

Chapter 12 of Signal In the Sky

Egoverride

by Purrsia Kat

Felina squinted at the bright morning sun that cut into the bedchamber. The first thing her eyes focused on was Lion-O's face, a crooked grin fixed upon it. Reaching behind her head, Felina grabbed a pillow and whipped it at him.

"Are you going to let me oversleep every time we lie together?" she demanded. "And today of all days!"

Clutching a sheet to her chest, Felina sat upright. Though her shoulder had healed in the few months since she suffered the arrow injury at the hands of Monkian, it still sometimes ached in the morning. She rotated her shoulder a few times to work the stiffness out of it. It was amazing how little scarring she was left with.

Lion-O's voice jarred Felina from her thoughts. "I know we have a serious mission to carry out today. But that's all the more reason to be well rested, no?"

"Right," Felina agreed, knowing full well that Lion-O's over-sleeping was more accidental than a calculated move.

"Shoulder still bothering you?" Lion-O asked with genuine concern.

Felina sighed, rubbing her shoulder as she spoke. "It's still a bit achy in the morning. But Tygra did an amazing repair job."

"Don't forget Alderan's role in that," Lion-O reminded her.

Felina nodded thoughtfully. "I just wish I would have had a chance to talk with him. He was gone before I ever awoke from the surgery," Felina lamented.

"I tried to get him to stick around," Lion-O explained, "But much like his underground cave dwelling relatives, he's a bit weary of most of the beings of Third Earth. Persecution the likes of which his people have suffered is not easily forgotten."

Felina turned, a poignant statement on the tip of her tongue, only to see Lion-O eyeing her amorously. "Oh no," she said as she rose from the bed, the sheets she still held barely hiding the curves of her backside. "We need to get moving."

"Aw, come on, Felina," Lion-O said with a laugh, "We've got plenty of time..."

"Good. Use it to take a cold shower," she quipped. Before Felina could walk away, Lion-O pulled her back down onto the bed. Despite the serious task that lay ahead, Felina found herself laughing at her husband's antics. And Felina couldn't help but admit to herself that she, too, had come to enjoy their lovemaking. She made a mock effort to escape his grasp, her laughter giving away any suggestion of seriousness to her actions.

A moment later, they heard insistent knocking on the chamber door. The playful couple tried to ignore it, but Snarf's muffled wailing was hard to ignore. "Lion-O! I know you're in there!" the snarf hollered. "Lion-O!"

Lion-O buried his face in Felina's shoulder and emitted an exasperated sigh. Lifting his head, he replied, "Hold on, Snarf. I'll be there in a minute."

"You don't have a minute," Snarf's voice rang clear, as he took it upon himself to enter the room.

Lion-O was so shocked by the snarf's bold entrance, he teetered off the side of the bed, pulling Felina down to the floor with him amid the tangle of bed linens.

“Mountains of Thundera, Snarf!” Lion-O exclaimed.

Glancing briefly at Felina’s exposed breasts, Snarf replied dryly, “Mountains of Thundera, indeed.”

Felina stifled a laugh at Snarf’s reference, her semi-nude state before the creature clearly not a source of embarrassment for her.

“What’s the big emergency, Snarf? I told you I’d be out in a minute,” Lion-O continued, slightly annoyed.

“A minute huh? Is that all it takes? Sneeyarf, snarf.”

“Well, you certainly have time to be a comic,” retorted Lion-O.

Snarf’s ears drooped slightly. “Sorry, Lion-O. I really didn’t know she was in here with you or I wouldn’t have come in, snarf snarf. As for the comments, sometimes I just can’t resist my natural comedic talent.”

“Riiight,” Lion-O replied with great sarcasm.

“So you do think I’m funny!” Snarf exclaimed, a self-satisfied grin on his face.

“No, I think you’re inflection impaired,” Lion-O said flatly.

“Eh?” Snarf mumbled. “Anyway, I came to get you out of bed, ‘cos today you’re going into that darn Book to seek out Mumm-Ra’s past and you need a good meal in you....”

Lion-O sighed. “Let me guess, food’s getting cold, right?”

“Rrrwl. Possibly,” Snarf replied in a small voice.

“I’m sure another minute won’t ruin the meal, Snarf,” Lion-O said. “And not another word about it, ok?”

Snarf was about to protest but quickly snapped his jaw shut. His shoulders slumped in defeat, he shuffled out of the room. Lion-O and Felina watched as he exited, his mumblings about under appreciation barely audible.



Slithe eyed his simian cohort with disdain. “Are you sure your sssource has her information correct thisss time?” he demanded.

“Hoo, HOO! Of course, Slithe. She’s never lead us astray before,” Monkian replied.

“Ha!” Slithe retorted, pounding a scaly fist on the table. “Her information wasn’t sssso accurate during Lion-O’s anointment trials last ssspring.”

Monkian’s eyes narrowed. “Her information was fine,” he muttered under his breath, “it was your blundering leadership that botched that golden opportunity.”

Jackalman, who was standing close enough to Monkian to overhear his inflammatory comments, let loose with a bout of nervous laughter.

“What?!” Slithe roared, sensing the mockery. Having scavenged his way from mere cook to Mutant commander, Slithe wasn’t one to tolerate the lack of respect these underlings constantly doled out. “Monkian, answer me or else!”

“Um, uh, I didn’t say anything....” Monkian stammered.

Slithe shifted his glare to Jackalman. “Jackalman!” The cowardly dog jumped at the sharp tone in Slithe’s voice. “What was Monkian babbling about?”

After regaining his composure following another bout of nervous cackling, Jackalman replied, “Er, uh, he simply agreed with you S-slithe.” Jackalman winced, realizing how truly pathetic and

unconvincing he sounded.

“Liar!” Slithe snarled. “I’ll show you two miserable idiots respect!”

Before Slithe could advance on the pair, Vultureman cawed loudly to get their attention. “No wonder we always lose. We can’t even discuss battle plans without getting into a brawl ourselves!”

