

A Very Third Earth Christmas

By Shay Leona

Chapter 3: Twirling Around the Christmas Tree

A few days after the card game incident, Shay went to the Berbil village to go Christmas tree shopping. She had already sent out her plethora of invitations for her party and had already asked Snarf, Snarfer and Linda to help her with the food. Still with all of what was happening, Shay just couldn't get into the Christmas Spirit. It was as if something were holding her back.

As she continued to browse around she heard familiar voice lingering from a few trees down.

"Hey Blade, what do you think about this tree?"

"I don't know. It's a bit much don't you think?"

Shay walked over and smiled, "Link and Blade! What's going on guys!?!"

Link's eyes lit up and he ran up to the short leopard, picked her up and spun her around. "Shay babe, what have you been up to?"

Shay smiled softly "I've been okay, just around. How have ya'll been?"

"We're doing fine. Just trying to look for a tree for the house but Mr. Picky here is getting all specific about it."

Blade looked at his partner and gasped, "Hey! I have to be! I refuse to have just any kind of tree in our house!"

Shay giggled, "Well I hope ya'll work something out. OH! Did ya'll receive my invitations?"

The white tiger shook his head. "No, I haven't checked the mail for today."

"Well in a few weeks I'm throwing a Christmas party and both of you are invited."

"Oh really!" Blade asked eagerly "That's so cool count us in!"

"Awesome! It will be a blast!"

"I'm sure it will be. If it's arranged by Shay, you're guaranteed for a part-tay!" Link exclaimed picking the leopard around again. "Oh girl I've missed you so much!"

“Likewise hun, it’s been forever!” Shay was finally put back down and caught her breath. “I’m so happy, Panthro is going to extend my house so that I can fit more people in it.”

“Ah you still have the mechanic man wrapped around your finger eh?” the pumiger instigated.

“No hun, it’s not like that. Panthro and I aren’t together anymore. This is his Christmas gift to me.”

“Yeah, right you know you still wanna jingle his bells!” Prince Link joked, he and Blade began to laugh.

“Link! NO! You guys are horrible!” Shay said trying to make a serious face. “And on that note, I think I’m gonna continue my search for a tree. It was nice seeing ya’ll!” Shay gave them each a hug and a kiss and went on with her shopping.

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After several hours of searching, Shay finally found the tree she was looking for and was now decorating it. Listening to Bing Crosby and Doris Day’s “Baby It’s Cold Outside” as she put different trinkets and ornaments on the tree. The loud of hammering from Panthro’s construction drowned out her music but she still sang a long like it was nothing.

Shay got a thought and fixed some of her homemade hot chocolate and put on her hoodie and took a tray with two mugs of the hot treat and went to the side of the house Panthro was building on and greeted the Thundercat who was sporting the ever so lovely Thermal Thunderwear.

“Hey it’s break time. I have my special hot chocolate!”

Panthro looked at the leopard thoughtfully and took a mug from the tray.

“Thank you Shay!” the panther took a hasty sip then screamed, “Ow! That’s hot!”

Shay giggled, “Um duh, big red truck1 hence the name HOT chocolate.”

Panthro rolled his eyes and sat down on the bench, “These thermal suits come in handy this time of the year.” Panthro stated.

“Yeah I bet. You guys look so cute in them. Especially Snarf and Snarfer.”

Panthro raised a brow, “Cute, eh?” his deep baritone added to the chills the leopard already had down her back. Shay nodded and sat next to the panther on the bench.

“Hey are you sure you don’t need me to help you with this?” Shay inquired looking at the progress Panthro already made in one day.

Panthro took a cautious sip and shook his head, “No Shay, this is my gift to you. Tygra will be helping along with a few Berbils next week. I’m just getting the basics done for now. I’m almost done actually.”

“Aww Panthro, you’re so sweet. You don’t know how much I appreciate this.” Shay said her tone not as cheery as it should be.

“You know I don’t mind.” He eyed the she cat curiously, “Do you mind telling me what’s wrong?”

Shay looked at the mechanic and shook her head, “Nothing dear.”

“Shay I know you too well, I can always tell when something is bothering you. It’s in your eyes I can tell.”

