

POST WITH REFERENCES

Overall story

The AU's story takes place many generations after the events of The Lion King films. The Pridelands, once the home of a bloodline of great kings, would expand to cover the majority of the land, and later split following years long conflict between Mufasa's descendants, who claimed their parts of the territory and formed their own prides. The Pride Rock became a historic monument, now occupied by Mjuzis who ensure that its history is preserved.

Many years passed, and new conflict is brewing on the horizon. Anyanwu (The Radiance), blinded by the revelation of her connection to Mufasa's bloodline, has grown mad with her obsession of uniting the prides and resurrecting the Pride Lands, with her as the queen. Her physical strength, and most notably her resemblance to the old bloodline of kings gained her a group of followers, and with time, they began attacking other prides and assimilating them into their own, known as the Sun Pride. The most recent wave of attacks has left her seriously injured, bringing a short period of peace to the lands. However, it is only a matter of time before she regains her strengths and resumes her mission.

Characters (in order of appearance):

(Grimm) Daathari / Mwenda ("to destroy" / "one who loves; traveler")

Anyanwu's younger brother, recognized for his flirty and teasing nature. They intended to rule the pride together once their parents passed, however, once they reached early adulthood, Daathari was exiled from the pride by his sister after insinuating her ambitions are madness, and attempting to interrupt her plans; the faded scars serve as a reminder of his defeat. He left the territory and wandered alone, occasionally bumping into other prides and getting into trouble - he was no stranger to charming and even seducing other lions, males or females. He lived the life of a nomadic lion, until one day he met Inaya, a lioness from the local pride. Daathari felt enamoured by the lioness, he found her good heart and optimistic attitude charming, and the two soon fell in love and left to start their own small pride, which slowly grew as they welcomed newcomers in need. It was then that he

took a new name, Mwenda, to separate himself from his past. This was his new life, he had a purpose

Unfortunately, his happiness was short-lived, as Inaya died from complications after giving birth to their cubs, from which only Nuru survived. Mwenda was heartbroken, his whole life fell apart in such a short moment, and he started isolating himself from the rest of the pride. He realized, however, that Nuru needed him, his mate lived on through him, and even though looking at him brought him pain, Mwenda promised himself he would raise the cub with love like she would've wanted him to. Sadly, things would only get worse, as terrible illness has struck their pride, forcing him to leave with the cub in order to protect him. They became nomads, traveling between different territories and seeking shelter in unclaimed lands. That was when he met Amadi and his two cubs, who, as it turned out, were also wandering without a pride. After a short growling match, the two realized that neither of them had ill intentions, and that sticking together would be beneficial to the cubs. So they decided to travel together, and as days and weeks passed, the two lions started getting along very well.

Mwenda was still struggling with his grief, but Amadi's soft and approachable nature helped him open up, and as time went on, they grew closer and closer until they both realized they had feelings for each other. Mwenda's personality would also shine through the pain once again - he started showing his teasing and charismatic nature more often, now directed at his new mate, who he began feeling incredibly attached to. The pale lion helped him realize that there was still a chance for him to love and to find joy, and that Inaya wouldn't have wanted for him to torture himself like this. The two lions would eventually settle in an unclaimed territory far away from their original prides, and start their own small family pride, becoming parents to all three of the cubs. Just like in his previous pride, Mwenda was very welcoming to strangers in need, offering them a place in the pride if they contributed to it.

(Lewk) Nuru ("light")

The only surviving cub of Mwenda and Inaya, now the adoptive son of Amadi. Despite the tragic circumstances of his birth, Nuru is a little bundle of joy, he's extremely curious about the world, though his young age and lack of experience make him very naive. However, he avoids trouble as he doesn't want his father to worry, and for a youngling like him, he is already very responsible. When he met Amadi, Desta and Tamu, he became immediately interested in the two cubs, and not

even a day later he already proclaimed them as his little siblings. When the two lions decided to travel together, Nuru was overjoyed at the prospect of having other cubs to play with. Moreover, he's grown very attached to Amadi despite only knowing him for a short time, suggesting that he really needed a second parent in his life. He has no memory of his mother, but he has some idea what happened for her to be absent in his life and wishes she was also there as part of the family.

