Paralyzed in the Moment

by Little_Chickadee

Summary

During a final fight with Lord Hordak, Catra and Adora work together to go head to head against him. Although when Catra's life is threatened, Adora makes a split-second decision that would change their lives forever, and pays a large price in order to protect her old friend.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Finality is Unsettling

Something about this battle made Adora uneasy—she hadn’t seen one like this in what seemed like a very long time. But the battle for Brightmoon seemed like child’s play after this encounter.

Everyone was pushing it to the limits, screaming, and erupting into a fray of soldiers and voluntary fighters from both the Horde, and the Rebellion. You couldn’t decipher who was on which side at this point, unless for every now and then seeing a soldier or two with the red-winged insignia of their back or front.

The fray of the battle crowded the entire battlefield with just enough room for horde tanks to steamroll through any defense the Rebellion could muster. Perfuma’s vines and thicket, along with Frosta’s icy-crystalline wall, were barely holding. The Princess Alliance was the only force keeping the Rebellion at a stand-still with the Horde. Each princess using their power at full force in hopes of gaining the upper hand and turning the tide of the war—right here, right now.

Adora could feel the aching in her bones as she willed herself to pull it together. After all, she had the Princess Alliance covering her back and she had managed to gain even Catra’s cooperation in this battle.

Within the fray, many Horde soldiers had turned away from Hordak during the fight, along with Catra, Scorpia, and Entrapta.

Catra had it planned a long time ago to overthrow the dictator and take the Horde and reform it, and which she secretly hoped would have her become a hero in the eyes of her people. It nagged at her still that Adora wouldn’t be at her side to lead like they’d dreamed of as children; that was in the past now. Catra now was finally taking her stand with the people she had gained the respect of. Catra couldn’t believe after all she’d done to hurt Adora and her friends, that she’d one day be fighting side by her side again. But she had to take all the helpful force she could manage to get at the moment. This attempt would have to prevail over Hordak and his remaining troops if everyone wanted to keep their lives.

Adora watched as Glimmer teleported over to the Eastern end of the battlefield, yelling something she couldn’t make out over the white noise of the skirmishes around her, to help push the fight farther away from the larger one about to engage between Catra, She-Ra and Hordak. Bow joined in, keeping the battle contained and rallying the Rebellion soldiers to keep up the defenses and work with the newly found help of the defected Horde soldiers in hopes of overwhelming the few loyal to Hordak.

That left Adora, and Catra, alone to face Hordak.

Everyone else was covering for them at this moment; it felt almost—final.

Adora knew this day would come, and she had trained for it. But she knew she could never have had prepared herself for it emotionally. She was She-Ra, the chosen champion of Etheria—but what did that really mean to her? She still knew practically nothing about the hero she was supposed to become. Was this how she is supposed to heal the planet? By fighting other people? She hoped so, she didn’t know much else. Deep down at this very moment she felt scared, like a child again, maybe because she still was one. But she knew she had to fight, and face Hordak, in order to make sure no one else would get hurt. Especially her friends—and now, Catra.
She couldn’t lose her again. She wouldn’t after just getting her back, she thought.

She’d rather be killed than see anyone be anymore harmed during this war.

Adora rushes in through the rest of the fray, despite the tiredness she feels in her limbs. She sees Catra to her right side and a small smirk graces her lips.

It’s nice to run with her again, she thinks.

Catra makes eye contact with She-Ra for a second and turns back to look dead ahead, determined.

“Hey, Adora,” she huffs out, “Ready for this?”

Adora jokes, “If I’m being honest Catra, I think this is our stupidest idea yet!”, although in the end it really wasn’t a joke.

“Well then, at least it’s our idea this time and not just mine,” Catra smirks, “So let’s just get this over with, huh?” She growls out before pulling her mask over her eyes, and transforming into a beast that ran much faster than She-Ra on four legs.

Adora wasn’t sure when she learned this trick but there would hopefully be other times to ask about it. So, Adora brandished her sword and sprinted forward with her.

Hordak had little to no troops left to protect him, as Catra mauled through most of them, and Adora cut through the rest by simply thrusting her sword into the battleground.

With no men to fend off the two young women, a rush of bots came and gathered around the giant, magical, panther and the mighty She-Ra—Hordak's final defense was merely Horde technology.