Slithe reluctantly backed down. “I promise you thisss, Monkian. If your ssource is wrong this time, I’ll personally drag her out of that tree the two of you tryst in and slit her miserable throat...yessss?”

“Fine then,” Vultureman interjected, cutting off Monkian’s likely smart ass retort. Pointing at the blueprints of Cats Lair that lay upon the table, the bird continued, “Let’s get back to the task at hand.” Once he finally had his comrades undivided attention, Vultureman explained, “We’ve been informed that Lion-O and that bookish wife of his will be going into the Book of Omens. Supposedly to seek out information on Mumm-Ra.”

Jackalman wrinkled his nose. “I don’t see why they would do that. Mumm-Ra hasn’t been heard from in months and his Pyramid is still a pile of rubble,” he reasoned.

“Unlike you,” Slithe pointed out, “the ThunderCats aren’t STUPID! They know that he’ll be back.”

Though he wasn’t within Slithe’s striking distance, Jackalman still took a few steps back and cowered slightly.

Monkian rolled his eyes and muttered, “Yeah, yeah, Mumm-Ra is ever living...blah blah blah...”

“I’ve always wondered what sssimian sssandwiches would taste like,” Slithe glowered. “I think I’ll find out when I roast you on a spit!”

Vultureman let forth a caw of pure exasperation. “Mutants! Please!” When the Mutants’ attention was once again focused on him, Vultureman sighed. “As I was saying, they’re going inside the Book of Omens. But to do this, Lion-O must leave the Sword behind. This is where we come in. While their fierce leader is trapped in that magical Book, we attack the ThunderCats and hopefully, steal the Sword.”

“Even so,” Jackalman ventured, his eyes nervously darting over to Slithe as he spoke, “fighting the other ThunderCats sans Lion-O isn’t going to be a cake walk...”

“Scared, Jackalman?” Slithe taunted. “If you don’t want to come share in the glory of defeating the ThunderCats, you can stay home and bake cookies like a true sissy, yessss?”

“Isn’t baking more your specialty, Slithe?” Monkian asked with mock innocence, knowing full well that the reference to Slithe’s former, remedial occupation would infuriate the reptilian.

Despite the probability of a severe head bashing, Jackalman broke into hysterical laughter. He mentally cursed Monkian for making him laugh. Jackalman knew when it was his turn to suffer Slithe’s wrath, he certainly wouldn’t be laughing then. Fortunately for Jackalman, Vultureman once again interrupted.

“Any of you kids interested in how we’re going to get into the Lair?” Vultureman asked, his arms folded across his chest.

“This isn’t over, you two,” Slithe grumbled, before poring over the stolen Lair blueprints.



Cheetara looked up to see Felina round the corner into Tygra's open bedchamber.

"Oh, Cheetara!" Felina said, her demeanor a bit frazzled. She was dressed in Egyptian attire, and Cheetara had to admit, the Wolo women had done a fine job of putting the costume together. The ankle length white linen dress complimented the lioness well. "Have you seen a little leather-bound handbook around here? I left it in here last night before Lion-O summoned me to...uh, study with him," she finished weakly. Felina fidgeted with her matching linen cloak.

Cheetara laughed lightly, knowing full well the only thing the newlyweds had likely studied was each other's anatomy. "Actually, I just put such a book back on the shelf over there," she said, pointing Felina in the general direction. "You know how Tygra is about tidiness. It's nice to hear Lion-O and you are getting along so well," she added coyly.

Having located the book, Felina tried her best to avoid the cheetah's reference. "Yes, I surely know how Tygra is about neatness. I am truly grateful that he allows me to use his books, as well as his room to study within. I'll try harder not to leave it in such a mess."

Cheetara took a few steps toward Felina and smiled warmly. "Don't stress yourself about it, Felina. I know all about how powerful the call of love can be."

Felina suddenly broke into girlish giggles. "Ok, ok, you got me. So we weren't exactly studying Egyptian culture last night."

"I didn't think that for a minute," Cheetara replied. "We were all wondering for a while if you two would ever click."

"I suppose what we lack in love, we make up for elsewhere," Felina noted humorously.

Cheetara was about to question Felina's odd comment when she felt the child she carried kick for the first time. "By Thundera!" the cheetah gasped as she rubbed her swollen belly.

"What's wrong?" Felina asked with alarm.

"Oh, nothing's wrong," Cheetara replied, "the child...it's kicking...I can feel it!"

"May I?" Felina asked hesitantly.

"Of course," Cheetara replied, placing Felina's hand on her pregnant belly.

Felina jumped back when next the child kicked, her eyes large with surprise. "By Thundera, does that hurt?"

With the naivety of Felina's comment, Cheetara was reminded of the fact that although she appeared to be a grown woman, Felina only had 10 years of life experiences to draw from. "No," Cheetara reassured her, "not at all. But it will probably keep me up at night nonetheless," she added with a chuckle.

"All set for your fact finding mission, Felina?" Tygra's voice boomed from the doorway.

"Yes," she responded. "I found your quick reference book on Egyptian language. Though I think I've finally got the basics down, it never hurts to have something of a translator around just in case."

Tygra nodded. "Very well. Lion-O and the others are waiting for you in the Sword chamber."



As soon as she entered the Sword chamber, Felina was accosted by Jax. Leaping into her arms, he said, "Felina, Bela says you're going to disappear into a book. Are you going to be gone forever? How can you fall into a book? When are you coming back? Why are you going?" The jackal pup spoke in such a rush, Felina had difficulty following him.

Felina set the worried pup down and tried to reassure him. "Lion-O and I will be coming back soon, Jax. The magic Book will show us some things we need to know."

"Can't I go with you?" Snarf spoke up, looking with hope from Lion-O to Felina and back again.

"No, Snarf," Lion-O said gently. "The smaller our numbers, the better chance we have of moving about ancient Egypt without being detected."

"That's right, Snarf," Tygra added, "Lion-O and Felina will be taking part in what amounts to time traveling. Which means they must keep their interaction with the ancients to a minimum or risk altering future events."

