King's Legacy

Chapter 3: The Shattered Darkness

By ashrhinos and ladyleatc

The cold rain on the window that rattled draughtily in its frame. The wind outside managed to flicker and sway the candle flame that sat perched on the wooden desk inside the filthy bedsit room in the wrong part of the city. Across from the desk was a rickety bed with thin sheets and even thinner pillow. The sheets and pillow were stained with grime, sweat and dried blood. Inside the bed was the shell of a human being, a husk, a remnant of something that once was.

Gaston Schwenk was huddled under the sheet for some crumb of warmth in a cold, damp room. It had only been two months since his attempt on the life of Claudus failed. He'd been set-up, the assassination failed, his escape had failed and now his life was failing fast. His previous life of hitman, assassin was over. His trigger finger was attached to his right hand that was long gone. The pain in the stump raged on, unabated. He had been given some pain meds at the local dropout clinic, but alcohol worked well; hard drugs worked better. Schwenk was a recluse in his filthy hovel, but only partly by choice. Since the assassination attempt, capture and release Lion-O redoubled his efforts in capturing this cold, heartless individual who would slay his first-born. Leanna was responsible for his release, he didn't know why she'd done that, his life was in the palm of her hand and Lion-O, her Lord and master was roaring for the coup de grace was simply ignored. Leanna had spared his life, for what it was now worth. Schwenk wished for death on a daily basis. As well as his stump, Schwenk bore the scars on his throat where the lioness had buried her fangs, when she was minded to exterminate him. He had difficulty in swallowing and his speech was more sibilant now. Then there was his head. In the fight with Lion-O, just before he embedded his dagger in the lion's soft intestines, Lion-O had started crushing his head. There was constant pain in the left part of his face and he had suffered a fractured jaw. Something else that made eating, drinking, talking…..living, difficult.

On top of the desk were the remains of the TAG device, the Temporal Anomaly Gateway. Shattered by Lion-O, it was now useless in its current state. Schwenk needed parts, but even more critically, he needed to locate the designer to help repair it. He would be here in the city, somewhere, eighteen years younger than when Schwenk knew him, but here nonetheless. But the daily security sweeps made any exploration impossible. Whilst death seemed an easy way out at times, he did not want to die at the hand of Lion-O, because that death would now no longer be swift and merciful. Besides, Claudus still

lived and Schwenk still knew how to end life, even if that had become so much harder now. He had a goal, he had a focus. Schwenk got up to urinate. He looked at the stranger in the mirror. He was thin, painfully thin. Mostly due to lack of food to eat, but the drugs in his body played their part too. His black hair was lank and fell submissively to his shoulders. He gaunt countenance was covered by a black beard that filled the hollows of his cheeks. His eyes were starting their gradual sink into their sockets. Unless things changed soon he would be as dead as his right hand and Claudus would live.

It was gone midnight, the candles were out. Schwenk shuffled out of the room and downstairs to the communal bathroom. He walked back and entered the pitch black room and locked himself in.

A figure stood waiting in the corner of the room, covered by the blackness.

He fumbled for a match, struck it and lit and candle. He screamed and fell back against the door. It was her, his nemesis.

"Figured this place looked like a place you'd slink off too," Leanna said moving from the corner.

"What do you want?" he eyed the blade in the scabbard. "Come to finish me off.....slice by slice....." he moved closer to the flame. "Look at what you did....look at your handiwork! Proud of yourself are we?" he hissed with venom

"Frankly...yes," she smirked, "see it's just like this, Lion-O is very upset that I let you walk away and I'm here to fix that little problem"

"Figures.....well...you needn't waste the energy.....you've killed me already.....nice and slow, like.....how could you be so cruel....." he was getting tearful. "I don't deserve this...." he waved around the filthy room."Or this...." the wrist stump. "Or even this!!" he removed his neck scarf, showing the horrific wound.

"And a young boy doesn't deserve to die," The lioness snapped

"He does! You just wait another eighteen years....."

"Who are you to judge, who should live or who should die, you're nothing but a hired thug"

"Well...you're here in judgement now....so I guess anyone can judge.....Claudus will die.....not if.....when...." he snarled.

"I'm here because it's my job to Protect Lion-O and his family; I am part of those who uphold the law"

"Well.....how long have you known I was here?"

"A while"

"Then why wait? Why not storm this place with a dozen guards.....why not drag me to the feet of Lion-O?"