Adora thrust her sword deeper into the earthen ground and the terrain around them crushed and folded, sending the robots’ spindly legs teetering over the edges of the crust. This gave Catra the chance to pounce each one, tearing at them with her monstrous teeth. She crushed them with her giant paws and slash them with her claws. It seemed almost too easy. Sure Adora was tired now more than ever but it seemed to happen to quickly.

Like almost as if… Hordak wanted them to confront him. Adora had a sinking feeling in her stomach as she ripped her sword from the ground to prepare her for what was coming next.

“Catra,” she yelled out, trying to communicate her fear, but the sight of the man they were facing stalking up to the edge of the large crater paralyzed her in shock.

Much to her dismay, Hordak was more prepared than ever— with a smirk, he raised his clenched fist and one of the smashed robots came back to life and grasped catra’s large form as hard as it could with its metal legs.

“You dirty son of a bitch!”, Catra yelped as squirmed and tried to wrestle out of its hold on her. She released her beastly form, but it only grasped her tighter as Hordak tightened his clenched fist and Catra gasped as air was strangled from her lungs.

Adora shot up, but Hordak stopped her in her tracks by raising another fist that quickly manifested into a large blaster ray that radiated energy.
He definitely had that arm upgraded just for this battle, Catra thought.

Adora looked to where he had pointed it—directly at Catra, across the crater she’d created. They were caught right in his trap.

The first thing that came to mind for Adora was to steamroll him right into the ground with all her might, but she knew that that was only impulsive enough for Catra to do, and right now all she could think back to now was, ‘I can’t lose her again!’

Panic raised in Adora, and of course Hordak had taken notice at this point and started to break out into maniacal laughter, with a smirk to top it off as Adora stood stock still trying to figure out what move wouldn’t cause Hordak to shoot a massive ball of energy radiating sparks of lighting—straight into her newly reclaimed friend.

“Either one of you comes with me willingly and calls this little quarrel off,” Hordak began, “or one of you dies—right here, right now…” he growled out.

He locked into Catra now and aimed, as Catra had the guts to look straight back at him, into his eyes. Her own gleaming with disgust and flaming with anger.

“I’d rather die at the hands of a disgusting, mechanical brained idiot like you, then forfeit the lives of those who I’ve fought for to get here to this battle today,” she growled out, “And I’d rather intend to keep my honor than to stoop so low and give it all up now.”

Hordak’s smirk faded.

“Then so be it, Commander Catra,” he sighed.

He clenched his fist and held it open to release the energy ray from his blaster. In that moment, Adora realized she had only two options on how to take action—and no time at all to weigh either one. All she knew was that she had to fight, in order to make sure no one else would get hurt.

She turned and saw Catra yell something out behind herself, but seemingly to late.

Because, just as Hordaks stream of hot, red, energy bolted and arched through the air to reach its target, it collided with the bright, glowing She-Ra’s shield.

Catra flinched and gasped as the blast practically over took Hordak’s control, and blew up in his face. And on the other end, it sent She-Ra careening out of the crater she’d been standing in and through the air.

She-Ra had gone limp and crashed into a nearby mountain outcrop on the edge of the desert and the whispering woods that stood as the border from the Fright Zone. The force of impact sent She-Ra into the rocky earth and created yet another crater. A cloud of dust and rubble was sent flying through the air as everyone watched, stopping the battle as they saw the mighty She-Ra appear through the dust and her glow flicker, until all that was left was a small girl, falling limp and out of the rocky face, and onto the hard ground with a loud thump.

Catra was in shock as the robotic legs grasping her let her go abruptly, and she fell to the ground.

It was all she needed to snap back to reality, and finish the plan she had started.

Hordak was just getting onto his knees as Catra screamed out with all her remaining strength,
"ENTRAPTA, NOW!"

And in seconds, a large droid rose up from behind Catra and the carnage of the old Horde robots, which then shot out a barrage of energy blasts from its canons—that obliterated Lord Hordak right where he stood.
Brightmoon After Battle

Chapter Summary

Adora is hurt, and so they take her back to Brightmoon, but Catra worries about her while things get sorted out around the Castle.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Swift Wind was already at Adora’s side when Glimmer and Bow rushed in from the battlefield. She had teleported to Bow and grabbed him as fast as she could, using what little was left of her power to reach their friend, causing Bow have massive vertigo afterwards due to the sheer force of speed Glimmer had teleported them to the outer edge of the border.