"I know, I know," Snarf conceded. "But you all are going to wish you had let me go. All I'm going to do is worry until they get back, sneeyarf snarf!"

"I already wish you'd gone," Panthro half-joked.

"Besides, imagine how an ancient Egyptian would react to seeing a snarf," Tygra noted.

Snarf folded his arms and wrinkled his nose. "Ha! They'd probably build a shrine to the superior creature that is the snarf!"

"Actually, if Lion-O and Felina are discovered, they probably would be worshipped," Tygra informed Snarf. "It seems cats were highly regarded and held to godly standards by the Egyptians."

"Hmmpf," Snarf snorted. "small consolation."

"Don't sweat it, Snarf," Cheetara said. "You and Bela can stay here in the Sword chamber and make sure the Sword of Omens doesn't get separated from the Book. That way, when they do return, you'll be the first to know."

"That's another thing I don't like," Snarf grumbled. "Isn't there a way Lion-O can take the Sword with him?"

"You know how this works, Snarf. We've been over it a hundred times," Lion-O said with a grin. "We'll be fine. In fact, we'll be back before you know it. Like the Guardian explained to us, for every day we stay in the time warp, only a minute will pass here. So we'll literally be back in minutes, I'm sure."

"Well, have a nice trip," Bela said nonchalantly.

"Have a nice trip?" Snarf echoed incredulously. "That's all you can say?"

The female snarf shrugged. "Why worry so much, Snarf? Whatever happens, happens."

Snarf swished his tail in aggravation. Bela's laid-back demeanor had a way of rubbing him the wrong way. "Hmmpf."

Felina knelt down and ruffed the pink tuft of fur atop Bela's head. "I'll see you soon. Look after Jax for me, okay." Rising, she humorously added, "and do try not to push Snarf's buttons so much."

"Well, it's time to go," Lion-O said.

Felina smiled reassuringly at Jax before turning to take Lion-O's hand. Standing before the Book of Omens, Lion-O raised the Sword and commanded, "Eye of Thundera, Book of Omens. Transport us across the mystic void to a time when Third Earth was known as First Earth; to the land of ancient Egypt."

Felina and Lion-O were surrounded by a blue aura and immediately transported through the Eye and into the open Book.



Vultureman settled himself into his flying machine. He shook his head and muttered to himself as he flicked several switches in preparation for take-off. "I don't know why I hang around these buffoons. They can't stop squabbling amongst themselves long enough to do anything."

"What'd you say, Vultureman?" came Monkian's query from the seat behind Vultureman.

"I said that you're the smartest monkian Third Earth has ever seen!" Vultureman cawed shrilly, the sarcasm dripping from his words.

Monkian perked up and grinned at the unexpected 'compliment'. "Hoo! Why, Vultureman, I never knew you thought so highly--"

"I don't, pea brain! AARGH!" Vultureman was purely exasperated. "By the pits of Plundarr, you can't even understand sarcasm!"

"I do to, I...uh....huh?" Monkian's rejoinder was shortened by a commotion near where Slithe was attempting to mount his Nose Diver. The simian's eyes widened when he spied Grune the Destroyer, his huge foot resting on the front of the Slithe's vehicle and his arms crossed defensively.

"You mean you guys are going on a mission to crush the ThunderCats and I wasn't invited?" Grune asked with mock hurt in his voice.

"G-G-Grune!" Slithe stammered. "What are you doing here, yesss? I though Mumm-Ra banished you with the rest of the Mutant fleet after the last unsuccessful battle...."

Grune stepped down hard on the nose of Slithe's machine, dismounting the reptile in a humiliating fashion. "Perhaps Mumm-Ra can push mutant-kind around, but I don't fear that bag of bones. Now," he growled, turning his glare on the pair in the Flying Machine, "I too know of the opportunity of which you hope to take advantage. And I'm inviting myself to come along. Anyone got a problem with that?"

"Well, hoo hoo, I...uh..." Monkian began before a hard slap alongside the head courtesy of Vultureman silenced him.

"That was a rhetorical question!" Vultureman seethed.

Monkian frowned as he re-adjusted his displaced helmet. "I knew that," he lied, "I was just going to--"

"You were going to what?!" Vultureman demanded, clearly at the end of his patience. "Invite him to discuss our plans over tea? Shut up! You wouldn't know rhetoric from your own hairy a--"

"Enough!" Grune boomed. "It's amazing any of you can breathe unassisted!"

"I agree with you wholeheartedly, Grune....me being the exception to your generalization of course," Vultureman babbled along, a meek grin gracing his beak.

"Don't flatter yourself, bird brain," Grune said with a laugh as he mounted a Sky Cutter. "I

see that coward of a jackal isn't with you. That's just as well. It will be enough of a headache keeping the three of you from fouling things up."

As Vultureman fired up the Flying Machine's engines, he was chagrined to hear Monkian's stifled snickering. "Ass kiss," the simian whispered into the bird's ear. "Oh, hoohoo. And what's that brown on the end of your beak? Is that from your extracurricular ass kissing activities or is that from where Grune just shit all over you?"

Vultureman squeezed his eyes shut and clenched his fists. He would have his day of vengeance. But for now, he'd have to swallow his pride.



Jax sat in the corner of the Control Room, his arms wrapped around his knees and rocking back and forth. It'd seemed like forever to the pup since Felina disappeared into that book. In fact, he was convinced she was never coming back.

"I knew it was going to happen," he thought, unhappily. He tugged at his loose-knit tunic nervously, his thoughts of Felina darkening. Jax could sense she and Lion-O were growing closer which only meant Jax would soon be forgotten. That is, if Felina ever returned out of that Book. Maybe she would decide to stay within it, and thereby be alone with her beloved for eternity...no worries and most of all, no pesky jackal pup to be bothered with...

