

## The Lion King 4: The New Rule

by

*Wild Wind*

It was about a year after the Outlanders joined the Pridelands, and Zira was defeated. It was the reign of Kiara, and her new mate, Kovu. As expected of them, they were to provide heirs, and not long after they became the new rulers, and Simba stepped down with Nala, Kiara found herself pregnant, and gave birth to a dark colored female, whom she named Akosua, as she was born on a Sunday. Kiara was quite satisfied, but Kovu wanted a male heir. And, once Akosua was weaned, Kiara became pregnant again, and hopefully this time, an heir would be here.

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It was night time. Darkness was thrown across the lands, with only the glitter of starlight to light the way and the pale moon, shining like a claw scratch in the sky. Priderock loomed up, and looked like a mountain at some angles. And if you looked closely, very closely, you could see the dark outlines of lionesses, laying on the rock. On most nights, especially one like this where it was quite cold, they usually stayed inside, but they looked restless. Out of all the lionesses, the ones that stood out were two males. One was a yellowish orange color, with a dark red mane. He sat near the main focus of everyone's attention, which appeared to be a small cave. The male had a worried expression on his face, clearly nervous about the happenings inside. The other male was smaller, with a dark brown, almost black mane, and an orangeish brown pelt, with glowing green eyes. That male was pacing, agitated.

"What's taking so long?" he asked out loud. "They've been in there for hours!" he exclaimed. "Do you think something's gone wrong?" he said, walking up to the larger, older male. "Do you think something has happened?" he asked again. The other male shook his head. "No Kovu, I'm sure everything is just fine. Rafiki is there, remember," the male lion said. Kovu sat down, and gave a long sigh. "I hope you're right Simba," he said, then looked down at his

paws. "Father! Father!" a voice called, and a small, reddish colored lioness cub jumped over to Kovu. "Akosua! What're you doing up past your bedtime?" he asked, looking down at her. She smiled sweetly up at him. "I couldn't sleep. Everyone is just so excited!" she exclaimed, jumping up and down.

"You should be in the cave, getting rest," Kovu said, turning her around with his paw. She stubbornly turned back, giggling. "Where's mom?" she asked, looking around. Kovu's green eyes widened, and a serious expression passed over him. Simba saw this, and looked over. "Sarafina, could you take Akosua back to the den?" he asked. An aging lioness with green-blue eyes got up and nodded. "Yes, Simba," she replied, then grabbed Akosua up in her jaws. Kovu sighed, turning Simba's attention to his son in law. "Kiara will be fine, I promise," he said, smiling warmly. Kovu returned it, but a glimmer of doubt was still in his mind.

It seemed like forever, when a shadow arose from the cave. Out of it hobbled a monkey, wielding a stick with some fruits attached to the end. Kovu got up, eyes wide. "How is she, Rafiki? Is she ok?" he asked, his ears pulled back. Rafiki gave a weak smile, which faded quickly. "Simba, Kovu, I want you to follow me," he said, then headed back into the cave. Simba and Kovu exchanged nervous glances, then headed in, side by side. The cave was much darker than it was outside, but pale light shone through a few cracks, illuminating a lioness lying on her side, heaving. "Kiara!" Kovu exclaimed, heading towards her happily. He lay down beside her. "Are you ok?" he asked, then realized something wasn't right. "K-Kiara?" he asked, flattening his ears. She gave a moan, and he noticed blood nearby. "W-What happened?" he asked, looking to Rafiki. The old monkey lowered his head. "The first two were fine. But....the last one caused her much strain. She lost too much blood. I'm....afraid she won't make it," he whispered, but Kovu heard every word he said. His eyes widened in shock, and he looked to Kiara. "Please. You need to fight through it," he pleaded, nudging her. She gave a weak smile. "My time is coming, Kovu. I need you to be strong," she replied, opening her brown eyes.

"No. No!" Kovu exclaimed, getting up to pace the cave, tears stinging his eyes. "This-this can't be happening!" he said. Simba walked to his daughter. "Daddy," she said. He nuzzled her, and tears began to stream down her face, and Simba teared up, but kept his voice strait. "Are you sure?" he asked. She gave a weak nod. "I guess you can't send Timon and Pumbaa after me this time," she joked, giving out a weak laugh. Simba smiled. "I guess not. Tell Mufasa I said hello," he replied, then they both nuzzled one last time. "I will. And just remember, I'll always be with you," she whispered, then her head dropped, and the room fell silent. Simba fell to the ground, covering his

head with his paws as he mourned for his daughter. Kovu had paused from pacing and growled. He glared at Kiara's dead body, and an indescribable anger overpowered him. He unsheathed his claws, then yelled, "It shouldn't have happened!" He raced out of the cave, and went straight through the lionesses, who all seemed confused. Vitani began to go after him. "Leave him," rumbled Simba, who appeared at the mouth of the cave.