Shay sighed, “That’s the thing. I don’t know exactly what is wrong with me. I just feel a sense of hopelessness and I dunno boredom. I’m trying hard to get into the groove of things this year but it’s hard, EXTREMELY hard.”

Panthro nodded, “Well it sounds like to me that you may have too much going on with planning the party and all. So it’s taking out that initial joy you’re supposed to have.”

Shay pondered over his words. It sounded accurate, but she still had the feeling that something else was behind it.”

“Yeah, Panthro you’re probably right. I’m just gonna take it easy for a few hours and try not to do so much. Are you going to be staying for dinner?”

“As much as I want to, I can’t. I promised Snarf I would be there tonight for his special surprise dinner.”

Shay looked at Panthro and they both said simultaneously, “Spaghetti and meatballs.”

“Poor Snarf he really enjoys to cook but he makes that dish way too often.” Said Panthro.

“And the day he decides to not cook anymore, you guys will be upset.” Shay joked, “Okay I’ll leave you to your work, just give me a holler if you need anything.”

“Oh you know I will.” He winked and went back to his work. Shay walked back to the living room and put her tree decorations to the side. She saw the top of the tree moving on its own. She looked at the closet thing she could find, a broom, and gently poked around.

“Oh goodness, I hope it’s not a bird or a random squirrel or something.” She thought. She finally poked something and heard an “Ow!” then a figure fell out of the tree and on to the floor curled up in a ball. Shay then realized that it wasn’t a bird or a squirrel at all. It was the one being on Third Earth that made the 4’11 leopard feel like she was tall.

“Salix! Great Jaga, what were you doing up there?”

The 3 ft fairy groaned and rubbed the back of her head, “Ohhhh I was taking a nap in the tree and when I woke up I realized that I wasn’t in the Berbil Village anymore.” She said.

“Awww darlin’ I’m sorry for poking you with a broom. I didn’t know what you were up there.”

“It’s okay you’re not the first to do that, trust me!” she said with annoyance. She looked around the house and her eyes lit up. “Oh wow, your house looks wonderful!”

“Thanks hun! I’m trying to prepare for my Christmas party. Did you get your invitation yet?”

“Yes as a matter of fact I have it right now.” She reached in her pocket and pulled out the red invitation, “I will soooooooo be there!”

“Cool! I can’t wa---” A loud hammering cut the leopard off and she tried talking over it, “I CAN’T WAIT UNTIL THE PARTY!” she shouted over the noise, faking her enthusiasm.

“WHAT IS THAT LOUD NOISE!” the fairy yelled back.

“OH, PANTHRO IS EXTENDING MY HOUSE TO MAKE IT BIGGER FOR THE PARTY!”

“OHHHHH OKAAAAYYYYY! THAT’S AWFULLY NICE OF HIM!!!!” Salix shouted even louder.

“I KNOW!!!! IT WILL HELP OUT SO MUCH FOR MY GUESTS! THERE WILL BE A LOT OF MOVING ROOM!” Shay yelled. Both women didn’t realize that the hammering had stopped.

“I CAN’T WAIT TO SEE IT WHEN IT FINISHES!”

“ME NEITHER! HEY I HAVE SOME HOT CHOCOLATE, DO YOU WANT----”

“HEY, What’s with all the shouting?!” Panthro questioned standing next to them.

Embarrassed, Shay and Salix giggled. “Oh well, sorry we were trying to talk over your hammering and I guess we were shouting so loud we didn’t realize you stopped.” Shay explained.

Panthro gave Shay a smirk, “Riiiiight! Salix, how are you doing?” he said trying to bend down to her level.

“I’m fine thank you!”

“She was a stowaway in my Christmas tree.” Shay joked.

“Oh I see.” Panthro said standing back up, “Well I’m finished for the day. I guess I’ll be heading back to Cat’s Lair.”

“Okay Panthro, thanks a lot!” Salix and Shay waved bye to the panther as he left out the front door.

Salix turned to the leopard and shrugged, “Soooooooo....what do we do now?”

“Well, you can help me decorate the tree.”

“Awesome! I’m game!” the fairy grabbed a box of ornaments and began to help Shay with the tree decorations.

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In Cat’s Lair, Lynxana and Tara sat on the couch watching T.V. while Purrsia sat in the chair reading a book. Linda was sitting on the floor looking through the cook book trying to come up with some recipes for Shay’s party.