Jax jumped to his feet and cried out into the empty Control Room. He didn't care one way or the other about any of the other felines, even though they all have shown him more kindness than he'd ever known in all his six bleak years of existence. But the idea of having to share Felina with the ThunderCat Lord or falling from her favor scared the pup to his core. Jax feared such a happening more than he had his father's beatings, his mother's drunken indifference, or the slave pits of Plundarr combined. Only when he was near Felina did Jax feel anything remotely like a normal being. And it was all slipping away and there was nothing he could do about it...

"By Thundera!" Tygra's voice boomed into the room. "Jax, what in Jaga's name are you doing?" The tiger demanded with disbelief.

Jax startled and yelped. He nervously itched the scar that ran across the bridge of his short muzzle, his brow furrowing in confusion at the big cat's accusation. When Tygra began to cross the room toward him, Jax instinctively backpedaled. He was certain Tygra would beat him. It was obvious the cat was agitated about something. Jax hadn't moved far until he backed into the main control panel. He whirled around in surprise, realizing for the first time that he was no longer crouched in the corner, but had somehow ended up on the opposite side of the room. The youngster's attention was drawn to the sound of something metallic clattering to the floor by his feet. His eyes widened as a hammer barely missed plowing into his foot. Had he been holding it? Or had Tygra thrown it at him?

Trembling, Jax looked up into the stern countenance of Tygra, who was now towering over him. "Well?" Tygra sighed. "What do you have to say for yourself?"

"W-what?" Jax asked in a small voice.

"This!" Tygra said, making a sweeping motion with his arm indicating the control panel.

Jax reflexively ducked and winced when Tygra gestured. When fists failed to make contact with his body, Jax opened his eyes and regarded Tygra wearily. When Tygra merely stared at him expectedly, Jax slowly turned to look at the panel behind him. He gasped when he saw it had been smashed to bits with something....like a hammer perhaps.

Jax gulped. Without looking back at Tygra, he stammered, "I---I don't know. I don't remember."



Felina gazed across the sandstone cave at her pensive husband. The firelight made his features seem harsh, as though his brow were furrowed in anger. Luckily, Felina knew better. She reclined back onto her elbows, buried her toes in the sand and sighed. "What are you thinking?" she said softly.

Lion-O looked at Felina and managed a faint smile. "I'm just trying to figure out how everything we've witnessed so far connects. The way things are going, I don't think I'm going to get much sleep tonight."

Felina nodded in agreement, but for her it wouldn't be her thoughts of what befell Pharaoh Mefeset keeping her awake. No, for Felina it would be the fact that they were camped out close to the Natron fields near the makeshift hut where Mefeset's body lie mummified. The entire process with which the Egyptians prepared their dead made Felina shudder. The memory of watching them remove all of Mefeset's internal organs --save for his heart --was sure to haunt Felina's dreams for some time to come. And she had thought just reading about the process was harrowing. But to actually witness the shoving of a hook-like instrument into someone's nasal cavity; albeit a dead person's nasal cavity; and watching the liquefied remains of the brain be removed, had been nearly too much for Felina to handle.

"At least I learned something about myself on this trip," Felina said. "I'm definitely more of a classroom scholar than one that cares for field study."

"Referring to Mefeset's mummification, I assume," Lion-O remarked with a chuckle.

Felina nodded. "I didn't turn too green, did I?"

"Not at all," Lion-O assured her. "At least you didn't run screaming from the room. That would have blown our cover," he added jokingly.

"In that case," Felina replied with a sly smile, "upon capture I'd have told them I was the goddess Sekhmet who would visit them with curses and plagues if they didn't set me free."

"That might actually work," Lion-O conceded with a laugh. "This older version of Third Earth -- First Earth, I suppose you could say -- is an intriguing place indeed."

Felina sprung forward, spraying sand about as she did so, and moved beside Lion-O. "Although this particular piece of First Earth real estate is a bit too sandy for my tastes." As if to demonstrate, Felina grabbed the front of her cloak and shook it, causing sand to cascade out from within.

"We cats prefer our earth a little grassier, I suppose," Lion-O remarked, brushing sand off of his own colorful tunic.

“Hunting here would be a nightmare,” Felina added. “Not to mention I’ve already swallowed more sand with my food than I’ve swallowed actual food.” Felina’s demeanor then became serious. “Lion-O...what do you suppose the Guardian of the Book wants us to see here? I mean, we’ve been here for nearly 3 months. We were told to follow Pharaoh Mefeset in life and death, and yet I don’t see anything too unusual about him as of yet...”

Lion-O stared into the embers of the dying campfire for a long moment before replying. “I think, although we didn’t get a chance to see much of Mefeset before his untimely demise, that he is Mumm-Ra.”

Felina gasped. “That’s the obvious conclusion...” she stammered. Though logically, she knew Lion-O was likely correct. She’d simply never expected that Mumm-Ra was ever a living person, let alone a person with a shred of goodness or compassion.

“Leave it to me to state the obvious,” Lion-O replied, regarding Felina’s reaction with curiosity.

Felina could feel her cheeks warm underneath the short fur of her face. “I meant no disrespect,” she apologized, “I guess I just figured Mumm-Ra had yet to make his debut from whatever pits of hell he crawled out of. I assumed Mefeset was some kind of catalyst for Mumm-Ra to make an appearance...not that he is or is to become Mumm-Ra...” Felina’s voice trailed off as she pondered the likelihood of Lion-O’s conclusion.

“Think about it,” Lion-O mused. “In all our frantic studying about this era of Third Earth’s history, there was no mention of a great Pharaoh Mefeset. Although we have witnessed for ourselves that he was indeed a highly esteemed ruler and philanthropist.”

Felina nodded slowly as she thought back to their first few days in the time warp. They’d arrived just after Mefeset had received a gift from ruler of Upper Egypt. They observed the Pharaoh from afar, careful to lie low, just as the Guardian of the Book had instructed. Upon opening the crate which supposedly held a peace offering to the Pharaoh, Mefeset was aghast to find it full of serpents instead. Just as it seemed he was about to give orders of retaliation, a blinding light emitted from the still-open crate and something --it was hard to discern what exactly due to the brilliant light-- struck Mefeset squarely in the chest. He staggered back, clearly in great pain as well as shock, as his servants frantically tried to aid him. Felina could tell Mefeset’s subjects must have truly revered him, as they rushed to the stricken ruler’s aid despite their obvious fear at what had transpired.