"Everyone, gather yourselves over there," he said, whipping his head sharply to his right, where a large rock jutted out, the place where he announced things and such. As they headed over, murmuring, he returned to the cave. In the shadows, a lioness with blueish eyes lay, three small bundles at her side. "Are you sure you can handle them?" he asked her. She gave him a smirk. "I handled Kiara and Kopa very well didn't I?" she asked. He smiled. "Yes, but that was only two. Now you have three cubs," he said, then looked around to see Kiara's body. "I wanted to be here for Kiara," she said, then looked down at the cubs. "Do they have names?" Simba asked, laying down. She nodded. "Well, most of them. The oldest male there," she replied, tossing her head in the direction of a pale brown male, "Is Tendaji. The other one," she added, looking to a small, dark brownish male, "Is Kato." He nodded. "What about the female?" he asked, noting the small cub. "Kiara didn't name her. This is the one that caused trouble," she said, looking down at her. "We'll let Kovu decide," Simba said, getting up and heading out. "If he comes back," he muttered under his breath.

He stepped outside, where a slight breeze ruffled his mane. He headed off to the right, where the lionesses had gathered, along with Kopa, his only son and once was the future ruler of the pride. Vitani was by his side, her pelt pressed up against his. Simba skirted the crowd, until he was at the front where he could address the pride from a slightly higher post. "Everyone, I have an announcement to make," he boomed, and the crowds fell into a hush, all eyes on the past king. He took a deep breath, knowing that what he was going to say would affect everyone. "Kiara has passed on to be with the great kings and queens of the past," he said, looking wistfully to the sky, where he swore he saw two bright stars beside each other, as if Mufasa were welcoming his daughter into the realm of the great rulers. The crowd gasped, and Kopa stood up. "This can't happen. Who will lead us?" he asked, confusion and sadness on his face. Then, the crowd began to murmur, until it rose to a dull roar as they began to panic. Simba was frustrated, and gave a loud roar, silencing them.

"We will be able to live on, but not without your help. We will need every member of the pride to keep calm, and just work a little harder," he said. The crowd got quiet, and everyone tried to

comprehend the task at hand. "But who will rule us?" asked a lioness. "I will, for the moment," Simba announced. There came a few gasps, and Kopa walked to him. "Father, you are far from being the young lion you were. You could get hurt, or killed!" he exclaimed. "You won't be able to defend this pride alone," he added in a calmer voice. Simba sighed, saying, "I know, son, But, you have denied the throne." Kopa flattened his ears in sadness, and Vitani lead him away. "Now, we have three new cubs, and a possible new king," Simba continued. He was about to start again, when the sound of paws on stone made everyone turn around. Kovu stood there, his eyes hateful and glowing. "Please continue. I didn't mean to disrupt," he hissed, then headed off for the rock he had slept beside when he first appeared. Vitani exchanged worried glances with Kopa before going after him.

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It had been two days since the birth of Kiara's cubs, and her death. It was a sunny day, but Kovu felt less than sunny. He was still mourning, staying in a secluded cave far from pride rock. Despite Vitani pleading him to come back, he payed no attention to his sister, and lay in the dark shade, glaring at the wall. Right now, a ceremony was to be held for his cubs, but he wasn't going to go. It would cause him too much pain, especially since two of his three cubs resembled their mother. His claws always seemed to be out, scratching at the dirt, rock, or whatever happened to be under his paws. He ate well, hunting small animals for himself, and even though he needed more, he ignored the hunger pangs in his stomach while he thought over what had happened. He bared his teeth as he remembered Simba's words: "Kiara will be fine, I promise." Well, look how truthful those words were.

Yesterday, Simba had come to Kovu, asking for a name for the female. Kovu replied with, "Why not name her Laana. She was a curse to us all." Simba wouldn't have it, and left in a huff, angered with how Kovu was acting, though he couldn't disagree that it had been rough for everyone.

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Now, it was morning, the sun rising higher and higher. While Kovu was still mourning in his cave, Nala lay in the main pride cave at Pride Rock. She had the three cubs in her paws, Tendaji, the oldest and future heir, Kato, the second born, hence his name, and the only girl, Rutendo. Since Kovu refused to give her a nice name, Nala took it upon herself to name her. Now, it was time. Nala smiled upon her grandchildren, as they all slept, breathing in and breathing out softly. Rafiki walked

in, smiling. After giving each of the cubs their own juice marking, he picked up the cubs, holding Tendaji in one hand, and juggling Kato and Rutendo in the other. He walked out to the peak of the rock. He held them up, showing them to the land and exposing them to the sun. It almost appeared to Simba that Kiara and Mufasa both looked down upon the new lives below them.

The animals all began to praise them, rearing up, and then bowing to the future King, Tendaji, and the prince and princess, Kato and Rutendo. Once the ceremony was finished, and the animals all left, the cubs were left to nurse with one of the queens who had just lost a litter, but she still had milk. When Akosua found out her mother died for them, she went to see just how precious they were. She was disgusted, seeing as none of them were fit to be king in her eyes. After that, she grew bitter, especially towards the girl, Rutendo, just like her father who, for days on end, was alone in his cave, not talking to anybody. The thought that their sweet Kiara was dead, that they was never going to hear her joyous laughter again. Now, there seemed to be no sunshine. Only hate and anger. The one love of Kovu's life was gone, and it was all because of those little furballs. Since Simba was worried for the king, he sent Zazu to get reports on him if he could, but everytime it was the same: he just seemed lost, confused, and angry. After Kiara died, all he could think about was death. Life wouldn't be the same, and indeed, he was right.