(Asta) Desta ("joy")

The older of the twins, and the intended heir to the pride before she left it with her twin brother and father. Her brown fur, as surprising as it may be judging by the coats of her parents, was inherited from her grandparents on Amadi's side. She's a very energetic cub, with a big tendency to get in trouble, but an even bigger heart. She loves her little brother and would always protect him from the other cubs from the pride who bullied him, which got her in a lot of fights and gave her the reputation of a troublemaker. She felt very uneasy with the prospect of becoming the future queen of the pride, and would often run from her training sessions, much to her mother's exasperation. All she wanted was to be with her brother, she did not care for her responsibilities. After leaving the pride with his father, she tried her best to help catch food for Tamu, and she would often bring him little rodents to eat, already showing her future hunting skills. She was the first one to spot Mwenda and Nuru, and the first one to growl at them to scare them off. Despite that rough start, she gets along with them very well, especially Mwenda whom she finds very funny.

(Milo) Tamu ("sweet one")

The younger of the twins, he's a pale cub with a frail physique and a grumpy look on his face. He was immediately rejected by Sabra as a potential heir due to his weak condition. He became very close to his father, who insisted on giving him a name with an affectionate meaning despite what Sabra suggested. Tamu has struggled to keep up with his sister from the start, but he was lucky enough to have a loving father and the rest of the pride's lionesses who were willing to look after him, and so he was able to survive his early days. However, his clumsiness and lack of charisma made him the object of bullying from the other cubs in the pride, and so he grew to be very grumpy and pessimistic about everything. He was the last one to give Mwenda and Nuru a chance, seeing them as strange intruders who shouldn't be

trusted, but the other lion managed to eventually win him over. He's still very close with Amadi, he's drawn to him whenever he feels sad or insecure, though he doesn't reject Mwenda's attempts at showing him care.

(Vyrn) Amadi ("seemed destined to die at birth")

A chubby lion with a somewhat short posture. He was born as the runt of the litter, the only pale cub of the bunch, and his parents immediately assumed he would not survive for long. And while he surprised them by making it against the odds, it did not change their attitude towards him. He was the only pale lion in the pride, and legends told of a pride of pale lions that once terrorized a distant land; consequently, a lot of the elders saw him as a bad omen, which carried over to how he was seen by his peers and even his family. While he was never directly chased away, he could tell they didn't want him in the pride, and so he left as soon as he reached early adulthood.

He was hoping that he would finally find someone who would accept him for his appearance, and so it was to his immense surprise when he ventured into the territory of the Moon Pride led by a pale lioness, Sabra, whose right paw was another pale lioness. He never expected to meet anyone else like him, so he tried very hard to earn the pride's trust and was eventually welcomed into it. He believed that he fell in love with the queen of the pride, who seemed to return his feelings, and so he became her mate. Unfortunately, he would not be given the privileges of being the king. It didn't take her long to show her true colors - she was cold and fixated on survival of the fittest, and with his gentle nature and the fear of confrontation, she believed he wasn't of much use to her. She was never cruel to him, he will give her that, but she seemed to always dismiss his opinion and assign him duties such as cubsitting or hunting with the lionesses.

Their first cub, named Bakari, was intended to be the heir to the pride, but Amadi tried his best to be there for them in the time between their royal lessons. Unfortunately, he wasn't brave enough to stand up to Sabra and protect them from her harsh words and discipline. It is this quality that created a rift between him and his second child, Kiburi, born from a dalliance between him and Mkali, the queen Ash Pride. He was pressured into the act for diplomatic reasons, to strengthen the alliance between the two prides. He tried his best to be a good father to Kiburi, but as she grew up, she started to see him as weak and pathetic.