In the days that followed, Mefeset fell in and out of a seemingly tortured consciousness. Felina had managed to make her way into the well-guarded room where the feverish Pharaoh lay, the day before he died. Alone in the room, Felina sat the water jug she’d brought down in the corner. She simply observed the sleeping Pharaoh for a moment before hesitantly moving toward him. The budding medic in Felina so wanted to remove the dressings on Mefeset’s chest so she could assess his injuries herself, even though the Guardian warned her and Lion-O not to touch Mefeset’s body in life or in death. Curiosity nearly got the better of Felina. Claspings the cloak that she’d draped over her head to hide her feline features with one hand, she slowly reached out with the other. Mefeset suddenly came to and grabbed for her outstretched arm.

Felina startled at the memory of that moment, which didn’t go unnoticed by Lion-O, even in the increasing darkness. “Felina, what’s wrong?”

“I was just thinking about when I went in to see Mefeset before he died...” Felina began.

“You told me he wasn’t awake then,” Lion-O stated. “Did you see something in the room that scared you?”

Felina studied her feet that she’d once again half-buried in the sand. “He wasn’t awake when I

first went in. But--”

“But he woke up,” Lion-O finished for her. “I thought you seemed a little shaken when came out of there. What happened?” he gently urged her to continue.

“I’m sorry I lied to you, Lion-O,” she apologized meekly. “But he looked right at me with these eyes that seemed --- they seemed, I don’t know....like---” Felina struggled for a moment to find the right words. “Like the eyes of the undead. And he started rambling incoherently. Something about how he couldn’t let them take over. I thought he was talking about the King of Upper Egypt conquering his people, but now--”

A shrill scream originating from the area where Mefeset’s body was undergoing the final stages of the mummification process cut Felina’s musings short.

Snarf watched the Sword of Omens spinning above the enchanted Book of Omens with impatience. “Rrrwl, I don’t like this. They’ve been in there too long for my taste, sneeyarf snarf,” he muttered, casting a scowl at Bela as she stretched and yawned. “I don’t know how on the Moons of Thundera Felina has survived this long with you as her caretaker!”

Bela shrugged. “I don’t know how you’ve survived this long the way you worry constantly about Lion-O,” she replied dryly. “I can sense when Felina is in real danger. And she’s not right now, snarf snarf.”

Snarf was about to reply with a snappy come back, when Panthro and Cheetara entered the room.

“Still not back, huh?” Panthro commented casually upon seeing the Sword still rotating above the open Book.

“No,” Snarf answered in a huff, “and I don’t like it!”

“Calm down, Osbert,” Bela said with a roll of her eyes. “They’ve only been in there just over an hour.”

“Osbert?” Panthro said, his eyebrow arched.

Snarf’s tail swished about, accentuating his frustration. “Rrrwl. I don’t know why I ever liked you in the first place, Beulah,” Snarf whined. He recalled when Bela would visit the Lair with Felina back on Thundera. The summer before Thundera met its end, Snarf took a liking to Bela and, one night after indulging in perhaps too much Thunderberry schnapps, he told her his true name among other things.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Bela purred with mock innocence. “They didn’t know your real name is Osbert?”

“No,” Cheetara said with a chuckle, unable to hide her amusement with the quarreling snarfs, “but I think it suits you, Snarf.”

Snarf winced. “Just forget all that name nonsense for now,” he declared as he ran up to Cheetara and Panthro. “Even though Beulah doesn’t think it’s such a big deal --” Snarf paused to shoot a quick glare in the female snarf’s direction. He was further unnerved to see that she had resumed her curled position and that his efforts to rile her by using her full name hadn’t had the desired effect. “--Lion-O and Felina are still inside the Book. An hour is a long time, considering

the way the time warp works, sneeyarf snarf.”

“True.” Panthro mused thoughtfully. “What’d Tygra say? For every minute ‘our time’, that’s a day where they’re at? That makes about 3 months time for them...”

“Exactly!” Snarf exclaimed, half in relief, half with exasperation. Finally, someone was getting the picture. “Why in all of holy Snarfdom would they need 3 months to find out what they need to know?”

Cheetara blinked several times, as if trying to shake off the unnerving effect of Snarf’s shrill voice. “Calm down,” she begged of the small creature.

“Yeah, Osbert,” Panthro added. “Don’t get your fur all matted over it.”

Snarf crossed his arms and looked at the pair of ThunderCats through narrowed eyes. “The next one who tells me to calm down, or calls me Osbert, is going to get a ‘surprise’ in their morning Berbilberry Muffin.”

“Ok, ok, Osb--er, uh...” Panthro stammered, perhaps thinking of the stomach-turning possibilities of Snarf’s threat. “I just think the Sword would give us some clue if something happened to Lion-O. With no warning from the Sword, it’s a simple case of mind over matter....I don’t mind, and it don’t matter.” Panthro punctuated his statement with a shrug.

“Hmmp.” Snarf sank from his position upon his haunches back to all fours, his ears drooping slightly. “I suppose...” Perking up, he added, “And I don’t want anyone telling Lion-O about the whole ‘Osbert’ thing. Understood? sneeyarf snarf.”

“Whatever keeps you from molesting my food is fine with me, Snarf...bert,” Panthro joked.

Cheetara stifled a giggle.

Snarf sighed heavily. “You two are pushing it. The name is ‘Snarf’. Not Snarfbert, or Osnarf, or Snert, or...or....”

“Ok, Snarf, we get it,” Cheetara managed despite her laughter. “Just stop already before you send me into labor.”