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Now, it was about three weeks after the birth of the cubs and the death of their mother. Most of the pride had forgotten Kiara's passing, as they were all focusing on hunting and the current cubs. Adanna, a lioness of the pride and a successful hunter, had adopted a young male lion whom she named Imamu. Kopa and Vitani were expecting cubs of their own, and with three very boisterous ones prancing around, along with their slightly older sister. Rutendo was known very well as an almost exact copy of her mother, though she was more willing to cooperate. She and Tendaji were very close, mainly because of teasing from her brother Kato and sister, Akosua. And, it was one of these days that an argument got out of hand.

It was another sunny day in the pridelands. The boiling sun sent most of the lionesses to the cover of caves or trees. Simba sat in the main pride cave with Zazu and a few others, discussing Kovu's behavior. Nala was part of it, as was Sarabi and Bamidele, but Sarafina was left to watch the cubs. And on a hot day like this one, it was hard not to take a nap, and soon she fell under the summer spell, snoozing under a tree. Kato took this as an opportunity to torture his younger sister, with back up from Akosua. Tendaji was off, talking to Imamu, so it was a perfect

deal. Rutendo, or Ru as she was most commonly called, was chasing a butterfly along the rocks, and Kato smirked, thinking it too easy. He walked up to her. "Hey Ru," he said, sitting down. "Oh, hey Kato!" she exclaimed, noticing him and turning away from the butterfly. "Hi Akosua," she added, looking to her sister. Akosua looked at her unimpressed.

After a few moments of silence, Ru smiled widely. "Do you guys want to play?" she asked, lowering her front end into a playful position. "You know, Ru, we don't like you," he hissed as he began to circle her. Ru gulped as he kept circling around her like a shark would. "Y-You don't? How come?" she asked, confused. "Nothing much, except you drove away our father and killed our mother!" he growled bitterly. "I-It wasn't my fault!" she exclaimed, as tears began to sting her eyes. "Oh, of course it wasn't. A bird just swooped out of the sky and took her away!" Kato exaggerated, making flailing expressions with his paws. "I-I didn't mean to," she began, sniffing. "What now? You gonna cry little baby?" Akosua taunted. "Maybe you'd have a mommy to go to if you hadn't killed her!" Akosua yelled. Ru broke down on the spot, crouching down and stuffing her head in her paws, muffling her cries, but it was clear how she actually was.

"Hey!" a young voice called. Akosua and Kato looked up to see Tendaji standing there on a rock, looking down on them with a hard gaze. He leapt from the rock, landing heavily with a thud before stalking over to stand in front of Ru. "Don't pick on her," he said gruffly. "Why if it isn't the little king Tendaji here to save the day," Kato spat, smirking. "Leave her alone," Tendaji said, his voice getting deeper. Akosua stood over him, glaring down with her deep brown eyes. "Why should we? She should be punished," she said, screwing up her face. "It isn't right to pick on anyone, no matter what," Tendaji retorted. "She killed our mother, but you still stand up for her?" Kato asked, scorn in his growl. "She killed our mother," Akosua said. "And sent our father away," Kato added, flicking his tail. "No one picks on my little sister," Tendaji replied. Kato was known for having a short temper. In fact, it was one of his 'gifts'. And now, this would come into play. He crouched down, narrowing his green eyes as his fur began to bristle, and his tail flicked. He bared his teeth and leapt at Tendaji. Ten, on the other hand had learned how to fight from Simba, since he would have to protect the pride one day.

But, he couldn't bring himself to hurt his own brother. His eyes widened as Kato lunged out at him. Ten turned his head to the side, eyes clenched closed, and he struck out with a front paw, his claws snagging on flesh. Kato gave an angry growl as one scored down over his left eye. He fell to the ground, rolling over a bit before getting up. He opened his eyes hastily, and brought a front paw over his eye, and gasped as he saw blood on his paw pad. Ten opened his eyes slowly, then

gasped at what he saw. He had hit his own brother, wounding him. "Kato....I-I didn't mean to..." he began, but Kato wanted nothing else. He ran, droplets of blood falling on the ground. Akosua glared at them one last time before leaving. Ten looked at his paw, seeing Kato's fur caught in his claw. Disbelief clouded his eyes, and he flopped his backside down, shock written on his face. Ru had opened her eyes once she heard Kato's growl, and went over to her big brother. "A-Are you ok?" she asked nervously, sitting beside him. She lay her front paw on his shoulder in comfort. He didn't reply, continually staring at his paw. She stayed with him till Simba appeared from Priderock. His eyes were darkened with anger. Akosua stood behind him, obviously having told him. Rafiki happened to be in the cave with them, and came out. Simba exchanged looks with him, then nodded. Rafiki headed off, probably going to help Kato.

