King's Legacy

Chapter 1: Exordium et Terminus

By ashrhinos and ladyleatc

Schwenk ran though the outskirts of town, he was heading for the badlands.....he needed to escape, things had gone very wrong. The wind was blustery as the sun set, soon it'd be night, and the fat full moon was already sharing the sky. The children should've been dead, history should've been changed. They were alive.....the great assassin had been sold out and the hunter was now the hunted.
Lion-O gathered his people, "you know what to do, "he said to each one in turn," Stop him if you come across him, but" The lion-o growled fiercely, "the human is mine"
Schwenk was nothing if not enduring. He had fitness, strength and determination.....just not at the Thunderian level. He ran through the thicket that led to the scrubland.....and then.....to the plains beyond. He needed space to make his getaway.....and time. He wasn't sure if he had the latter.
the Thundercats separated, each taking a different sector, each knew it was vital that the human was caught, to threaten the life of an adult was punishable by prison, threats against a child, was another matter, especially if those children just happened to belong to the Thundercats lord himself, that alone was punishable by death, and judging by the lion's mood, Schwenk's death would not come swiftly.

It had been a big job....an unusual job, but Gaston Schwenk was 'King of the Unusual'.....He had travelled back in time....not long, only 18 years, 4 months and 4 days. It was decided that the decisions made by Lion-O's son, Claudus, needed to be 'undone'. There had been more than one option, but the best one was considered to be assassination in the past. Schwenk was good, in fact, he was very good. He was disciplined, effective and.....most importantly.....didn't have qualms about killing a child as long as the money was right. Sending Schwenk back into the past was the easy bit really, the difficult bit was communicating with his agent. Direct communication between employer and assassin was bad news normally, so an agent was always hired. Agents were the insurance for the employer.
They were also the weak link for the hired gun. When the temporal communication link with Dorian was discovered he was brought in and interrogated. This occurred three weeks before the hit was planned. The Thundercats were merciless on Dorian, and when more evidence was discovered and the ghastly plan was revealed in the cold light of day Dorian knew he was a dead man. But Lion-O and the others knew that assassins who killed the young were rare and the opportunity to clean the streets of another

was too good to be true. So a deal was struck. The death sentence on Dorian was commuted to life imprisonment if he kept the plan running smoothly and nothing was said to the killer. Dorian agreed and played the mook like a dream.

The stage was set and the only non-actor, the only player without a script was the despicable Gaston Schwenk.

Schwenk ran out into the darkening plains. He had to head the hills in the distance; it was unfortunate that he was in prime lion territory.

Tygra flew over head in the Thunderstrike, Pumyra and Bengali in the pods. "Anything?" Tygra asked.

"Nothing," Pumyra answered from the orange tigers left side. "Ben?" Tygra asked the white tiger.

Bengali narrowed his eyes to get a better focus, "ten degrees starboard, "he said spotting movement below

Schwenk heard a rumbling roar approaching he dived into the grass and kept perfectly motionless.

The Thunderstrike slowly circled around, they knew Schwenk was hiding in the tall grass somewhere, Tygra quickly radioed, Lion-O and the others.

Schwenk knew that the others would head towards him; he couldn't allow that to happen. He rolled onto his back and took aim the Thunderstrike. He fired three high velocity round into the crafts underside.

Alarms screamed inside the small cockpit, "We've been hit," Tygra said stating the obvious, "Pumyra, Bengali, prepare to detach"

Schwenk knew the vessel was in trouble. He got up and ran towards the lake that was half a mile away.

Cheetara was on the scene in seconds, she was just in time to see the human fire at the Thunderstrike, then run, " No you don't, "she said and sprinted after him

He heard the pursuit and turned, steadied himself and fired once.

Using her incredible speed, the cheetah easily moved out of the bullets path, taking her bow staff off her cuff, she extended it and caught the human on the shin as she passed in a blur

"Shit....." he grunted as he fell to his knees. But he was ready and fired three times more at the speeding cheetah, in a spread.