The alicorn gently nudged and nuzzled Adora’s cheek with worry. He looked up at the two teens from Adora and glanced back down.

“I could feel all her pain,” he choked out, “and then there was nothing! Please, do something!”

Glimmer had never seen Swift Wind so panicked before, even about Adora’s well being. She gently scooted him aside and knelt down on one side of her fallen friend. Bow came down onto her other side as war-torn soldiers began to surround the four of them.

Perfuma frantically pushed through the crowd with Frosta fresh on her tail, and Mermista came forward with a battered Sea Hawk beside her. Netossa and Spinnerella came around and pushed the crowd back so they wouldn’t overwhelm the teens, although they looked over their shoulders with worry written on their faces.

Glimmer looked over her friend frantically with Bow, she was scraped and battered horribly, but not bleeding out it seemed, so that was a start.

Hopefully She-Ra had helped to take some of the damage from the impact and not manage to kill Adora. The way she was laying awkwardly on the ground made Bow uneasy.

Glimmer put her ear to Adora’s chest as gently as she could. She listened carefully for a second and found that she could hear the soft thump of a very slow heart beat, and the gentle rasp of labored, shallow breaths. Her head shot up, and she grabbed for a pulse at Adora’s neck, looking into Bow’s frantic eyes.

“She’s breathing Bow! And she has a h-heart beat still!”, Glimmer sobbed. Her emotions were finally catching up to her with every second, and it was getting harder to withhold them in front of everyone.

Just then, Catra ran straight through Netossa, out of breath. And fell onto her hands and knees, trying to breathe normally again. Seeing Adora unconscious like this on the ground did not help.

She had just gotten her back, dammit.

Why was Adora so stubborn as to shelter everyone else, and instead risk her own life for no reason?
Did she want to die? Catra couldn’t grasp it.

"S-she’s still alive, so, w-what do we do now?”. Glimmer asked shakily.

“We get her back to Brightmoon, as fast as we can,” Bow finally spoke up, in a quiet hush.

All eyes fell back onto Glimmer.

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Adora couldn’t begin to comprehend what she was experiencing right now, was she dead? Is this what death feels like, or something?

She couldn’t see anything, the world was enveloped in black around her.

Some spots of dark faded color like phosphenes were the only stimulating thing around.

She only felt like she was floating, almost like if she was on a boat in the water. But instead—no, she was sinking.

It felt like spinning one too many times, until you get vertigo and fall over, unsteady on your own legs.

She couldn’t tell which way was up, or down, or left and right.

She just wanted the banging in her head to stop.

It felt like it might split open at the force of the throbbing against what must be her skull.

Then it did stop.

And sweet consciousness hit her chest and head like heavy lead weights brought down upon her.

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The last few days had stressed everybody in the castle out to the maximum. Defected Horde soldiers were being integrated with society in Brightmoon, and Catra could only hope they’d find a temporary home for now, until she could create a better place for them in the future. A safe haven, perhaps—she liked the sound of that.

The loyal servants of Hordak that were captured were being interrogated and then set on probation under the guards of the castle. Some were kept in cells if unable to accept their loss at the latest battle.

Catra has been in and out of several meetings with the Princess Shimmer, or whatever, and that obnoxiously friendly boy, who she didn’t quite hate all that much. They had just gotten out of one with the Princess Alliance, discussing if Catra was to become the appointed leader of these people from the Horde, what her intentions would be in the future. She surprised them all with the mention of a treaty, seeming out of her own character, asking for cooperation for once.

The other princesses had been skeptical of her presence at first, but she had gained their trust by fighting beside them.

Glimmer had smiled at her, as if saying thanks.

And she, didn’t completely—hate it?
Queen Angella looked on with proud eyes, and agreed to meet more upon planning a treaty so as to avoid an issue with future generations.

Catra never thought she would be here, walking out of a meeting with the Queen of Brightmoon and the Princess Alliance feeling so...accomplished.

But here she was, and she was heading back to her post in the Brightmoon infirmary, next to Adora’s bed in a chair.