The battle with the Sun Pride, first initiated by the betrayal of one of the pride's warriors, Nyoka, was the turning point in the Moon Pride - Bakari was deemed no longer suitable to be the heir due to their major injuries, including the loss of their voice, and the pride lost many of its warriors. Amadi himself fought in the battle, protecting his daughter from Nyoka and giving him the large scar he is now recognized by. Sabra became even more nervous and irritable after this battle, as she was left without an heir. By the time the twins were born not that long after, Amadi was tired of being treated as nothing more than a pawn in her game. Her treatment of the cubs, in particular Tamu, was the last straw. He already saw the future of Tamu as the outcast of the pride rejected by his own mother, it reminded him too much of his own childhood, and the pressure put on Desta to be the future heir was clearly too much for her, and yet, Sabra didn't see it. So in a moment of silent anger, Amadi took the cubs and left the pride under the cover of the night. It was irresponsible, but he couldn't bear the thought of watching them meet the same fate as Bakari.

They wandered away from the pride's territory, making sure to avoid patrols and other prides. The cubs were old enough to survive on solid food, and thankfully, his involvement in the hunting parties made Amadi a good hunter. Not long after, they met a stranger lion with a cub - Mwenda and Nuru. They eventually decided to travel together, as two adult lions would protect the cubs better than just one. A few days later, they were found by Kiburi and Bakari, who shared that they were sent to look for him by Sabra, but decided to disobey her orders and stay. Amadi was happy to see them, though he felt he had to apologize for the years of standing back and letting Sabra mistreat both of them, especially Bakari, who was later given a new name by him - Mbali. The whole group eventually settled in an unclaimed land, far away from the Moonlands, becoming a small family pride - the Dawn Pride, symbolizing the beginning of a new era for all of them.

(The White Lady) Sabra ("patient")

The queen of the Moon Pride, a cold and distant lioness with ice cold eyes, who struggles to show empathy even to those closest to her. Her parents died when she was still a small cub, leaving the pride in utter chaos without a leader, with many bloody battles between pretenders to the crown. She was raised by her aunt, who protected her from any attempts at her life. As she grew into a young adult, she challenged the new leader to a fight for the throne that belonged to her, and defeated him. The strength and intelligence she displayed during that fight made her

a very respected, and even feared queen, but it did not seem to bother her. Her rules were strict but clear, and anyone who broke them would be exiled. The very last thing she needed was other lions conspiring to take the throne from her.

The events of her childhood made her especially paranoid about having no heir, and with the threat of the Sun Pride, she realized that she needed to raise her offspring to be strong enough to defend themselves. She struggled to find a suitable mate to be the father of her heir, until one day a pale lion named Amadi was caught trespassing on her territory. He seemed strong, and his interest in her did not go unnoticed by her. She allowed him to stay, it meant she could observe him and decide if he was suitable; the feelings he seemed to have for her only solidified her decision. Most importantly, she quickly found that he would not be an issue - he was very non-confrontational, and thus easy to order around to do as she pleased. His kind nature in her eyes was a weakness, but she believed he was a good lion, and so she did the bare minimum to treat him well. Not long after, their first cub was born, whom she named Bakari - he (or rather they as it later turned out) would be her successor and protect the pride from harm. Or so she hoped, until they were greatly injured in a battle and left without a voice. In her eyes, that made them not suitable to be the ruler of the pride, it needed a lion who would be strong enough to protect it, and Bakari was no longer fit for that role. She still loved them, in her own way, and while her obsession with having an heir came from a place of concern for the well-being of the pride, and by extension her family, it unfortunately made her neglect their emotional needs and reject them.

She felt no love for the cub born from the dalliance between Amadi and Mkali. It was not her blood, her existence was only for diplomatic reasons, and she was not a threat - Kiburi was going to be the queen of the Ash Pride, after all. And when the twins, Desta and Tamu, were born, she treated the latter just as she treated Bakari - he was not fit for the throne, so she wouldn't waste time on him. She nursed them for a short time, and then moved that responsibility onto other lionesses in the pride, and Amadi, who had nothing better to do anyways. Desta was her focus, she was a strong cub, and had the potential to be a good queen if raised with discipline. She had no idea Amadi opposed that strategy, so she was shocked and infuriated when one day he disappeared with both cubs. She sent search parties his way, but somehow he managed to escape them. Then, she turned to Kiburi (who was staying in the pride following the disappearance and presumed death of Mkali) to search for them. Kiburi insisted Bakari went with her, claiming that his bird companion, Fumu, would scout the air to aid with the search. Sabra, unaware of Kiburi's intentions, agreed to the idea. And that was the last time she's seen all of her children.