Simba padded down Priderock, a frown clouding his gaze. Nala watched him as he left, worry eminent in her eyes. "Tendaji, Rutendo. Come with me," he said, his deep voice making Ten wince. He got up, as did Ru, and they slowly padded up to him. He grumbled, then headed down Priderock. Ru and Ten followed, their heads held down and tails dragging in the dust. The whispers of the lionesses could be heard, wondering what punishment Simba had planned for the young prince and his sister. They set out on a walk in the Pridelands. Simba's shoulders were hunched, his brows furrowed. Ten searched his face desperately, trying to find out any little bit of information. But, Simba just kept on going, his expression blank. Finally, they reached a gorge, filled with rocks and a few stunted trees dotting the landscape. Ten and Ru stared at this new place. "Tendaji. I am very disappointed in you," Simba said, turning around. The prince gulped then looked down at his paws. "Why would you do something like this?" the king asked, opening his eyes wide in disbelief. "Th-They were picking on Ru. I-I couldn't let that happen," he stuttered. "You could have prevented this fight if you just used your words," Simba pointed out. "I-I tried, b-but Kato just lunged and me, and..." Ten began, but trailed off, sniffing a little at the memory.

Simba sighed, then closed his eyes for a moment, thinking. "Let me tell you a story," he began. "It all started a long time ago. There ruled a King and his Queen, Ahadi and Uru. The Queen gave birth to two male cubs, named Taka and Mufasa," Simba began. Ten and Ru exchanged glances. They had heard slightly about their relatives, but not the entire story. "They knew the two couldn't become kings together, so a decision had to be made. Mufasa was chosen to be the future king, but they didn't want them to split apart. So, the King and Queen kept it to themselves," he continued. "But, soon, it was evident that Mufasa had better treatment. Young Taka later learned that his brother was to be future King, and he grew distant. Darkness began to grow inside of him. And once it got ahold of him, it wasn't going to let him go. As he grew, it was clear there was a darkness inside him he couldn't escape," Simba said, looking down sadly at his paws and the

ground, almost as if studying the pebbles.

"He later changed his name to Scar, then something happened that changed his life. Mufasa and his queen, Sarabi had a son, and the future King: me," Simba told them. Ten and Ru gasped lightly as he continued. "Scar became even more bitter, and soon, he came up with a plan. A plan on how to kill the beloved King Mufasa and his new heir. He put me in danger, and my father tried to save me. But, he was killed in the process," he said, his voice ringing out across the gorge. "Scar scared me away, and took over, making the Pridelands suffer. Quite a few lionesses died, and finally, your grandma Nala convinced me to come back and fight him. I defeated him and cast out his followers. And soon, the Pridelands were restored to its former glory," Simba finished, looking off into the distance.

Ten gulped. "I told you this because I don't want history to be repeated between you and Kato. Though it's hard, you need to make amends with your brother," Simba said, getting up. "Why come here grandpa Simba?" Ru asked. "This is where Mufasa died," Simba said, looking into the distance with watery eyes. The cubs both stared off, mesmerized that this is where the great King Mufasa had taken his last breath. "Now, why don't we get out of here? I'm sure the hunting party will be back soon," Simba added. The cubs nodded absently, then followed their grandfather back to Priderock.

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It was now nighttime. Nala, Tendaji, and Rutendo were snuggled up together. Rafiki kept Kato in a separate cave, since he needed rest. Akosua went off and slept on her own outside. Adanna, Imamu, and Bamidele, Adanna's brother were at the back of the cave, near King Simba. The Great King couldn't sleep though. His mind swirled with what had happened to Kato today, and was restless. He silently got up and padded through the cave, passing the sleeping bodies of his Pridemates. Kopa and Vitani were curled up together, their sides rising and falling as one. He poked his head out of the entrance before heading out onto the great rock that was bathed in moonlight. He quickly padded off to the cave where Rafiki and Kato were. The baboon insisted on keeping him there so he didn't get a fever or catch infection in the cut. As he approached, the snore of Kato could be heard, as well as soft murmuring. Simba looked around the corner, seeing Rafiki mixing leaves and juices together. Simba walked out further, and cast a shadow. Rafiki turned around to greet him.

"Oh, hello Simba!" he said, smiling at the King.

Simba walked up to him and nodded a greeting. "How is he?" the King asked, trying to find Kato's sleeping form in the shadows. Rafiki sighed, then looked over his shoulder before answering. "He will be fine, but, he is going to have a scar," the shaman said. Simba gasped slightly, then looked dejectedly at his paws. "He-he looked just like...." he began then trailed off. "Scar," Rafiki finished for him. "I know it's not what you want to hear, but, it's true. And, I have to tell you something," he whispered. "What is it?" Simba asked. "Come closer," the baboon whispered. Simba came closer, and Rafiki put a hand to his ear. "I have received a prophecy from Mufasa," he whispered. Simba gasped, pulling his head back. "What's the prophecy?" he asked, his eyes wide.

"One from the past lives on in the future, sharing a darkness with it's victim, who both contain a mark of battle," Rafiki recited. Simba thought it over for a second. "So, are you saying..," Simba asked. Rafiki nodded. "Scar lives on in Kato," he said. "And the same darkness will consume him. For your own sake your majesty, you need to banish him or yourselves. Simba looked flustered. "I can't just banish an innocent cub. Besides, who says he's going to become like Scar?" he retorted, getting up to pace. Rafiki's head followed him movements. "Mufasa has never been wrong before. Why should that stop now?" Rafiki asked, grasping his stick. "But, it just makes no sense," Simba said, glaring at the ground as he furrowed his brow. Finally, he stopped and looked to Rafiki. "What should we do?" he asked. The old baboon shook his head, his old eyes closed. "I do not know. The answer shall come soon," he said. Simba sighed then headed off. His mind had been full earlier, but now it was overflowing with thoughts. He lay down beside Nala once again, but he couldn't go to sleep with the thought of Scar being reborn.