Glimmer had given her a room to stay in, although, she hadn’t once slept a night in it since coming here. She could say the same mostly for Glimmer and Bow as well.

They needed to stay by Adora’s side.

But more importantly for her, she needed to stay with Adora.

Who knows when or what will happen, if—if they had said, she wakes up.

Catra was tired, and quite frankly frustrated with Adora at this point for not only being so stubborn as to sacrifice herself for Catra, but for not waking up sooner than the three days it has been since the battle.

But she knew she needed to be there for Adora when she woke up.

The healers had discussed some possibilities concerning Adora being permanently injured after the harsh blow she’d received from Hordak during the battle...at least from what she’d overheard.

They couldn’t say much more until Adora was awake and they could run more tests though.

So she quietly opened Adora’s curtain in the intensive care unit of the medical bay—the one room by a large round window, overlooking the stables.

She sat down in the chair next to the bed and looked at her old friend.

Her blonde hair looked much longer when it wasn’t in her signature ponytail.

And her eyelashes were long too.

Catra missed seeing her light blue eyes for the moment being. Even if they were surrounded by the dark circles under eyes, they would still be—beautiful...

So she slipped her hand softly into Adora’s good one—the one not hooked up to a tube, feeding her medicine through a clear baggy hanging beside her bed.

She rested her head on the bedside and closed her own eyes, letting the stress of the day wash over her as sleep came faster to her than normal, and she embraced it.

Willing that Adora would wake up soon.

Chapter End Notes

I really just wanted to post the next chapter, soooo enjoy!
Kudos are appreciated!
Chapter Summary

Adora wakes up, and Catra hopes that everything will stay okay for a little while.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The first thing Adora was aware of was the massive amount of pain radiating from her head and chest, and finally her hand. She noticed that she could feel a hard mattress with soft, thin sheets underneath her, and a light fluffy blanket thrown over her that kept her slightly warm. And within the hand that wasn’t exploding with a sharp jab, she could feel the strong grasp of someone else’s hand—it had a familiar weight to it but she couldn’t tell who’s it was without opening her eyes.

Although, it seemed that opening her eyes was the most difficult task yet.

Her eyelids felt like they were made of stone and she had to shove them open. But she groaned aloud and tried anyway, wincing at the light, as it spilt through the cracks. She instantly regretted it—as the room was too bright, despite it being dusk outside, and all she wanted to do was fall back to sleep at this point.

Although her curiosity prevailed in that moment because she could hear a faint whisper of someone she knew saying her name.

“Hey, Adora,” Catra softly whispered into the silence.

Adora blinked and tried to focus her eyes on the color blob beside her, but with hearing her voice and the feeling of her warm hand, she could guess well enough who might be here with her. And focusing hurt her head to much anyways right now.

“Ca-tra?” Adora croaked, trying to figure out how to use her vocal chords again. Her throat was very dry and scratchy. Adora heaved a long awaited cough, and winced at the pain that shot up through her chest as she did so.

Catra had grabbed a cup of water somewhere beside the bed and it had a straw that she put towards Adora’s lips. She helped her take a few sips before putting it back down somewhere out of Adora’s still focusing sight.

“Don’t try to talk if it really hurts, you haven’t had anything to drink in a while. But, yeah it’s me,” Catra smiled lightly, and genuinely—something Adora never thought she’d see again, “so don’t worry, okay? I’m right here.”

She patted her other warm hand over their already enclosed ones.

Adora attempted to make a soft reaffirming sound that hopefully got across that it made her feel reassured and content that Catra was here with her.

It seemed like Catra got the idea.
Sadly, as soon as Glimmer and Bow had walked in to check up on the two, their alone time was over very quickly.

They had to tell the healers that Adora was awake and leave the room so that they could do the work necessary to help Adora, and hopefully relieve some of her pain while she was still conscious. As much as Catra wanted to insist to stay by Adora, as a confused and worried look crossed her face when they were asked to get up and leave the room, she knew she would only intervene and probably not in any helpful way.

They gave Adora more pain killers and ran some tests, and finally let the trio come back in with a pitcher of water and a bowl of broth from the kitchen staff.

Adora looked more tired, probably from the painkillers, but a little more alert now that she’d been awake for about an hour or so.