Or so she thought. Soon after, it turned out she was pregnant with Amadi's cub. There was still a chance for an heir, and when the little cub was born, she became extremely dedicated to raising them just the way she wanted to, with no interruptions from Amadi. She named the cub Akono, for it was its turn to be the future heir. And this time, she knew she would be ready for the Sun Pride, as she continued forming alliances with the neighboring prides.

(Ghost) Akono ("it is my turn")

The youngest cub of Amadi and Sabra, born after the former left the pride. They never met their father or their other siblings, and they're still too young to be separated from their mother. Time will tell what their personality is going to be like, but what is certain is that without Amadi to get in the way, they will undoubtedly grow up to be the heir Sabra wanted.

(Holly) Bakari / Mbali ("one who will succeed" / "flower")

The firstborn cub of Amadi and Sabra. Born a male cub, they realized at a young age that they felt at odds with what they were perceived as. They did not feel like a male lion, nor a lioness, but something outside of those labels. It was unusual, but Amadi was supportive, and Sabra did not seem to mind. They grew up split between the two parents and their views - Amadi wanted them to be kind and empathetic, he believed they had a good heart and that they would be a good ruler of the pride. Sabra, on the other hand, wanted them to be a warrior so that they were able to defend themselves and the pride. They saw good points on both sides of the argument, and so they tried to maintain a balance. More than anything, they wanted to make their parents proud, and to protect the pride once it was their time to take the throne. It hurt them when Amadi didn't intervene when Sabra's words hurt their confidence, but they shouldered it, convinced it would make them stronger.

Unfortunately, a sudden attack from the Sun Pride would forever bury their future plans. They were targeted by Akello, Anyanwu's strongest warrior, and greatly injured. His claws slashed their body, including their throat, leaving them unable to speak afterwards, and their right eye, blinding them. Bakari was saved by their pride's warriors at the last moment, and taken to the healer of the pride. They were in

terrible condition, but they were able to recover. However, the wounds were crippling, on top of the damage to their voice and eye, they couldn't walk without limping due to the severe injuries to their shoulder. Long story short, they were no longer suitable to rule the pride, their scars made them too vulnerable to attack, and they became scared of confrontation, just like their father. And what broke their heart even further was that their mother suddenly pushed them to the side, refusing to even talk to them, as if she was ashamed of their failure. They became a loner, spending most of the time with their father and the pride lionesses, but they struggled with most tasks given to them. They were unable to hunt, cubsitting was difficult as they couldn't keep up with the cubs, and their inability to talk made things even more difficult. They felt like a burden to the pride, and they believed they brought shame to their parents, even though Amadi was always supportive.

One day, while wandering around the savanna, they found a bird hidden in the grass. Once the bird realized he was discovered, he began shouting angrily at Bakari, throwing insults and trying to make them go away. However, the lion didn't budge, and instead they stared at the bird's wings, noticing that one of them seemed injured. They took the bird with them despite his protests, and later found out his name was Fumu. They helped him heal his wing injury, and over time they formed a bond, which made the bird stay with them even after his wing was healed. It was beneficial for both of them - Fumu had a good protector, he knew no predator would ever bother him with a lion around, and Bakari had someone who could help them communicate with the rest of the pride. Naturally, Fumu's rude personality meant that the communication wasn't always what Bakari had in mind, but it was better than nothing.

After the twins were born, Bakari found themselves relating to Tamu, the weaker of the cubs. Just like them, he was rejected by Sabra, found unfit to be an heir, and thus unworthy of her attention. The two weren't close, but Bakari liked spending time with him, they had at least one thing in common, even if the idea of being replaced so soon was a bit upsetting. However, they were not surprised when one day Amadi and the twins went missing, after all, they had many chances to hear what their father said about Sabra and her treatment of the cubs. When Kiburi approached them with her plan, they joined the "search mission" without hesitation. Their father was the only one they felt comfortable around, they had nothing else keeping them in the pride. When they found Amadi and the twins, Bakari was a little suspicious of the other lion at first, but seeing as their father seemed to trust him, they accepted him. Over time, as the group became a family pride, and Bakari got their new name, Mbali, they began seeing Mwenda as a friend, and later as a father

figure. He was compassionate and patient, and he seemed to genuinely love their father, so in Mbali's eyes, they might as well see him as family. They still deal with the feeling of being a burden, but the new life gave them an opportunity to see the brighter side of things.

