

Pride Lands Flyover: Lion Guard Returns

by

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The Lion Guard returns...with a twist

by Ripoti Egret, son of Keefu

The second-in-line to the throne at Pride Rock has resurrected the protectors of the Pride Lands and Circle of Life's defenders at long last...with a bizarre surprise:

The new Guard is barely adolescent and consists of only one lion.

But yesterday in the Great Northern Reserve, the new team proved successful and triumphed despite the odds.

For reasons unknown, a terrifying ambush upon a herd of gazelles by a clan of outsider hyenas led by corrupt leader Janja almost left the Pride Lands being thrown into chaos.

Then Prince Kion, the son of Simba and second born Royal, intervened with his fresh assembled members of the new Guard - not with lions as per tradition, but a honey badger, hippopotamus, egret, and cheetah - and they made short work of the hyenas by using each of their superior skills to drive the wild dogs out of the Pride Lands.

But more heroics were to follow.

Following the ambush, the first-in-line to the throne, Princess Kiara, was unexpectedly caught in the danger zone of a stampede by the attacked herd of gazelles - undoubtedly fleeing in terror after the ambush - and it was thought that she would have been lost.

But her life was saved thanks to a gutsy effort from Bunga the honey badger, who, with Fuli the cheetah's assistance, braved the deadly hooves and used his scent glands to repel the gazelles away from the 'buffer zone' surrounding Kiara...much to the Princess's surprise!

Witnessing the whole event, King Simba declared that it was officially time for the Lion Guard.

It has been 7 years since The Lion Guard has been seen or existed, no thanks to the late and dark Prince Scar, who, before he usurped the throne after murdering his late great brother Mufasa, destroyed them by abusing his power as leader of the Guard.

Now for the first time since then, Kion has officially brought the team back.

Blissfully, this new leader is not showing any reminiscence of his dark predecessor.

According to tradition, the Lion Guard is made up of the Pride Land's Fiercest, Bravest, Fastest, Strongest, and Keenest Of Sight - the Fiercest being at the helm. Together, the five protect the Pride Lands and defend the Circle of Life.

The special skill of the Fiercest is the Roar of the Elders, where the Great Kings of the Past appear in the form of clouds and loudly roar along with the leader in times of needed defence from evil.

The decibels of the roar is certainly deafening as it is deadly to anyone of the wrong end of it.

Kion's choice of the teammates proved an initial shock to his King father, who knew that it was tradition for the Lion Guard to be made of lions only.

"I asked him to assemble the new Lion Guard, and when I saw who he had recruited, it looked like he was just playing a game with his friends." Simba told the Flyover last night. "I got the impression that he was not taking his responsibility seriously."

He added that he was not sure if his son was ready because he was still just a cub.

"I did hear him perform [the Roar of the Elders] early yesterday morning, and then [wise shaman of the Pride Lands] Rafiki informed me that it was time for him to take the reigns. I was certain that I needed more time to prepare him because he was still only young and not entirely mature as yet.

"The reality is that it is a big responsibility and that pressure might be too much for a barely-adolescent cub to handle.

"Clearly, he proved me wrong yesterday.

"I was very impressed with their efforts and I am now sure that this team is the perfect fit for the Lion Guard."

He added that he saw a lot of the wisdom of his late father Mufasa in his son, and concluded that Kion is mature enough to be a leader.

Speaking at a press conference at Pride Rock last night, The Royal Prince said that he knew what he was doing and did not regret his decision to go beyond tradition.

"After a few years exploring the Pride Lands and really getting to know all the animals here, I had an immediate inkling of who I knew would fit the mould." Kion stated.

"Don't get me wrong, our pride of lions had plenty of depth in terms of vital skills for the Guard, but I thought that by choosing a variety of animals instead, it would provide an element of surprise for our enemies and, therefore, would catch them off guard and give the opening for us to capitalise on their mistakes.

"Also, the fact that all of us are only young would give us a further angle against the opposition.

"I think that goes to show that it is wise not to judge an individual of their skills or intellect by their age. I knew that we were all skilful and smart enough for the job."

He added, however, that he was initially hesitant about his decisions after Simba scolded him for his choice of teammates, but regained faith after guidance from the spirit of his late grandfather.

"I was not sure that dad was going to let me lead the Guard because I could see that he was worried that I could not handle it.

"But then I met my grandfather Mufasa for the first time. He appeared in spirit in the skies and told me to trust my instincts and know that he would always be there to guide me until the Pride Lands' end.

"There was no need to wonder after that. The choice was made and I affirmed that it was time."

He then explained what he saw in his chosen members, adding that they had more than what they were chosen for.

"Bunga [the honey badger] and I go back a bit, so we know each other well. He is very enthusiastic with a lot of energy but very friendly at the same time. I think these attributes come from his adopted uncles Timon [the meerkat] and Pumbaa [the warthog].

He added with amusement the less-appealing attribute that Bunga 'inherited' from one of his uncles.

"He certainly takes after Pumbaa in the flatulence department with his powerful scent, as is the key defence mechanism of the honey badger.

"But he is not afraid to tackle any job and is willing to get himself in perilous situations to get it done. He is without a doubt the bravest animal I know.

"Besthe [the hippopotamus] is so strong he can move heavy rocks, and when he crashes into animals smaller than him and sends them flying, it is like being hit by a moving vehicle going at top speed.

"Even though she can act semi-seriously stubborn at times, no one in the Pride Lands is faster than Fuli [the cheetah]. There is no escaping once she catches up and backs you into a corner, where justice is then to be served.

"He hasn't just got radar vision, but Ono [the egret] is very intellectual and would make for the perfect advisor when going about solving a problem.

"All in all, their special abilities stand out for themselves. They are a not just willing allies, but great friends. I could not ask for anything more."

Though proud of an impressive debut, Kion says that the new formed Guard will not get distracted by priding themselves too much as they have an important agenda to keep.

"The important thing was that the Guard was finally assembled, and we proved ourselves worthy of defending the Circle of Life.

"That was only our first assignment, however, and there will be plenty of others to follow, so we have to stay focused.

"Whether it will be fighting enemies who are against the Circle of Life, or helping out our allies whenever they are in need, as the Lion Guard, it is our responsibility and we are not prepared to back down from anything."

The Guard is currently busy training in preparation for the upcoming tasks concerned with defending the delicate balance of life.

About the author

Ripoti, son of Keefu is an egret who has worked with The Flyover in Kenya since his arrival from his original home in 2012. A former reporter for The Zambezi Gazette in Lower Zambezi National Park, Zimbabwe, Ripoti flies daily around the Pride Lands to report on all current events.