"I do not need guards with me, "Leanna snorted, "I am very capable of handling you on my own"

"We know that already....." his left hand was imperceptibly moving the handle on his side dagger. "...and I trust Lord Lion-O made a full recovery...."

"He is well, and if you move your one remaining hand another inch I shall remove that also"

He moved it back in front of him again."So....how does this pan out then?"

"Well not really much of a choice, I cannot allow you to live, you're too much of a threat"

"Really? What do you think I can do now?? I'm not left-handed, I'm in constant pain and.....oh....." he reached inside his pocket.

"Stop, right there, "Leanna warned holding her weapon at the ready

He lifted his hand and stump. "Inside pocket.....letter from the doctor.....go ahead.....take it...."

Leanna walked over, holding the tip of her blade against Schwenk's throat, she reached inside his pocket and removed the letter and stepped back.

He kept his arms up. "Go ahead.....read my death sentence....."

Leanna lit the candle on the table and opened the letter and started to read.

Schwenk started to reach for the knife again.

"Well looks like you're just up shit creek," Leanna smirked after reading the letter, "good thing I'm here now, I'll put you out of your misery"

He lunged at her with the dagger.

: Leanna dropped the letter and side stepped him, grabbing his wrist and twisting it behind his back,

"Are you stupid or just suicidal," she growled pinning him face first into the wall

"You deserve death for the cruelty you put me through.....at least Claudus would've died instantly.....take a good look at my throat.....you tried to kill me like an animal....."

"You are an animal," She growled in his ear

"You think?" he focused his mind on what he saw as Leanna tried to choke him with her teeth. He then thrust that into her mind.

The lioness gasped and slammed his head into the wall, "Stop that" she warned, "you tried to take the life of an innocent child, and that does not go well in my books"

He focussed on Claudus.....it was the view from the gun sight as he fired. He thrust it into the lionesses mind.

: "ok, that's it, "she snarled and took the dagger from his hand and held it too his throat, "do it again and you're dead"

He was so tempted, but held off. "So what's the deal? Execute me or get another job? Bully boy Lion-O up to his usual tricks??"

"I want to know how the hell you get into my head" Leanna snapped, "that's the only reason you're still breathing"

"Well....not much of an incentive for a quick reply....." he croaked

"Fine, let's go visit Tygra, I'm sure he'll find out how, he's very good with minds"

"Fuck you....." the hatred clear in his eyes.

Leanna just smirked and grabbed a length of cord and tied Schwenk's arms at his back at the elbows,

"come on monkey, looks like you get to live a few more hours"

"No....wait....." the anger was gone, now it was fear. He was begging.

The lioness grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and pushed him towards the door

"Please...." he cried

"Please what?"

"I'll tell you....please....don't take me to them....I'll be nothing more than a lab rat with an expiry date...."

"So" Leanna shrugged, "am I suppose to care and take pity on a child killer"

"Where's the child killer?? If you remember....nobody died!"

"Not from the lack of trying," Leanna growled

"I'm no killer.....and if this was justice they'd see that.....you're ruled by fear and lies.....I've killed....nobody..."

"Only because we stopped you, tell me how do you live with yourself, how can you sleep at night"

"Easily.....I have a clear conscience....."

"So someone's life is just another coin in your pocket?"

"We all have jobs....."

"And I'm doing mine," She said pushing him out the door

"But....I thought you wanted to know....." he flashed another image.....this time of Leanna in eighteen years time.

"Doesn't look much different"

"Oh you think do you?? Where do you think you were? What was your job??"

"Still doing the same as I've always done...protecting the people who live here," she lied, truth was, what she saw disturbed her

"You weren't a Thundercat....so stop lying....." he flashed another image. This one was the lioness living in a small room, not unlike Schwenk's one now.

"It's all lies," she snapped

"I can flash into your mind and you know what? I can extract.....that's right....I'm reading your mind right

now...." he cackled.

Leanna growled and pushed him away from her, "stay the hell out of my head"

""So.....going to kill me now?" he leered. Of course, whilst he was showing Leanna a future.....it wasn't the future.

"How do I know you're just not making this up to confuse me?"

"You don't.....its called trust.....So use that sword now....or leave me to die of natural causes....."

"I can't let you go" Leanna said quietly

"Sure you can....." he stepped one pace back.”Go on then.....use the sword.....or maybe you'd prefer your teeth again....."