(Zote) Fumu ("royalty")

A white-browed coucal, he's the bird companion of Mbali. The lion saved him from a wing injury, and Fumu decided to stick with them for protection. They became friends over time, though with Fumu's nasty personality it is sometimes difficult to see the friendship, as he tends to call them names. He has some trouble flying for long periods of time due to their past wing injury, but he still helps them scout the area and to communicate with others. Fumu never talks about his past, and it's difficult to say if it's because of its unpleasant nature, or if perhaps he finds it too boring to talk about. Judging by his personality, it is very likely that the name is something he gave himself, but he never brought that up.. What is known is that he believes to be much braver and successful than he really is. He can go on for hours talking about his accomplishment, most of which sound completely unachievable for a bird his size. Deep down, he's a coward who keeps everyone at a distance due to his unpleasant behavior, likely as a defense mechanism. He currently lives with the Dawn Pride, serving the role of a scout.

(Hornet) Kiburi ("pride")

The daughter of Amadi and Mkali, the queen of the Ash Pride. She's a quick-tempered young lioness, a very skilled hunter who spent her childhood traveling between the two prides as her parents were taking turns in raising her. She realizes she was born of diplomatic obligation, not love, which does sour her relationship with her father noticeably, though deep down she still loves him.

From a young age, Kiburi was rebellious and kept getting in trouble, especially during her stay in the Moon Pride. Her short temper made her get into fights with the other lion cubs, and so she wasn't liked among the pride. The Ash Pride had the reputation of being ruthless and unpredictable, which made it difficult for her to make friends, even ignoring her personality. She got along with Bakari quite well, but the two didn't see each other very often, since at the time, they were often gone on

royal lessons with their mother. Back in her mother's pride, she wasn't very lucky in regards to friendships either, mainly due to her frequent absence. She spent a lot of time away from the pride, so the other cubs made their own friend groups without her, and it was hard for her to assimilate.

In her teenage years, she realized she found Amadi's lack of confidence to be incredibly frustrating, especially whenever she got into verbal fights with Sabra. She thought he was a coward for just standing there and not defending her, even though she knew for sure that he agreed with her. This caused many arguments between them, where she insulted him and told him she knew that he never wanted her, not realizing how much her words hurt him.

However, during one of her stays in the Moon Pride, Anyanwu's pride attacked unexpectedly. The fight was bloody, with many lions and lionesses losing their lives. Kiburi would soon become one of them, as the traitor Nyoka specifically targeted her. She tried to get away, she realized she had no chance at winning the fight, until he cornered her. What she didn't expect, was her father jumping in her defense, and somehow beating Nyoka in the fight and chasing him away. He was wounded, it was the first time he ever did something like that to protect her, and she gained a lot more respect for him. She took him to the healer to treat his wounds, and apologized for her previous words.

She stayed in the Moon Pride for a long time afterwards, wanting to spend more time with her father and Bakari, whose wounds were even more severe. She eventually returned to her mother and told her what happened and why it took her so long to return. Unfortunately, the peace didn't last, and the Sun Pride attacked again, this time aiming to destroy the Ash Pride. Mkali urged Kiburi to run and warn her father, and not long after she reached the Moon Pride territory, the news of Mkali's death reached her. The Ash Pride was in shambles, many lives were lost, and some even deserted to join Anyanwu to save their lives. Kiburi knew she had nothing to go back to, she wasn't ready to take the position of the leader, especially of a pride that was in such a broken state. The news of her mother's death devastated her, and she sought comfort from her father.

More time passed, and the world welcomed her new half-siblings, Desta and Tamu. Kiburi was still saddened by the loss of her mother, and she struggled to assimilate into the Moon Pride. When Amadi and the twins disappeared, she immediately decided she wanted to follow him. As one of the best hunters of the pride, she was ordered by Sabra to search for him and bring him back, which she

found to be the perfect chance. She convinced Sabra to allow Bakari to go with her after sharing her plan with them, and then the two left. It was difficult to track down Amadi and the cubs, but eventually she found them.