“Speaking of the baby,” Snarf remarked with renewed enthusiasm. “you really shouldn’t be in here. What if the Sword were to break loose from its bond with the Book and become a deadly projectile? You need to think about these things, Cheetara. I can’t always be there to bring that kind of stuff to your attention. After all, you’re carrying the next generation of ThunderCats, and I shouldn’t have to tell you how important that is, especially since the seven of you might be the last of your kind...”

Snarf continued his rambling lecture while nudging Cheetara to the door. Panthro laughed out loud. “Looks like Snarf found someone else to fret over. So much for Lion-O.”

“Yesssss. So much for your cub Lord.”

The jovial atmosphere of the room was shattered by the evident chill in Slithe’s reptilian voice.

“What the?!” Panthro instinctively took on a defensive stance. “Slithe! How in Jaga’s name did you get in here?”

Grune entered the doorway and pushed Slithe aside, to the reptilian’s obvious displeasure. “Never send a reptile to do a cat’s job,” the saber-toothed Thunderian sneered. “Without me, Slithe and his troop of petty buffoons would still be arguing back at Castle Plundarr.”

Cheetara’s eyes narrowed fiercely as she regarded Grune. “Grune, you’ll be lucky if you live to regret this trespass.” She withdrew her bo-staff and extending it, twirling it expertly a few times.

“And what do we have here?” Grune remarked as he studied Cheetara closely for the first time since entering the chamber. “A she-cat with child?” Turning his body slightly, but never

taking his icy glare off Cheetara, Grune shouted, “Monkian!”

Monkian squeezed past Slithe to answer Grune’s call. The simian’s eyes scanned the chamber quickly. “Only a coupla snarf’s and 2 ThunderCats to deal with? What are you waiting for, Grune. Grab the Sword before the other cats get here!”

“I’ll grab the Sword in due time, simpleton.” Grune retorted. Pointing to Cheetara, he added, “I want you to take your knife and make a ‘special delivery’ understand?”

Plucking the blade from his belt, Monkian smiled fiendishly. “Hoo hoo! Yes...” he replied, stepping threateningly toward Cheetara.

“Cheetara,” Panthro said quickly as he readied his nun-chucks, “get behind me. I can deal with these jokers.”

Grune approached Panthro menacingly, his club at the ready, with Vultureman and Slithe closing in on either side. “You’re going to have your hands full with me to be able to help your she-cat, I’m afraid,” Grune growled.



Mefeset fought through the cacophony of demonic voices in his head and willed his eyes to open. His eyes focused on a trio of priests, loyal subjects who had served him well during his rule. They appeared to be looking over a cartonnage cage with an embalmer. He tried to speak, but his jaw seemed stiff and unwilling to move. He then struggled to move his limbs, trying to sit upright, but to no avail. Though fighting to keep a coherent thought in his mind and his fear at bay, he was determined to speak.

When one of the priests turned to look at him, Mefeset could only muster a strange groan. He wanted to tell the priest to exorcise him of the evil demons that have seemed to have invaded his very soul. Mefeset was stunned when the priest responded to Mefeset’s efforts to speak by screaming hysterically.

“No,” Mefeset managed to croak in a gravelly voice that was not entirely his own. “Don’t run. Help me.”

His spirit was indeed sick, that Mefeset knew without a doubt. But if his priests refused to help him, then his soul was surely doomed. And why were they so afraid of him? Perhaps his illness had taken more of a toll on him physically than was predictable.

Mefeset finally was able to move his stiff limbs and sit upright, though their joints snapped and popped in a sickening fashion. Looking down at his hands and torso, he was horrified to find he’d been mummified. No wonder the priests had fled in fear. The illness had long since claimed his body, but the evil spirits still claimed his soul.

Mefeset’s jaw nearly came unhinged as he let forth a blood curdling scream into the desert night.

“Say it,” taunted one of the wicked voices in his mind.

“No,” Mefeset insisted. “You’ve taken my body, but you shall never fully possess my soul.”

“Say it, and you shall be rewarded with everlasting life and power beyond all imagination,” promised the devils in his head.

“No! NO!” Mefeset wailed as he swung his legs over the side of the embalming table and rose unsteadily to his feet. He held his head as if it were about to explode from the battle of wills raging within it. He looked warily at the canopic jars that had been placed around the table he sat upon. Those jars held his internal organs, he knew, and was sickened by the thought of it.

“I have been cursed,” he muttered bitterly. Mefeset found himself growing angry that he, who had been kind and giving in his life, had such a nasty fate befall him.

He stumbled about the room several minutes, mumbling incoherently to himself before finally giving in to the evil spirits.

“Ancient Spirits....of Evil....” Mefeset uttered in defeat, “Transform this decayed form, to Mumm-Ra, the Everliving!”

The sunken holes that were Mefeset’s eyes glowed red as he was consumed with the invigorating energy of the Ancient Spirits. His bandages flew off to reveal a huge, strong body beneath. The circular scar on his chest glowed red with power, and an image of a two headed serpent appeared within it. The canopic jars likewise shone a fiery red and shook as if they were about to erupt. They suddenly levitated and flew to the four corners of the small enclosure and grew into four great stone statues. Their growth destroyed the housing in which the mummification had been performed, leaving the four statues towering as menacing shadows into the night sky.

The arms of the statues slowly raised until they were outstretched in front of them. A great quake followed, as an onyx pyramid rose from the desert sands.



Tygra eyed the jackal pup warily from across the room. The silence in Jax’s bedchamber laid heavy between them, as Tygra waited for the child to explain his earlier disturbing behavior. Tygra knew Jax was clearly afraid of him and considered not pressing the issue at this point. But then again, he wasn’t comfortable leaving the disturbed child alone, either.

“Tygra!” WilyKat called as he skidded past the open chamber door. Backtracking, Kat poked his head into the room and tried to catch his breath.

Tygra became alarmed. “What is it, WilyKat?”

“Mutants! In the Sword Chamber!” Kat gasped.

“What?” Tygra roared. “How in blazes did they get inside the Lair without tripping the alarms?”

“I dunno,” Kat answered, “but Grune is with them and they’re attempting to overrun Panthro and Cheetara and take the Sword. I figured Kit and I would have a better chance to help them if we had you behind us.”