The cheetah's staff found the sensitive part of Schwenk wrist; she sent a light shock through the staff and into his hand.

"Aaargh....." he dropped his gun as the bolt went through the assassin's wrist.

Cheetara gave the human and sound smack with her staff, which sent him sprawling on his stomach, "Stay down," she ordered putting her foot on the humans back and her staff at the base of his skull

"Get off me.....or you'll be next!" he hissed

The Cheetah snarled and hit Schwenk on the back of his head

"Fuck!!" he snapped. "Try it again bitch....maybe I'll get you in the family way.....improve your life...." he added

"If, it wasn't Lion-O right to kill you, I'd gladly do it myself, "she hissed

"That's my point...let me go.....he'd prefer a hunt, not an execution.....you know I'm right.....You've got my gun.....just let me go and he can hunt me down....."

"Do you really think I am that stupid?" Cheetara laughed, "You're not going anywhere until Lion-O gets here, "she said turning her head, "which won't be long, "she said hearing the approach of the ThunderTank.

"Point one...yes, you are that stupid and point two....always check pockets and then you'd have been OK....." the tranquiliser pin easily entered the top of Cheetara's foot.

The Cheetah yelped in pain as she was stabbed in the foot, she tried to make a swing to knock the human out, but the drug he had injected into her system worked fast, it was only seconds before she slumped to the ground unconscious

He got up. "Bitch...." he swung his foot and kicked her in the face, breaking her nose. He picked up his gun, reloaded, picked up his backpack and ran for his life.

the roar of the ThunderTank quieted as it came to a stop, Lion-O and Panthro jumped out and ran when they seen the downed Cheetah, Lion-O checked for a pulse as found it beating steadily, "Take her home," Lion-O ordered and picked the woman up and handed her to the panther. "What about you?"Panthro asked. Lion-O's eyes scanned the horizon, "I, have a human to hunt"

Schwenk jogged down the slope that led to the lake, he's circle the body of water out of sight from the plain.

Lion-O waited until Panthro left, he turned and followed the humans scent trail

The moon bathed the landscape in dark blues and blacks. He kept jogging, this had been a sever test of his stamina and the bitch cheetah had made things all the harder.

Lion-O caught the human's scent, his brow furrowed and he growled and quickened his pace

In the backpack was a 'temporal anomaly gateway' or TAG for short. He needed high ground and five minutes of peace and quiet. The mission had failed.....this time. Time to go back and start again.

Lion-O followed the scent to the lake and slowed down

Schwenk stopped under a boulder overhang. He removed the control unit and added coordinates, to save time later. He heard no ThunderTank, no Thunderstrike, only the wind was audible.

Crouching low, the lion moved quietly

He’s the one I’m talking too about it

Schwenk listened intently, nothing but the wind. Two miles away lay the Ferric Escarpment. It was perfect, high, space and a high metal content in the rocks. He checked his bags, gun and pockets. He then jogged out from under the overhang.

Lion-O suppressed a growl as he spotted the human, he followed but not too close as to tip him off

He estimated that he's reach the base of the escarpment in about forty steady minutes. The wind was cool now. The moonlight picked out everything in high contrast, but he saw no pursuers. He did see in the distance the ThunderTank and Thunderstrike leaving in unison. He smiled. They'd given up.

As the lion followed he closed the gap between them a bit more

Ten minutes to go he thought. He was still by the lake; he placed his gun and backpack down. He scanned the area. Nothing. He crouched down for a drink.

Lion-O seen the human taking a drink, in a burst of speed and strength the lion lunged from his hiding spot and laded on the unaware human

In an instant Schwenk thought a piano had landed on him. He tried to get to his feet.

"Don’t think so," Lion-O snarled digging his claws in the back of Schwenk neck and stood himself, picking Schwenk up off the ground

The pain was intense. "I'm unarmed.....at least give me a fighting chance....." he said levelly.