Mwenda immediately irked her - when he wasn't moody and moping around, he cracked bad jokes and teased her about her hot-headedness. Worst of all, Amadi didn't seem to mind him, he even seemed to like him more and more with each day. Kiburi was furious and refused to give Mwenda a chance for a long time, seeing him as an outsider who would betray them when he saw fit. Over time, her anger passed, but she still refuses to acknowledge him as family. Thankfully, she's a lot less unpleasant to his cub, Nuru, though she still finds it difficult to completely trust him. After some time, she bumped into a pale lioness by the name of Zahra, the princess of a neighboring pride. She finds her smugness incredibly irritating, and yet she can't seem to get her out of her mind, which she's terrible at hiding.

(Irma) Inaya ("gift from God")

A lioness from the Black Marsh Pride, one of the nieces of its king. Ever since she was a cub, she was the dreamer type, constantly coming up with the wildest stories of adventure and heartbreak. Some of the cubs found her weird, others were fascinated by her imagination and loved whenever she came up with a thrilling story on the spot. Inaya loved to spend time with the pride elders, listening about their lives and what they experienced, and especially the myths and legends they were familiar with. One of her biggest dreams was to speak to a spirit of one of the Great Lions of the Past, though her low position in the pride meant she wasn't allowed to speak to the Royal Mjuzi. Nevertheless, she continued to come up with stories, some she even immortalized through paintings in the pride's cave.

Even though she was related to the king of the pride, her role was the same as any other lioness - her responsibility was to hunt and to look after the cubs of the pride. She wasn't exactly happy with the order of things, but she found that despite her duties she was still able to live in her own dream world. She thought of her possible futures, of her meeting the love of her life, the adventures they could experience together, and maybe even a family they could start. It was during one of those daydreaming moments that she bumped into a stranger lion on the edge of the pride's territory. She was frightened at first, but the lion, Mwenda, didn't seem to have bad intentions. The two talked, and decided to meet the next day in secret. He

had a lot of tales of his travels to tell, and she was eager to hear more, so the meetings continued, until they realized there was a spark of love between them.

It didn't take long for Inaya to leave the pride with Mwenda. They traveled for a while together, and after bumping into other nomads in need of company, they decided to start a small pride, with her as the queen and Mwenda as the king. It was clear they were in love, so it wasn't surprising that she became pregnant not long after.

Unfortunately, their happiness was cut short. Complications from birth made her fall sick, and she passed away soon after, leaving three cubs - from which only one survived. The cub was named Nuru, meaning light, as that was one of the names she chose for her cubs.

(Herrah) Mkali ("fierce")

A massive lioness who towers over even the largest males. She's the queen of the Ash Pride, who inherited the throne after defeating her mother, the previous queen, in a duel. Mkali, as her name suggests, is a fierce lioness who cares deeply about her pride, though she is surprisingly compassionate. Her previous mate, a king consort from another pride, sadly died during a hunt, leaving her with no heir as they struggled to conceive throughout their relationship.

The conflict started by the Sun Pride pushed the Ash Pride out of his fairly isolated position. Mkali fought its leader early on, and she left Anyanwu wounded, but the pace at which the golden lioness gained supporters was worrying. Mkali decided to form alliances with the neighboring prides, something unheard of for the Ashlanders. However, it was the Moon Pride that first reached out to Mkali to form an alliance, showing that the concern about the Sun Pride situation was spreading. Mkali agreed, on the condition that the king of the pride would give her an heir. From this agreement, Kiburi was born.

Mkali loved her daughter dearly, and she wanted what was best for her. However, part of the agreement was that the cub would spend time equally in both prides, to strengthen the link between them. Mkali found Amadi to be a good hearted lion, so she didn't protest - she believed that having two parents would be good for Kiburi.

Years later, Anyanwu attacked again, starting with the Moon Pride. Kiburi returned home from the Moonlands, warning her mother of the attack. Mkali was vigilant, knowing that an attack could happen at any time. However, she did not anticipate how well coordinated the attack would be. She urged Kiburi to run while she still had the chance and to ask for reinforcements from her father's pride. Unfortunately, by the time Kiburi reached the Moonlands, the bird messenger informed her of her mother's death, and that the Ash Pride was as good as gone.