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A few days later, it was night once again. Kato was fine now, and had returned to the main den, but kept his distance. Even though Simba hadn't been there in Scar's early days, he figured this is what it must've looked like. He often sat by himself, glaring at everyone else. When Nala tried to talk to him, he turned away without a word. Rafiki's prophecy had Simba glancing at Kato often, which wasn't unnoticed. Nala questioned him about it, and Simba said he was only making sure he didn't get into trouble, which was partly true. Simba had noticed certain features that reminded him of his deceased uncle: a black Outlander nose, piercing green eyes, and

a noticeable scar running over the same eye. Simba became more worried everyday as he thought out this 'prophecy' more and more.

Now, Simba was sleeping, but fidgeting in his sleep. He stood at a cliff, looking down upon his kingdom. Suddenly, he felt a huge shove, knocking him over the side. He dug his claws into the stone, trying to pull himself up. The sky turned red, and he felt the heat of the flames licking at his hind legs. A dark shadow appeared, and it looked like Scar. But instead, Kato appeared, fully grown now. His claws unsheathed, he flung them out and grabbed Simba's paws. He howled in pain, and Kato dug in harder. He cackled evilly, his green eyes beginning to burn itself into Simba's memory. Then, Kato's mouth lunged forward, heading right for Simba's eyes. At this moment he woke with a start, gasping for air. "We need to leave," he said aloud. Nala stirred next to him. "What?" she asked sleepily. "N-Nothing. Go back to sleep," he murmured. She nodded, yawned, then closed her eyes. Simba now knew what he had to do to save his family: he needed to leave. Simba got up and headed out of the cave quickly. He went out and sat at the peak of Priderock. He gazed across the land, images from his nightmare remaining with him.

He then began to think. He needed to leave along with his close family. But where to go? He thought of neighboring prides that might welcome them. Tojo and Tama were still getting on their paws after a recent sickness had enveloped their land. He considered it, but shook his head. They lived in a place that has hyenas nearby, which would easily snatch up a cub, or injure an older lion. Chumvi had gone rogue, and there was no sign of him nearby. Malka and Kula's seemed like a good fit. They lived far enough away to be safe, and they always had room for more lions. Simba decided to go there, but he still needed to bring others with him. Rallying them to follow him would be tough, as it seemed bizarre that a cub could be their destruction. But, he had to try. Suddenly, he remembered what Malka had said. 'We only have room for eight more. After that, we can't have anymore lions,' he had said.

Now, he had to plan who to bring. Obviously, Nala, Sarabi, and Sarafina. If there really was going to be destruction, then Bamidele needed to come with too. He couldn't handle something like this. Timon and Pumbaa, since they could help keep a good mood. Now, the last place. He needed to bring one of the cubs. Finally, he decided on Rutendo, since she seemed to be the weakest. He felt bad about leaving his pride suddenly like that, but it was for the greater good. He couldn't tell Akosua, Tendaji, or Kato about it. They'd beg him to stay, and he couldn't bear that. He sighed, then headed in as the sun rose. Nala would need to know.

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It was a few days later. After telling Nala about the whole thing, she agreed, knowing they were doing the right thing. It was night time now. Rafiki stood outside the main cave to see them off. Simba had pretended to sleep, as had Nala. They both got up and gathered the others. Bamidele had heard of the plan and agreed to it, saying he had known something was off with Kato. Bamidele got up first, then went off to gather Timon and Pumbaa. Simba went to get Sarabi, while Nala went to get Sarafina and Rutendo. He waited at the entrance with Sarabi, Bamidele, Timon, and Pumbaa. Nala showed up from the shadows, carrying a sleepy Rutendo in her jaws. "Ready to go?" Simba whispered to them. They all nodded, but Nala hesitated. "Are you sure it's the right thing to do?" she asked, her voice slightly muffled around Rutendo's scruff. "We all agreed it was the right thing to do," Sarafina murmured, putting a paw on her shoulder. She sighed, but said nothing.

They padded past the old baboon, and nodded respectfully to him. Rafiki put his hand on his heart, forlorn laced in his eyes. They padded down Priderock, and headed into the savannah. Nala paused to look once more at her old home, where her beloved daughter Kiara had been born, and died. Where she herself was born and played with Simba as a cub, and where Kopa had been born. She saw images of herself and Simba playing as cubs, when Kiara was a cub herself. All of them were at Priderock, her home. But now, she needed to leave. Sarafina came up and grabbed Rutendo from her. Nala nodded gratefully, then headed on by Simba's side.

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After traveling all night, they reached Malka's Pride. He gladly accepted them, but questioned Simba about his presence. After explaining the whole thing to him, Malka agreed to let them stay. When Ru woke up, she was confused and disoriented about where she was, but Nala comforted her.