"No... I’m taking you to the others"

"Oh no you're not.....he took three steps back and in a flash kicked the bedroom door shut. With a click it locked. He started to burn at the bindings with the candle flame.

On the other side of the door, Leanna growled and started kicking the door, the first two kicks made the door crack

The bindings snapped. He picked up the knife and backed himself into the corner.

On the third kick the door flew open; the lioness spotted Schwenk in the corner and launched herself at him

He held the knife out in front of him. "I'm not going to them.....never....I'd rather die....."

"Then die, "she roared knocking into the human

His feeble framed was winded and he fell to the floor. His dagger fell to the floor. His left hand reached for it.

"No you don't," Leanna said and head butted the human and reached for the dagger

He clutched his face, blinded in agony.

Leanna grabbed the dagger and tossed it across the room, she then punched Schwenk hard intent on knocking him out

He fell to the floor. "MERCY!!!!" he croaked

The lioness froze in mid swing

He bawled with tears. "Mer....cy...."he covered his face waiting for the death blow.

"If I kill you, then I am no better then a hired thug also"

"Don't you dare take me to them.....don't....."

"There is no other way, I have to" she said pulling Schwenk to his feet, "or you will have to kill me to get past me"

"One hand...no knife.....riiight.....Ans what do you think they'll do to me, huh???"

"That’s not my problem"

"I can make it your problem....."

"I highly doubt that"

"Don't push it lioness.....I can put terrible things in your mind....."

"If you can read my mind then you'll know exactly what I will do if you do that"

"That's really no threat....." he focussed this time on an image of Leanna's parents.

"No, don't you dare" Leanna warned

"Then promise me you won't hand me over....." his eyes narrowed.

"I can't do that...i just can't walk away"

"Last chance....." he growled.

"It goes against everything I stand for, I can't"

"Fine!" he spat. He rammed an image into Leanna's mind. It was a transport; it had crashed and was on fire. He stopped. "Do it or I will continue”?

"These images mean nothing if you cannot carry them out" she said standing firm

"So be it....." the image moved and the contents were shown. Leanna's parents were both dead, killed in the crash. With them a small child, also killed in the crash.

"Stop it, "she roared and slammed her fist with all her strength into the humans jaw

It broke again. He screamed in pain.

"Who was that child," She demanded to know

“Your.....your daughter....."

"What! That’s bull, I have no children"

"It's in the future....." he sighed, his broken jaw raged. "You find a mate.....a tiger.....Claudus is lion clan leader and disapproves of cross-clan mating.....you're expelled from the Thundercats.....then you become pregnant.....you're ....you're expelled from the lion clan....."

Leanna just looked at him in disbelief, "what caused the crash?"

"You won't believe me....."

"Try me"

"It was merely an accident.....after you lost your job and position in the clan.....you were destitute.....you and the child moved into the home of your parents. The three of them were out for a drive when the accident happened....."

"How do you know this?" she growled leaning closer

"Because.....because it was in the media shortly after....."

"No...You were there in person, the images are too clear....you did this," The lioness roared

"No, no.....I swear....It was nothing to do with me...." he lied.

"You are either lying about the whole thing or you were involved"

"I'm not lying....." he lied

Leanna looked at him, her insides were boiling with rage, "Animal, "she growled and grabbed a handful of his hair and sharply pulled his head back, in an instant she clamped her jaw firmly over his windpipe

"No....." his words were clamped off and, oh, the pain! He knew that there would be no reprieve this time. He knew he had one last roll of the dice. He focussed his mind, not random thoughts or objects.....but his very being, his soul. He knew where the target was, he'd already checked. Before he blacked out he sent forth all he had. Some passed through Leanna's mind on the way through.

The lioness was blinded by rage; she could feel the human's life slowly slip away

Schwenk died whilst still clamped between Leanna's blood-soaked jaws.

Once the human was dead, she released her prey and sat back and let out a long loud roar of anger, pain and remorse, "what have I done?"She questioned herself; she had just taken a life

Schwenk fell over, clutching his throat. He roared in anguish, and then stopped; his foreign hands felt his neck. Nothing.

the taste of human blood left a bitter taste in the lioness's mouth, she stood and went into the bathroom and washer her face, taking a handful of water she rinsed out her mouth, she couldn't look at herself in the mirror, switching the light off, she went back into the room, the air heavy with the smell of death and freshly spilled blood, she sat down on the side of the bed and took out her comms, "The human is dead, "Was all she said then sat and waited for the others to come.