What Kiburi and the others didn't know was that Mkali survived. After being pushed off a ledge by Anyanwu herself, she lost consciousness. When she woke up, however, she was greeted by a spotted face hidden under an antelope mask. Bashiri was the name of the cat, and as Mkali later learned, she was responsible for keeping her alive and treating her wounds. It wouldn't be months until Mkali was strong enough to walk again, so throughout that time, she was dead to the rest of the world. At the current point, the Ashlander queen still remains with the eccentric healer and her bird sidekick, counting days until she can get her revenge, rebuild her pride and, most importantly, see her daughter again.

(The Radiance) Anyanwu ("eye of the sun")

The queen of the Sun Pride, a golden lioness obsessed with her ambition of reuniting the prides and resurrecting the Pridelands at its greatest. Despite what her conquest may suggest, she wasn't always a ruthless lioness. She grew up with her brother, Daathari, whom she was very close with. Their mother died early in their life from illness, leaving only their father to raise them. He believed it would be beneficial for the pride if the two ruled together, and so he made sure they were getting along from early on. His last wish before he passed was that they stick together no matter what happens, though unfortunately it was not to be.

Years later, after finding out about her connection to the bloodline of the kings, she began dreaming of reuniting the prides and bringing back the Pridelands she heard about in legends. At first, her vision was far less bloody; she wanted to see the prides prosper, united under the rule of a descendant of the great bloodline. This was when the first cracks between her and her brother started appearing. Daathari believed her idea to be ridiculous, and that she should stop paying so much attention to mere legends. She brushed off his comments at first. Then, as her plans got more elaborate and she began sharing her ideas with pride advisors, things slowly took a turn for the worse. Daathari kept doubting her vision, and would frequently disturb

her conversations with the advisors to voice his disapproval. The situation between the siblings was more and more tense, Anyanwu's ambition became less peaceful after the neighboring prides rejected her idea, and Daathari only contributed by calling her mad. Until one day, she snapped, and accused him of trying to sabotage her and get the throne for himself. The siblings fought, and Daathari, being the physically weaker of the two, lost. He was exiled from the pride shortly after, and warned that he would not be spared next time.

Once she had full control of the pride and gained enough loyal followers to put her plan into motion, her conquest began. At first, she approached the neighboring pride with an offer to join forces. When they refused, she threatened to use force, to which they protested further. If asked now, she would say that her claws were forced, but no one knows what truly happened. She took over the pride and increased her territory, but she did not plan to stop there. It was just one of the many prides she would have to get rid of, and she already had her eyes on the next one.

However, her conquest did not go as smoothly as she wished. She met strong resistance from the Ashlanders, and was defeated by their queen, Mkali. The defeat was humiliating, but it only angered her further. She knew she would be back to get her revenge, but if she was to play smart, she would have to wait.

Years later, her attacks resumed. First, she attempted to take over the Moon Pride, though they proved to be too strong. She ordered her forces to retreat, and after a few weeks of regaining strength, she carried out another attack, this time to get her revenge on the Ash Pride queen. And much to her delight, she got her chance. Mkali was weakened after the battle, and she was able to overpower her and throw her off the ledge to her death. Most of the Ashlanders were dead, though some managed to escape. She did not care, however, she got her revenge and that's all she cared about. Despite the victory, Anyanwu was seriously injured, and so she called the remainder of her pride and returned to her territory.

There have been no attacks from her pride for months, though it is only a matter of time before she resumes her mission, though she may be surprised to find that the other prides used that time to prepare.

(Divine) Johari ("jewel")

A lioness born with a rare condition which gave her a characteristic fur pattern. She's a very charismatic lioness, with a fondness for other females. Together with her older brother, Badru, she was born to a pair of nomadic lions. She was there for him after his mate tragically died, and they ended up leaving their parents together to continue the nomadic life. Eventually, they stumbled upon a small tribe they've never heard of, led by a pair of male lions. Johari was particularly intrigued by the two, finding a connection to their rather unusual partner preference. They were offered a place in the pride, and while Badru declined, Johari decided to stay. She grew especially close with the cubs of the pride, gaining an affectionate name of "auntie Johari".