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Back in the Pridelands the next morning, things were less than peachy. The first to wake up was Tendaji, who was shocked to find Simba, Nala, Rutendo and the others gone. After alerting the others, they all began to panic. Adanna did her best to calm them down until she finally yelled, then gathered them at Priderock. She stood on a rock that was elevated above the ground. "Listen up! I

know all of us are distressed by Simba's sudden disappearance. But, we must move on. It was Simba's choice to leave, and if he doesn't return, then we need to move on. Until Simba returns, we need a new king. I call upon Kopa to take his place as king in his father's absence. Kopa stood up. "I am willing to take this position to help benefit my pride. But, what shall happen to my cubs? Kato and Tendaji were next in line, but what happens to my cubs?" he asked. "They shall become the new heirs in favor of you Kopa, since you are now our king," Adanna responded. He nodded. Vitani looked at him happily, while Kato glared over at the couple. Their cubs could ruin his chances of becoming king. He knew he had to dispose of them once they were born.

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A few months later, Kato and Tendaji were just growing their manes when Vitani gave birth. A female and a male. Vitani was a loving mother, but, she also wanted to help out her pride by hunting. One day, she had left to hunt, leaving her cubs with Adanna, who was busy training Imamu at the time in combat. Kato had told them he would watch them, but decided to make their deaths look like an accident. He slipped out of a secret entrance in the back of the cave, guiding the two. He led them into the Pridelands, where he began to attack. The male squealed as Kato ripped his claws across his face. The details were pretty brutal, but once he finished, they were a bloody mess. He washed off his paws in a stream, then ran back to Priderock, acting distressed. "They-They're dead!" he exclaimed. When asked to explain the story, he said he'd brought the cubs out to explore their future kingdom when hyenas jumped them. They all grieved the loss, as did Kato, who only pretended. Vitani became fearful of the same thing happening to future cubs, and so, refused to have any more, which was a double win.

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About a year after that event, Kato and Tendaji were adults now. Kopa was getting old, and clearly, it was time for a new king to rise to power. Tendaji was the obvious choice, being the older and more strong brother, but Kato strived for it. He had planned to get rid of Kopa once and for all. He wasn't just going to sit idly by and watch Tendaji rise in power. He invited the old king on a patrol, just the two of them. Kato had learned fighting moves, and executed them perfectly, which wasn't in the favor of the king today. Kopa tried to put up a fight, but Kato was too strong. Before long, he was on the ground, dead. Kato panted, as he claws dripped with blood. Kopa had gotten in a few scratches on Kato, but other than that he was fine. Quickly, he ran to Priderock, saying a group of rogues had attacked, trying to take over. Kato was attacked by one, but Kopa took them all on, and told Kato to get help. When he brought them back, he pretended that Kopa had just

died. He cried and mourned with the rest of them, but it wasn't real. Now, he had one more loose end to tie.

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Now, most of the lionesses were out hunting, except for Akosua, who was helping out with the plan. Imamu had been cast out earlier, in case he tried to take over when Tendaji became King. Since Kopa's death, everyone was wracked with grief, including Tendaji, who was like his student. Kato walked up to the king, then began to fight him. It was hard, since Kato was weaker than Tendaji, but he had a plan. Akosua came in, scoring her claws down Tendaji's back and making him howl. After a while, they chased him from Pridelands, thinking they would never see him again. They told the others that Tendaji had gone mad and attacked them, and ran away. They bought it, and Kato resumed the place as the King. But, he didn't have much of an idea on how to rule, what with his brother being trained mostly. He promised them that he would be the beginning of a new era of greatness, which turned out to be false.

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Over time, the Pridelands began to deteriorate, turning into a wasteland like none of the lionesses had seen before. They were forced to hunt for Kato, who always had a big appetite, and then, hungry after hunting, they had to go out for themselves. A drought spread over the lands, and all water sources were beginning to dry up, as well as grass. What's worse is that this happened faster than Scar's reign, and the Pridelands could possibly even become worse than it had been under Scar's rule. Rafiki refused to go to Pridelands, since Kato would only have him look at himself instead of the lionesses. Kato, however, hadn't bred with anyone, and hardly let outsiders join. When a female turned up pregnant from a rogue, he sent them out of the pride for treason, and now, sometimes lionesses just went looking for rogues, hoping for a way out, until Kato made it so no one crossed the borders, and now they had to stay. It was increasingly becoming worse, and someone needed to take action.

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Back at Malka's Pride, Rutendo grew, and learned all the skills she could from Sarabi and Nala. Simba became increasingly worried over the news he heard of the Pridelands. Now, he knew he had to take action. He got permission from Malka to take a few members of his Pride with him,

including his own mother, who said she'd be willing to die for the Pridelands. Rutendo came with them, and together, they skirted the borders of the Pridelands, heading to the jungles where Simba had taken refuge after being exiled by his uncle Scar. They were to stay there and rest, before going to confront Kato. Nala was worried, especially since Simba was to fight Kato. He was older than Kopa, and so, not as fast or strong as he used to be. Only with the lionesses help could they overthrow him. But, if Simba died, who would take over? Tendaji had been exiled, as they had heard, and left the Pridelands, but no one knew where he'd ended up.