“Cheetara!” Tygra exclaimed, momentarily feeling his strength drain from him as he thought of what a Mutant might do to a female Thunderian in her condition. Gathering his bearings, Tygra bounded for the door. He turned to Jax, who sat across the room, slack jawed. “Stay here where it’s safe, Jax. I’ll return for you when the crisis is over.”

Racing beside WilyKat to the Sword Chamber, Tygra asked, “Where is WilyKit?”

“She went looking for you at the other end of the hall,” Kat responded, “she’s probably already back at the Sword Chamber.”

Sure enough, they bumped into Kit at the entrance to the Sword Chamber.

Tygra quickly scanned the room. Panthro and the Mutants were nowhere in sight. The Sword of Omens was gone from atop the Book of Omens. But the worse sight -- the one that nearly brought Tygra to his knees -- was that of Cheetara, lying motionless in the corner of the chamber.

"Aw, gee!" WilyKit exclaimed mournfully, "We're too late!"

"You two," Tygra ordered the twins, "get to the control room and scan the Lair and the immediate area. They can't have gotten far, if they're even out of the Lair."

Kit and Kat nodded and ran off to do as instructed.

Tygra then ventured across the expanse of the chamber. As he knelt down next to Cheetara, he noticed Bela curled up next to the fallen cheetah.

"Oh, Tygra," Bela sighed as she rose to her feet. "Those blasted Mutants have taken Panthro and the Sword. Now Lion-O and Felina are forever trapped in the Book of Omens."

Tygra gently felt for Cheetara's vital signs and was relieved to find she still lived. "What happened to Cheetara, Bela?"

"The simian Mutant was going to try to cut the child from her. She tried with all her might to fight him off, and he probably would have succeeded if they hadn't decided to run while they had the chance. He threw her against the wall before he left, and she's been lying here unconscious ever since..." Bela sadly explained.

Tygra's jaw clenched as he grappled with his emotions. He was just about to gently pick Cheetara up, when Jax came running into the room, holding the Sword of Omens with Monkian hot on his tail.

"What the --??" Tygra said as he spun around.

"Come back here with that, you trecherous little brat!" the hairy ape sneered, closing the gap between himself and the pup.

As Monkian grasped Jax by the collar, the child threw the Sword with all his might toward the Book of Omens. When the blade got within a few feet of the Book, it was drawn to its prior levitating position above the mystic tome, the vital connection between sword and book once again restored.

Monkian shook Jax violently. "Why you insolent little--"

"Hold it right there, Mutant!"

"Wh--What?" The cowardly jackal recoiled at the site of Tygra, whip in hand and ready to pounce.

"If you know what's good for you, Monkian, you'll unhand Jax and leave," Tygra demanded calmly but sternly.

Monkian's eyes darted to the rotating Sword of Omens and back to Tygra. "Hoo! I'll, uh, take you up on part of that offer, Tygra," he sneered as he sprinted out of the chamber with Jax securely tucked under his arm.

"No!" Jax screamed as he was hauled off. He tried in vain to scratch and bite Monkian. "I don't want to go with you!"

Tygra was about to pursue when Cheetara stirred and moaned.

"Tygra?" she muttered, her eyes fluttering open. "Grune....he overpowered Panthro...with that damned thundrillium club...we've got to--" Cheetara stopped short as she doubled over in pain, clutching her stomach.

Bela regarded the cheetah with great concern. "What's wrong?"

As Tygra scooped her up, he explained grimly, "She's going into pre-term labor more than likely."

“But-but...it’s too early,” Bela sputtered as she scrambled to follow Tygra out of the room. “If she delivers now, the cub won’t -- I mean -- it can’t possibly-- Oh, sneeyarf, this is awful!”

“That’s why I’m going to stop her labor,” Tygra said with a confidence he didn’t really feel, but hoped his false bravado would quell the fears of both Cheetara and the snarf.

At that moment, Snarf came bounding down the corridor. “Tygra! Monkian just left with Jax and--”

“I know Snarf,” Tygra said, cutting the snarf off in mid-sentence. “But Cheetara is in serious trouble here. Let me get her medicated and then we’ll deal with the Mutants.”

“Rwwl, how could this happen?” Snarf asked mournfully as he peered into the empty Sword chamber. “I wish Lion-O were here. What’s taking them so long?”



Lion-O took Felina’s hand and stumbled across the quaking desert from where they had been eavesdropping on the events in the embalming chamber. But the shifting sands soon gave way to the stone floor of the onyx pyramid, and so the two darted behind the towering idol of the Vulture King.

“Did you see that?” Felina whispered, her green eyes wide with a mix of fear and wonderment.

“Yes,” Lion-O replied, peering around the statue at the animated corpse that was Mefeset, now in the everliving form he knew as Mumm-Ra.

Lion-O turned in alarm when he heard Felina stifle a cry of pain. Before he could ask what was wrong, he too was struck with a sudden feeling of fatigue and pain.

Falling to his knees, he muttered, “The Sword...it must have been separated from the Book.”

Felina gulped and nodded solemnly in confirmation. “Pray to the Lords of Thundera that the bond between the Sword and the Book will be restored....or....” Felina ceased speaking as her eyes fell upon something that seemed to shock her. Lion-O followed her gaze and beheld the sight of the three priests and the embalmer several feet away. They lay sprawled on the cold stone floor, their bodies blackened and sunken as if they’d been dead for weeks instead of minutes.

Lion-O couldn’t take his eyes off the corpses’ mouths, which hung open as if frozen in a silent scream. “I think I see why the Guardian warned us not to touch Mefeset at all.”

The debilitated cats’ hushed conversation was interrupted by the booming voice of the Ancient Spirits of Evil.

“Mefeset is no more. You are now and forever will be Mumm-Ra, the everliving.”

“Yes!” Mumm-Ra declared as he raised his muscled arms above his head and unleashed unbridled bolts of energy into the air. “I feel the power, surging through my brain!”