"Right, "lion-O snorted, "should have thought of that before you tried to kill my son"

"I thought you were brave and noble.....you don't think you can beat me in hand to hand?" he sneered

"I’m not screwing around with you human," Lion-O snapped

"Yeah? I can beat you...no gun, no anything.....it'd be easy....."

"Right" Lion-O snorted

"Put me down and we do this properly.....you do want to kill me, right? Or is it back to jail with me?" he winked

"No jail this time"

"Fine.....then drop me, kitty and finish this....." his eyes narrowed.

"Before I do, I just have to know, why....why did you try and kill my boy?"

"Fine.....drop me and I'll spill...let's face it, I'm not running from you....."

"No good to run, I will catch you before you could blink"

"Exactly.....so drop I and I'll tell you why your little toddler needs to be dead....." he said cruelly.

Against his better judgment the lion dropped Schwenk to the ground

He rubbed the back of his neck, it was wet with blood. "I hope you'll make it quick in the end?"
"Maybe, now spill it"
"Well....." he dug his hands in deep in his pockets. "In about eighteen years and four months your cute little boy becomes clan leader....and because you're lord of the Thundercats that makes him the most powerful clan leader.....he can do anything." he snorted. "..An inexperienced jackass of a 20 year old in charge. Well.....he gets a cute idea to make it a personal mission to wipe the slate of all assassins and hit crime syndicates.....working guys like me.....well.....it works.....very well.....a golden age starts and people like me and my paymaster end up dead or in prison.....mostly dead.....So we decided to end the runts life, change the future and hide back into the shadows, from where we do our best work!"
"well sounds like he will have the right idea," Lion-O smirked, "life would be a hell of a lot better without people like you...you don't like it then get a different profession"
"We're needed.....and I'm very sorry you had to witness a bad result on my part.....Still.....you have me, you have my gun.....there's only one more thing you need....."
"Which would be? Your head on a spike in the town square?"
"No....this!" his hands flew out of his pockets and threw two handfuls of thundranium dust into Lion-O's face.
"Aaargh," Lion-O yelped tumbling backwards trying to wipe the dust from his face, the dust was in concentrate form and extremely potent
Schwenk just waited for Lion-O to become powerless. He strolled over and picked up his gun, checked the chambers then walked back and waited.
Lion-O fell back; he tried to reach for his sword
Schwenk kicked it away. He crouched down by the lion. "Thundranium.....never leave home without it!" he smiled and patted his cheek. He stood astride him and aimed for the forehead, he saw the fear in the lion's eyes. He then lowered his weapon and looked behind him. He chuckled. "Hope you can swim...." he grabbed the lion's ankles and dragged him towards the lake."Geez.....you need to wash these feet....hey, do it when you're on the lake bed...." he shuffled backwards into the water and then changed position to Lion-O's shoulders. He pushed him out deeper until he was chin deep. "Adios amoeba!!" he laughed evilly and pushed the lion out. He walked to the bank and watched the lion slip beneath the surface. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.....if you were metal, you'd probably rust...."<<
He picked up the sword and backpack and walked to the Ferric Escarpment.
The lion slowly sunk to the bottom of the lake
He eventually reached the place. He setup the tripod and placed the TAG projector on it. He powered up

and bright light short forth, illuminating the area and the surrounding plain with a bright blue-green light. He set the stopwatch to five minutes and counting.

Lion-O was starting to come around, the water washing away the Thundranium from his face and upper body

The air shimmered and crackled. "Three minutes, forty-two seconds and I'm home....."

Lion-O planted his feet and with a leap he headed for the surface

There was only one way to get to where he was and he stood facing the path. Gun at the ready, just in case the snivelling Thundercats took one more go at him. He attached a wrist cord onto his right wrist. A neat device that carried one hundred foot of steel cable, ending in titanium barbed arrow head. It helped him move great distances both at home and on mission.

The Sword growled sensing its master getting closer

Schwenk looked at his backpack; he cocked his head to one side. "What the hell?"

