor and recalled how she had leapt clear of the pair she'd worn earlier. From the footwear, she gazed at the row of soft white bathrobes which would undoubtedly fit her like tents.

The door to the closet slid shut at the press of a button, Lion-O turning about and leaning back against the cool metal and her stare finding the halter and shorts Cheetara had loaned her. The fit about her waist and hips had been a tad loose, yet around the chest had been slightly snug. It hit her, then, that she was used to looking down to see into Cheetara's lovely eyes. Now, she had to gaze upward. Lion-O glared at the silky undergarments. They sat on the floor at the foot of her bed, the memory of them on her most intimate parts and the look... the color!... of them seeming to both confirm her current gender and taunt her all at once.

"I'm a man," she whispered, sliding down to the unyielding floor. She sat there, lost in a malestrom of confusion and self-doubt. The thoughts that had whirled just beneath the surface at the council meeting returned, and Lion-O swatted them away as the addictive heat began to build in her core. "I'm a man," she said again, leaning her head back against the door to the closet to avoid looking down at herself. Thunderian attitudes toward nudity notwithstanding, she simply couldn't accept the sight of her breasts and her... Lion-O couldn't even give thought to what rested at the apex of her legs despite the heat that built there as well as the thought of... of...

She pushed thoughts of Cheetara and what she felt for her out of her mind as well as the other strange desires that kept nagging at her. Lion-O had been building up courage to try and establish a relationship with the beautiful Cheetah.

Fat chance of that now, she thought in anger. The door chime sounded, startling her out of her train of misery.

"Just a second!" she called, leaping to her feet and eyeing the underwear on the floor with disdain before re-opening the closet and snatching a handy robe.

Cheetara looked down into Lion-O's rather attractive new face which seemed to be breaking the surface of a river of white cloth. The robe pooled on the floor, showing nothing of form or shape.

"Hi," Lion-O said, a trace of sadness in her eyes.

"Good evening. Mind if I come in?"

"Sure." Cheetara entered as the smaller woman stepped aside and immediately noted that the shorts and halter she'd been loaned were discarded on the floor. "If there's any doubt of your masculinity, Lion-O, that puts paid to them," she said, pointing.

"Uh-huh." Cheetara winced, seeing that her attempt at levity had failed miserably. "I brought some clothing for you."

"Great. Thanks," Lion-O said, falling into a sitting position on the bed. The right side of the enormous robe fell down to expose a fetching expanse of shoulder and arm before Lion-O pulled the errant fabric back into place. Cheetara handed the bundle of tan fabric over as she dragged the nearest chair to the side of Lion-O's bed. The new woman unfurled the bundle to reveal one of Cheetara's leotards whose size Snarf had gotten wrong as well as...

"Uh... what on Third Earth are *these*" Lion-O asked as he inspected the gossamer panties Cheetara had provided.

"Underwear," Cheetara answered, "Which will suit that leotard better than the shorts I loaned you."

"Underwear," Lion-O said slowly as she eyed the tiny garment, "or what there is of it. I guess I should thank you. I don't have a *thing* to wear." Lion-O began to laugh at that, hysterics grasping her as she carelessly tossed the panties on the pillows. "I never thought those words would come from my mouth!" She roared in mad laughter, the bathrobe pooling about her as the hilarity overcame her.

"Seriously," Cheetara began, "You can't walk about in my underwear all day..." The madness of her statement hit her all at once, and she couldn't help a brief laugh. "I never thought *those* words would pass *my* lips!" They both laughed hysterically, both from humor and horror, and none could tell which was in dominance.

"How am I going to deal with this?"

"Oh, come off it," Cheetara said in reply. "You act as though being female for a while is a death sentence."

"It's not that," Lion-O said. "I just want to be myself again." Lion-O picked up the panties that Cheetara had brought and studied them with reluctant interest. "Don't tell me you acutally *wear* this?!"

"Women do," Cheetara said in reply. "Trust me, it is a necessity. As for the torso, my leotards have breast supports built in. They may be a tad small, but they'll do."

"To think I have to... DAMNIT!" Lion-O shrieked as the shoulders of her robe fell off her shoulders on standing. Lion-O barely managed to cross her arms to prevent the cascading cotton from exposing her breasts. "Having breasts... is covering them always this hard?!"

"It takes some getting used to," Cheetara said as Lion-O brought the folds of her robe back to her shoulders. "Maybe Snarf should make a smaller robe for you..."

"No, this is fine," Lion-O snapped, then winced at the harsh tone of her voice. "It's not like this is permanent."

"Even so," Cheetara said as she rose, looking down into eyes she had come to love. She had not admitted her feelings toward him - her? - yet that warm feeling still persisted. "There's more to being a woman than having the... er..." She gesticulated futilely for a moment while wracking her brain for the best way to finish her statement.

"Equipment?" Lion-O offered warily.

"That's as good a euphemism as any, I guess," Cheetara said with a chuckle. "Right now, you're probably feeling some rather intense urges."

"No, I'm fine." Cheetara eyed the shorter Lioness critically, hearing the lie in her voice like a misplayed note in a symphony.

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah."

"Well, then, good night."

"Good night."

"I haven't had this much fun in centuries!" Mumm-Ra cried in glee as he watched Lion-O disappear beneath the thick blankets of her bed. Within the waters of the scrying pool, the Lioness settled amidst the sea of fabrics as she sought a restful slumber that Mumm-Ra was determined not to allow. "Sleep, Lion-O," he muttered as he weaved an ancient dreaming spell above the liquid. "Sleep, and let us see what dreams may come."

Mumm-Ra searched the realm of Lion-O's dreams, anticipation tingling in his dessicated fingers. One only had so much influence on the world of dreams from the standpoint of the waking realm, and whatever nightmares he could conjure would have to be found in Lion-O's...

"How interesting!" Mumm-Ra roared, leaning down to pat Ma-Mutt atop his hideous head. "I never would have imagined this!" The dream images shifted and flowed in the pool as the undead mage howled in demonic glee. The best nightmares could sometimes be the most secret desires. "I never would have thought it of you, Lion-O."

The dream fully summoned from her mind, Mumm-Ra pulled his cloak tight about his body and waited for the show to begin.