“Hey what do you guys think about egg nog?” the human Thundercat asked everyone.

“Hey I think it’s wonderful as long as it has some rum in it!” Lynxana called out.

“I’m gonna make a non-alcoholic one as well for the ones who don’t drink.”

“Oh what’s the point of having egg nog if there isn’t any rum in it?”

“I don’t care what kind of egg nog you use, as long as I get to spread some on Lion-o and lick it off.” Purred the hybrid unaware she said it out loud. “Oops, I’m sorry that’s too much information isn’t it?” she giggled.

“Yeah and that is sooo in your dreams! Lion-o doesn’t want you!” Lynxie spat.

“Oh really? That’s not what he told me last night.” Tara said coy.

“Look here Tara, Lion-o is mine! Not yours! So keep your hands off of him!”

“Who says that it’s all me?”

Linda looked to the side worried, while Purrisa sighed and continued to read her book.

“Watch it hybrid or I’ll rip that smirk off your face!”

“Okay guys not now, I’m trying to read.” Purrsia said not looking away from her book.

“And why are you so calm? You’re usually the main one ogling over Lion-o.”

Purrsia finally looked up from her reading and eyed the lynx, “Yeah, but I don’t see a point in wasting my energy arguing over him. He’s been going back and forth between you two for years and instead of you guys getting upset with him, you are upset with each other. It’s quite amusing, actually so carry on.”

Before anyone could answer the door opened and a tall, male Thunderian liger walked in the room his hair all the way down his back, “Hey ladies!”

“Hey Therja...” they all said simultaneously.

“Hey Linda, Snarf needs you in the kitchen to help him with dinner.” The attractive man stated.

Linda stood up and walked towards the door and whispered, “You came just in time, THANK YOU!” she quickly scurried out of the room leaving a confused Therja and three heated she-cats.

“Anyways, what’s going in here ladies?”

“Another typical argument over Lion-o.” Purrsia answered turning a page in her book.

“Oh dear...” Therja said worried, “Well ladies, maybe it’s time that you guys expanded your options and ventured out on some different men.” The liger said looking dead at Lynxie.

“Therja, no one asked you okay!” Lynxie shot back, still irritated from the previous argument.

“Geez, Lynxie don’t act that way towards Therja.” Tara scolded, and then smiled at the liger, “And how are you today handsome?”

Therja ran a hand through his mane and smiled, “Not too bad. Went with Bengali and Tygra today to the Thundrilium mines in the storm... that was fun.” He said sarcastically.

“Oh you poor thing. You were out there in the horrible cold!”

“Oh yes but I did have the ever so convenient Thunder Thermal wear.” He said and winked at the hybrid. He looked over at Purrsia who was still buried into her reading. “Hey Purrs, what are you reading there?”

“A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.” She said simply.

“Oh...okay, sounds interesting.....”

“It is, especially when I’m not continuously being interrupted by two howling she-cats.”

“Hey!” Lynxie and Tara called out.

“Okay, well I gotta go do....something. I’ll see you gals at dinner. Bye ladies.” Therja said flashing his charming smile looking lastly at the she-lynx who was glaring at Purrsia.

“Bye Therja!” Tara and Purrsia called out. Therja waited on a response from Lynxie.

“Bye Lynxie...”

“Good BYE THERJA!” Lynxana said irritably.

Therja raised his right brow amused then left the room.

Purrsia put down her book and stood up, “I’m going to leave you two to quarrel. I need to have a piece of mind before dinner.” The lioness said, strutting coolly out of the room leaving Tara and Lynxie by themselves.

“You know Lynxie, its funny. You’re so wrapped up in Lion-o, you fail to realize that Therja is sweet on you.”

“What are you talkin’ about? Therja doesn’t---Oh ho ho ho....I know what you’re trying to do, you’re trying to get me to lose my focus on Lion-o so that you can have him all to yourself. Nice try dear but it’s not gonna work.”

Tara grunted out of frustration and got off the couch and walked towards the front door, “Okay Lynxie whatever, just to let you know that Lion-o is mine and he will ALWAYS be mine so GET OVER IT!” Tara said slamming the door shut.

“Ugh the nerve of that woman.” Lynxie said to herself, “Saying that Therja has a crush on me, how untrue that is.”