(Brumm) Badru ("born at the full moon")

Johari's older brother. A very mellow and quiet lion, a stark contrast to his talkative sister. He tragically lost his mate in a crocodile attack following a flood in the region, the same attack where he lost most of his tail. Ever since then, he barely speaks, still suffering from grief. He believes it was his fault that she died, that if she was fast enough he could've saved her. Badru ended up leaving his parents with his sister, and after months of traveling, they met Mwenda and Amadi. Johari decided to take their offer and stay with their pride, but Badru knew he wouldn't be able to adjust to that life. He said farewell to his sister, and ever since then, he occasionally visits the pride to see her whenever he's passing through the land.

(Dryya) Akia ("first born")

Sabra's most loyal warrior, advisor and childhood friend. She is the older sister of Nyoka, who would later betray the pride. Akia is a skilled fighter and huntress, most renowned for her swiftness. Her little brother's betrayal hurt her deeply, she practically raised him after their mother's death so it broke her heart to see him blinded by the false promises of the Sun Pride. Following Amadi's disappearance, she was part of one of the search parties that looked for him, to no avail. However, unlike her queen, she has always been more sympathetic to him, finding his affection for the cubs to be charming.

(Markoth) Akello ("bring forth")

A calm warrior allied to the Sun Pride. He was saved by Anyanwu from a group of rouge males, and ever since then he remained loyal to her. However, there are rumors that he is not as dedicated to her mission as it may seem, suggesting that he might only stay by her side to pay off his debt. Other rumors suggest that he may be her mate, though many find it hard to believe that someone as mad as her could ever love someone.

(Xero) Nyoka ("snake")

Named after his grandfather, recognized in the pride for his strange slit eye, which gave him the name Snake Eye. Unbeknownst to his mother, the name would become prophetic, as he would end up betraying the Moon Pride that he joined with his sister, Akia. During the battle that followed his betrayal, he targeted Kiburi, the daughter of Amadi and Mkali of the Ash Pride, but was stopped by her father. Despite Amadi's smaller stature, he was able to fight back, giving Nyoka a large scar on his side.

(Seer) Tendai ("be thankful")

An elder from the Sun Tribe, one of the advisors Anyanwu first shared her plans with many years back. Horrified by how violent her leader became, unbeknownst to Anyanwu, Tendai decided to sabotage her plans by sharing what she knows with Sabra, the queen of the Moon Pride.

(Quirrel) Harun ("messenger")

An old cheetah wanderer, who occasionally lives up to his name by serving as a messenger for the prides in exchange for food and shelter. He loves to stop by and tell stories of his travels to the cubs from various prides, though he definitely gives the impression of someone who has been through a lot.

(Lace) Zahra ("blossom")

The princess from the Thornlands pride, located away from the old Pridelands territory, close to where Amadi and Mwenda would end up settling and starting their own pride. She's confident, sassy and slightly narcissistic, and she cares a great deal about her looks. Zahra has her eyes on Kiburi, who finds the constant cycle of threats, teasing and flirting between them to be mildly irritating, though the pale lioness can definitely tell by the flustered expressions that there is something more to it, which Kiburi would of course never admit.

(Jiji) Bashiri ("to foretell")

A leopard who found her calling in healing "wounds of the flesh and wounds of the soul", as she often says. She's not known to many as she tends to keep to her cave, but those who encounter her believe that she is a little unhinged. In truth, she's very compassionate and gentle with those in her care, and shows a great knowledge of medicine and treatments that she acquired throughout her life. Her companion, a pied crow named Sahau, assists her in more precise operations and helps her scout the area in search of those in need. She saved Mkali, the queen of the Ash Pride, from death after the battle with the Sun Pride, and the large lioness remains in her care at the current moment.

(Jinn) Sahau ("to forget")

A pied crow and the assistant to Bashiri, who found and raised her from a hatchling. She speaks in a very monotone, almost robotic voice, often repeating Bashiri's words. Out of the two, she's the "surgeon", scout and gatherer of medical herbs.