As soon as the lion's hand broke the water, he called to the mystic weapon, the sword roared an answer and glowed brightly, sending the Thundercats symbol high into the air

"Fuck!!!" he yelled. "Two minutes twenty-two.....Not even the might Thundercats will get here before I'm gone!!"

Suddenly without warning the sword once again roared and grew bright, a ball of pure energy came from the tip, and exploded, sending a shock wave, laying everything flat in over a two mile radius

Schwenk flew backwards. His wrist cord fire into the cliff above the TAG.....saving his life....He now dangled eighty feet below the ledge. He pressed a button and the small motor whirred, lifting him up.

Lion-o ran out of the water and looked up in time to see Schwenk moving upwards, grabbing his sword; he sent a shot at the cord

The bolt narrowly missed the cord and Schwenk did not hand around.....he went quickly up and hauled himself over the ledge. The TAG was on its side. He righted it; the countdown had to start from five minutes again. He monitored the lion's progress. "No more tricks, lion...." he muttered

Lion-o growled and shoved his hand inside the claw shield, lifting his hand he shot one of the claws deep into the cliff and started climbing quickly

"Come on.....come on....." Schwenk muttered impatiently. The portal started to form. "One minutes thirty....." he glanced to the path. The lion was gone. "What??"

Lion-o looked up in time to see the portal, taking the sword he tossed it, directing it towards the TAG device

The human saw the sword embed itself in the rocks next to the TAG. He spun and fired twice where the

lion had thrown the sword from.

The sword roared and shot a beam of energy at the TAG shattering the device

"NOOOOOO!!!!!!!!" he went to grab the accursed sword. His ticket home had now gone.

With one push of his powerful legs, the lion vaulted over the edge and landed in a crouch a few feet from Schwenk

He swung his gun to the lion.

The lion roared and hit Schwenk with his shielded hand

He flew backwards and hit the escarpment wall. He fired three times. "I should've shot you back there....." he roared.

Lion-O used the claw shield to deflect the shots, "and I should have finished you"

"You fool.....destroying the portal changes nothing.....Claudus is a dead child....man.....anyway! He got to his feet.

"Not if you're dead, "Lion-O said and held out his hand, the sword removed itself from the rock and flew to its master palm

Schwenk kept the gun in front of him. "There'll be others!"

"Ever think that's why he decided to make that little law?"

Schwenk pondered. Then it hit him. "You'll tell Claudus....."

"Exactly"

He felt stick to the stomach. "You BASTARD!!!!" he fired and kept firing.

The sword came to life and put up a protective shield around the lion, Lion-O advanced on the human as the bullets bounced harmlessly off the shield, "you're out of bullets and out of options"

"Click, click, click....." the gun reported. In frustration he threw the gun and missed.

Lion-O growled and grabbed the human, "this time I'm not letting go"

"Mercy...." was all he could muster."You can't kill me in cold blood.....you're better than that...."

"When it comes to my own flesh and blood I would kill an entire army with my bare hands if I have too"

"Let me go....you'll see me or hear from me again.....I promise.....I can change.....I can....."

"you can die, that way I know for sure you'll never come back....ever, "he growled and placed his hand on top of Schwenk's head and started to squeeze, intent on crushing his skull

Schwenk was a gun kind of man, always had been. With his skull bones creaking he put his hand on the handle on his stiletto dagger. Lion-O was focussed on Schwenk's demise, Schwenk dagger was firmly embedded in Lion-O's stomach. All four inches of it.

The lion instantly released his prey; he looked down at the dagger then at Schwenk in shock

Schwenk slid away backwards on his arse, out of immediate danger. "Not as invincible as you make out....." he then raised his wrist cord, the titanium arrow aimed at his heart.”Any last words....." his head was hurting like a bitch.

"How about good bye, "he said as a sharp weapon sliced through the humans raised wrist

Schwenk stood in shock as he looked at his severed wrist on the floor. "What?"

"You should have known I would never come completely alone Schwenk," lion-O said holding onto his stomach

Schwenk looked from side to side. "Who?" he cradled his bleeding stump to his chest.