“His brain?” Felina said in a strained whisper. “Didn’t they scrape out his brains with a hook?”

Lion-O couldn’t help but laugh a bit at her comment. “I guess the Ancient Spirits of Evil had a spare to hand out.”

Felina bit her lip to keep from laughing herself. “This is no time for jesting, Lion-O,” she said with slight amusement in her tone. “Besides, it hurts to laugh right now.”

“But,” the Ancient Spirits warned, “your power comes at a price, Mumm-Ra.”

“A price?” Mumm-Ra raged. “I’ll show you who must pay a price!”

Mumm-Ra attempted to attack the four statues with the glowing red eyes. Lion-O grabbed ahold of Felina and held her protectively as Mumm-Ra’s first barrage blasted into the statue of the Vulture King, causing flecks of stone to rain down atop of them.

Enraged, the Ancient Spirits roared, “Fool! You dare bite the hand that so empowers you?” The heads of all four statues turned to face Mumm-Ra and blasted beams from their eyes into the chest of the towering, ever-living being. Mumm-Ra was helpless as he shrank back to his mummified form, the force of the statues’ beams sending him flying back into his open sarcophagus.

At the same moment, Lion-O could feel his strength return to him and he concluded the Sword must have been reunited with the Book. While still hovering over Felina protectively, Lion-O reached his arm out and called, “Sword of Omens, come to my hand!”

In a matter of seconds, the Sword fell into its master’s hand. Forming an encompassing globe around the pair of ThunderCats, the Sword proceeded to lift them up out of the Black Pyramid and across the Mystic Void until they were hurtled out of the Book.

“Lion-O!” Snarf bellowed. The diminutive creature’s size was deceptive of his capacity to be heard. “You’re back, oh thank Jaga!”

“Yes, Snarf,” Lion-O replied, still trying to shake off the disorientation that accompanies time travel. “We made it back in one piece at least.”

Snarf pushed himself up onto his tail and tugged on Lion-O’s arm. “Rrrrwwl. I’m afraid some of us here at the Lair won’t be in one piece for much longer, sneeyarf snarf. We really could have used your help here, Lion-O.”

“Hmmm, I knew something was going on here,” Lion-O admitted. “Felina and I both sensed it when the Sword of Omens was separated from the Book. What exactly happened, Snarf?”

“It was awful, sneeyarf snarf. The Mutants and Grune got inside the Lair somehow and attacked Cheetara and Panthro. They’ve got Panthro and Cheetara is hurt.”

Lion-O exchanged a shocked look with Felina. “What of Tygra and the Thunderkittens?”

“They’re alright,” Snarf assured him. “Tygra is in the infirmary tending to Cheetara now.”

The ThunderCat Lord bounded out of the room without further comment, trotting the short distance down the corridor to the infirmary. Felina and the two snarfs followed close behind.

“Tygra,” Lion-O said, not quite hiding the anxiousness in his voice. “How’s she doing?”

Tygra glanced down at the sleeping cheetah on the bed before responding. “She had been going into preterm labor, but I gave her a dose of magnesium sulfate and its muscle relaxant properties seem to be doing the trick. Her contractions have stopped.”

Felina and Snarf let out simultaneous sighs of relief.

“Good,” Lion-O replied with a quick nod. “We need to go get Panthro. Snarf can stay with Cheetara, Tygra. Let’s go.”

Tygra’s brow furrowed slightly. “Well, uh, forgive me Lion-O, but I don’t think it would be wise to just go charging Castle Plundarr in the middle of the afternoon.”

Lion-O’s anxiety was giving way to full blown agitation. “What do you propose we do then, Tygra? Wait around while the Mutants torture our friend?”

“He’s right, Lion-O,” Snarf chimed in. “If you just go blasting in there right away with the ThunderTank, you’ll play right into their filthy little paws.”

Tygra sighed. “I don’t like the idea of Panthro being in Mutant custody any more than you do. I just want to make sure we all don’t end up as slaves of Mutants. Right now, they’re expecting us to act rashly on our emotions. The best time to rescue them is later, after nightfall.”

“Them?” Felina questioned.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you,” Snarf answered, “They’ve got Jax too. The brave little guy snatched the Sword from Monkian and returned it to the Book.”

Felina gasped. “That poor kid...”

“Even though Jax is technically among his own kind, I propose we rescue him as well,” Tygra added. “I don’t think those particular Mutants would take well to having a child around for long, much less one as troubled as young Jax appears to be.”

“Of course,” Lion-O conceded.

“Then it’s agreed,” Tygra asked as he stepped away from Cheetara’s bedside. “that we wait until nightfall to make our move?”

Lion-O looked to Felina and then to the pair of Snarfs and could tell he was definitely in the minority opinion. “Yes, it’s agreed,” he said halfheartedly.

WilyKit poked her head into the infirmary doorway. “Hey you guys, glad to see you made it back.”

“We tracked the Mutants as best we could,” Kat added as he appeared from behind his sister, “but some of the controls are all busted up.”

“Could you tell where they put Panthro?” Tygra asked.

“Yeah,” Kit said, “an infrared scan of Castle Plundarr suggests he’s in their dungeons. We couldn’t get a fix on Jax though.”

“It was too hard to tell his body heat patterns from that of the other Mutants,” Kat explained.

Lion-O’s jaw tensed as he thought of his friend being tossed into some dank Mutant dungeon. He wasn’t sure if he could wait around for dark to come...

*It's the sound of my ego spinning out of control
Sounds in my head that might never come out
Stuck in my head forever and ever and how do you put them out? Oh, these are the stories that
will never unfold
All of the characters cast in stone
You surely weathered them, I don't remember them
They'd all fade away I'm a child, I'm a baby
I can change my mind like any other genius
This is genius, this is genuine, this is bullshit Suppressing the violent side
That ego can override As a child, as a baby
As a phenom, as a meteorite
Burned out in the galaxy, where the parking lots are oh so bright Suppressing the violent side
That ego can override--Egoverride, Bob Mould*