Rutendo was to go find food, and so, she went off on her own. She sniffed along the ground, hoping to find a single scent of food, but found something quite different. A lion's scent. Being curious, she followed the trail to find a male lion she recognized....slightly. He had a full, brown mane, with a creamy brownish body, but what really got her were the eyes. She stepped out into the clearing he was laying in, pushing past the bushes. "T-Tendaji?" she asked, cocking her head to one side. He looked at her strangely. "How do you know my name?" he asked. "It's me, Rutendo," she replied, smiling. He thought for a second, then smiled widely. "Oh my gosh! H-How'd you get here? Where'd you go? What happened?" he asked. Rutendo looked flustered, then held up a paw. "One at a time brother!" she exclaimed with a chuckle. "Sorry. It's just, I haven't seen you in so long!" he added, smiling. "Simba moved us," she explained. "W-What do you mean?" he asked, confusion written on his face. "Simba recieved a sign that we had to leave. So, we did. We've been living in Malka's Pride," she explained. He nodded, looking at his paws. "But, what about you? How'd you get out here?" she asked, changing the subject.

"Well, after you left, Kopa became leader. But, once Vitani's cubs were born, they were killed. Then, when Kopa was older, he was killed. A few days after, I was exiled, given a scratch by my own brother," he said, looking down at his paws. "I fled here, remembering Simba's tales of staying here as a cub," he said. "And it's been great," he added, walking over to some vines to lay down, much like Simba had when Nala visited. "What brings you guys to the jungle when you were living in the mountains?" he asked, smiling again. "We've come to end Kato's reign. But, if Simba dies, we don't have a leader. Tendaji, we need you," she said. "I can't. I won't fight my own brother," he stated. "But, we need you," she pleaded. "If you don't, then our old home will be destroyed. We need you with us," she said, looking at him sadly. "Give me time to think it over," he replied. She sighed in frustration, but nodded. As she headed off, she called over her shoulder, "But just remember this: Kato needs to be stopped." Now, Tendaji sat there, thinking.

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Later that day, Tendaji lay on that vine, deep in thought. A light colored lioness came towards him, dropping her catch nearby. She jumped into the vine herself, lying over him like a blanket. "What's wrong?" she asked, looking at him. He sighed. "My sister is here, and so is my family," he responded. "Well that's great! Maybe I can meet them," she said. He shook his head. "You don't understand. They want me to fight my own brother," he said, exasperated. "Why?" she asked, looking at him with alarm. "He's taken over my old home, and it's very bad. But I can't fight him!" he added, nervously. "It's for the greater good!" she said. "But Mila, what if I lose. Then who would be a father to our cubs?" he asked. She got up and jumped off. "They need you more than I need you," she replied. "So what are you implying?" he asked, sitting up. She walked towards him, a serious look on her face. "You need to help them, or I will," she replied. "No! Okay, I'll do it, but you need to stay as far away from the fighting as possible," he ordered. She sighed thankfully, and nodded. "Now, let's go find your family!" she said.

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After managing to find his family, Tendaji demanded the whole story from Simba. After he finished telling the story, Tendaji was heartbroken, but accepted it. He also decided to join the party, but told them to keep his mate, Mila here. A few lionesses from Malka's Pride agreed to stay here and keep her safe. They spent that night in the forest, and set out the next day for Priderock. Tendaji said a goodbye to his beloved mate, promising to come back. When they made it to Priderock, they went over the plan. Simba and Tendaji were to get as close as they could to Kato without being noticed while Rutendo and the others were to gather the lionesses, and fight against Kato. Rutendo was surprised to find Akosua looking sad. The other lionesses looked up as they approached. "What're you doing here?" Akosua asked. After explaining, Rutendo waited nervously for Akosua to repent. But, she joined in, seeing now that Kato wasn't fit to rule a kingdom as she had previously believed. They all joined in, walking up the rocks to confront Kato.

He seemed angry. "Well, if it isn't my family, come to welcome me," he said slyly, padding up to them. "We're only here to welcome you to your death," Akosua retorted. "Pfft. You couldn't kill me if you tried," he stated, shaking his head. "They can't, but we can," said a deep voice. Kato swung his head around to see Simba and Tendaji standing there, ready for battle. "Your reign is over brother," Tendaji added menacingly. Kato growled, then braced himself for battle. "We can end all this without violence," Simba began. "We don't have to fight, brother," Tendaji said. Kato snorted in reply, saying, "I don't get scared by broken promises." Tendaji's eye

brows furrowed, and he crouched down, putting all his weight in his haunches to leap towards the king, and end all the madness. Soon, the two brothers circled each other, none ready to make a move just yet. Simba, along with the other lionesses gathered around in a semi-circle, leaving the only way out was to jump off the edge of Priderock, which would cause certain death.