"I told Lion-O. If I seen you again, I’d kill you," Leanna said coming out from the shadows

"You?" he hissed, his eyes narrowed. "The unfaithful bitch of a lioness.....did you tell Lord Lion-O about us?? Maybe that's why you wanted me so dead.....to be forever silent on our....tryst....."

The lioness narrows her eyes, "I have no idea what you are talking about monkey"

"What a night that was Lion-O.....clearly your lioness likes a bit of rough!!" he laughed

"Lea?" lion-O question looking at his cousin. She shot Schwenk a harsh look

He simply flashed a grin.....knowing he was sowing future seeds of discord.

"I don't him," Leanna snapped, "until he tried to kill Claudus, I never seen him before"

"She slept with me.....who knows....maybe she carries a future generation of Schwenk....." he laughed.

"You only wish, "the lioness snorted

"He's fading fast, lioness.....you have a choice.....slay me or save him.....A real toughie.....but I think his kids need him more than the grave needs me!"

The lioness looked at both men, she knew the human was right, "you'll bleed to death anyway, "she said and went to the lion's side.”Kill him," Lion-O growled. "I have the feeling we will meet again, "she said looking at Schwenk

"I'll put it on my 'to do list'....." he sneered

"Don’t let him go," Lion-O said weakly

"Clock's ticking, hunny...."

Leanna picked up her weapon and stalked towards the human, her gaze intense, he mouth fixed in a snarl

"Fine.....see me die....then him.....Good choice....not!"

"He will live, "she said and put the sharp edge of her weapon under Schwenk’s chin and lifted his head, "although you will not"

"You're wrong.....He needs immediate treatment...." the confidence in his voice suddenly absent.

Leanna moved so she was nearly nose to nose with the human, her eyes dark and cold, "where do you want your body sent"

"I beg you.....spare me.....Claudus needs his father more than ever now....."

The lioness was serious, "no where? I guess you'll rot right here, "she growled and in a flash had her teeth latched onto Schwenk throat crushing his windpipe and cutting off his air supply

His body jerked and struggled, no air would go to his lungs.....In desperation he clawed at the lioness' face.

Leanna growled and clamped her jaw down tighter as she shoved him against the rock wall

He pushed his hands out, string to push her away, he was fading fast.

Leanna stayed her ground if he pushed her too far, she would rip out his throat in the process

Tears streamed from his eyes. He looked into her heart, begging her to stop.

The lioness all of a sudden stopped and let go, "what in the hell?" she said confused

His remaining hand clamped over his neck wound. He breathed in ragged gasps.

"But how?"She questioned, "how is this possible?" She said shaking her head, there was a slight thread of recognition with the human

"If...I...die.....you'll.....never know!" he warned

If anything the lioness had a strong sense of curiosity, which mostly got her in over her head, but she had to know, "go, get out of here" she said wiping the blood from her lips

"We'll meet again...." he spoke through a scarred blood soaked neck. He stood and looked into the eyes of Lion-O.

"I don't know what you did to her, but I will get even with you," Lion-O said

He whispered as he walked past. "Make sure you tuck Claudus in nice and tight.....every night....."

"Bastard," Lion-o spat before passing out

Schwenk disappeared into the night. He was trapped in his past now and undoubtedly public enemy number one. Now he was forever going to live on his wits.

The lioness stayed with Lion-O until, Tygra arrived with the Thunderstrike. Once they got him on board they went back home, Leanna glanced back at the rocks where the human had stood, her mind racing with millions of questions.

In a dark, filthy tavern in the dark, filthy part of the city the dishevelled human sat poring over the remains of the TAG. It could be rebuilt.....eventually. His metal hook rested on the table, the stump underneath burned as it always did. He drank some rum, the burn never enough to take away his pain.

Under the dirty scarf his neck was a mess. He would forever bear the scars of a throat attack. It hurt, it disfigured and it affected his speech. The lioness would pay....as would Lion-O. But first was Claudus.....