"You've gone mad Kato," Tendaji exclaimed. "Oh, brother of mine. Do you really think I'm the mad one?" he asked, baring his teeth menacingly, his tail lashing from side to side. Claws were now unsheathed, and scraping against stone. The lionesses braced themselves for the fight, in case one of them tried to make a run for it, or if Tendaji needed help. At this moment, the sun was setting, casting Priderock in red light, almost the same shade as blood. "Time to die, brother," Kato growled, then launched himself at the young lion. Tendaji had little time to react, and ended up getting bowled over with Kato's claws in his pelt. Kato dragged his claws along his sides, blood beginning to come out. Ten snarled in pain, then hit him in the stomach with his powerful hindlegs, winding him for a split second, in which he got up on his paws, bracing himself for a fight.

Tendaji ran at his brother, and hit the red lion squarely in the shoulder, knocking him over with his superior strength. "We can end this now, Kato. There is no need for more bloodshed," Tendaji pleaded. Kato struggled to get up, spitting as he did. "Oh no, brother. What you don't know is that wars must be won through bloodshed by me, for I will be victorious, and you shall lay in a pool of your own blood, bleeding your life away," he growled. His long, curved claws scraped the stone as he leaped at Ten once again. The lionesses could only watch in horror at the scene before them. Tendaji leaped aside at the last second as Kato whizzed by. His back was now at the edge of Priderock, unaware of the plan his opponent had in store for him.

Kato stalked threateningly towards the bigger lion. "I've been waiting all my life for acceptance from our father. He never payed attention to us. The only way to do that was to take over as king. It took a long time, brother. Lives had to be lost in order to achieve my goal, but it was worth it. I have earned this position, and I sure as a lion's mane are not going to give it up so easily," he growled, walking ever closer. Tendaji backed up, trying not to have another fight. It was at the last second that his back paws slipped over the edge, and he clung for dear life to the rock in front of him. Kato now had the advantage, and stood up over him, holding his head high. He then leaned over, and dug his claws into Tendaji's paws, making him gasp. "You're going to go, just like our great great grandfather Mufasa," Kato growled, and Simba noticable flinched in the background. "Any last words?" he asked, baring his teeth in a toothy grin.

Suddenly, the king felt a sharp pain in his tail. He yelped, then turned, baring his teeth at the attacker behind him. He found his older sister, Akosua with her teeth digging into his flesh. She tugged, pulling him closer. He growled, then swiped a paw at her, loosening his grip on Tendaji. "Come and fight me brother," she growled, her voice muffled around his fur. He left Tendaji on the rock, then leapt at the lioness, giving Rutendo the chance to go and help her other brother to his paws. Akosua dodged and deflected the blows Kato aimed at her. In this battle, experience outmatched anger. Kato threw his paws quickly, lashing out in anger. One caught her on the side of the face, launching her aside. Tendaji ran quickly, and slammed into his brother, knocking him to the ground. At that same moment, thunder erupted, causing the watching lions to look to the skies. Clouds had gathered, and blotted out the sunset, letting only a few rays of red light through.

Another lightning bolt came from the sky, and one of the many trees around Priderock that used to bring shade, but had now died, caught fire, and a blaze started through the dry grass. "History is repeating itself," Simba murmured, and the older lionesses nodded in agreement. "Everyone to the bottom of Priderock," Simba ordered. The other lionesses obeyed, though rather reluctantly. Sarabi and Rutendo nudged Akosua to her paws, and helped her down from the high fall if she slipped. Now, Kato and Tendaji were alone. They circled each other once more, though a noticeable line of blood came from a head wound on Kato. "It is time to end this," Tendaji said, more to himself. He ran at Kato, who in turn ran at him. Tendaji aimed a clawed paw for his face, and caught him squarely in the jaw.

He was launched through the air, and landed near the edge of Priderock. As he struggled to his paws, Tendaji stood over him. "Your reign is over brother. Unfortunately, you shall never see another day," he growled, then head butted him in the shoulder, throwing him over the side of Priderock and into the raging fire below. He peeked over the edge to make sure Kato would never come to power again. He had learned from Simba's mistake of trying to let Scar go, hard as it was. Then, the rain began to fall, for the first time in years. The lionesses looked to the skies in delight, smiling at the liquid that fell. Simba padded up Priderock towards Tendaji, who looked at him in dismay. Simba gave a warm smile. "It is time for your rule, Tendaji. The loss of a family member is always hard, but life goes on, and we must live with it. My rule is finished. It is time for your reign, King Tendaji," he said, ending with a small bow.

Tendaji gulped, then walked to the peak of Priderock. The other lionesses looked up, and their

mouths opened wide in amazement as they saw their new king ascending Priderock. He looked upon his subjects before roaring to the heavens, and the others joined in. As he roared, a small patch appeared in the clouds, and from it came the warm smile of his mother, now young again, smiling, along with her brother Kopa, showing their approval of the new king. And thus, a new era had begun, one of peace and harmony amongst the living things. And now, in the form of Tendaji's mate Mila and their soon to be cubs, the circle of life was being continued.

Credits:

Uru, Mufasa, Simba, Sarabi, Sarafina, Nala, Kopa, Vitani, Kovu, Scar, Kiara, Zazu, Malka, Rafiki, Timon, Pumbaa, Malka's Mother (c) Disney

Adanna, Kato, Akosua, Tendaji, Rutendo, Bamidele, Imamu (c) Me