Glimmer poured her some water in a cup, and now that Adora was sitting slightly up in bed, Glimmer carefully sat down beside her and let Adora grasp the cup in her own hands. They shook slightly, but Adora focused on holding the cup to her mouth and sipping as much of the fluid she could to soothe her throat.

“Don’t drink too fast there,” Bow chuckled lightly, “we really don’t want you tossing it back up later.”

“Thanks Bow…” Adora sneered quietly, rolling her eyes. Her voice felt much better, but still not quite there, but definitely better after lots of fluids.

She managed to hand the cup gently back to Glimmer.

Catra sat back in her chair next to the bed, and handed Glimmer the bowl of chicken broth, leftover from last night’s stew. The Kitchen staff had handed it to Catra when Glimmer implored if she could go find someone in the kitchens while she fetched Adora some water. Catra had asked if they had any good meals for someone who might have a hard time keeping anything down for the time being, and so they skepticaly handed her this.

‘Not everyday the kitchen here sees an ex-Horde commander coming in for chicken broth, eh?’, she thought jokingly.

Bow sat down on the window seat looking out at the horses outside in the field, as Glimmer held the bowl and helped Adora get down some the broth.

It didn’t seem real to Catra, still.

Everything is so peaceful all of a sudden.

It doesn’t feel like it’ll last though, does it?

In fact she knew it wouldn’t, not with what she knew she had to tell Adora, very soon. She just didn’t want to.

Just a few days ago they were fighting with all they had.

A while ago, Glitter Gun and Rainbow Boy would have fought her to the death for what she’d done to Adora.
'I still need to talk to Adora about—everything.'

That thought was nagging at her from the deep depths of her mind—it has been for days—but for now Catra pushed it down because it wasn’t the right time.

Neither she or Adora were in a stable place to hash that out. For now though, hopefully everything would stay okay for a little while. Just like this.

Adora finished her meal, and Glimmer helped her wipe her face. Adora squirmed and giggled, wincing a little.

“Glim’—stoooooop…”, she whined as Glimmer tried to use the cloth napkin to get the small bit of broth dribbling off her chin.

It was funny, Catra thought, seeing how comfortable Adora was around these two. Yet she still couldn’t really let them have the satisfaction of taking care of her.

Catra also noticed how frail Adora looked after a few days of being out cold.

It was wild—seeing Adora so vulnerable for a change. She’d only seen Adora look this way a few times; specifically like the time when she could’ve let Adora fall to her—she didn’t want to finish that thought.

But, Adora’s blonde hair was down, out of the typical ponytail she wore, tousled from being in bed for a while, and the hair framing her face kept falling into her eyes so Catra would tuck it back behind her ear. And it seemed like she’d lost a bit of muscle from only being hooked up to a tube for sustenance. While she wore a soft light blue nightgown Glimmer had provided for her instead of a white infirmary gown, being that it’d probably be more warm and comfortable. It looked a little loose on her shoulders now, one side of the round neck slipping off as she shifted in bed. Her skin was slightly paler.

Catra knew that it was a miracle by some First One’s Tech, that Adora was breathing on her own still, and thinking comprehensive thoughts, thanks to She-Ra’s strength and power. But she knew it couldn’t possibly protect Adora from everything.

She wasn’t naive or dumb enough to really just leave the infirmary without eavesdropping a little on what the healers had discovered upon Adora waking up, finally. She’d waited outside the door, listening to their hushed whispers as they stood far outside Adora’s room in the medical bay.

“This is just what I’d expected as she came in, but I really—“, the woman healer stopped for a second, and took a breath and a released a small sigh. “I just was hoping the She-Ra would’ve had more residual healing properties, even though she’s already fairing far better than any patient I’ve had with this severe of an injury upon waking up—I think this could’ve been avoided.”

“I know,” the other woman replied softly, “but the fact is—is that the impact on the girls spinal cord caused damage here—and down here,” Catra guessed she was pointing at some sort of x-ray maybe, “and now, she’s paralyzed from the waist down. It’s a grade B—there’s not much we can do to treat it, it’s just permanent damage. We’ll have to wait and see what happens...”

Catra’s stomach dropped, and she thought she might be sick when she overheard them say that.

This should not have happened.

How could Adora be so stupid!
Was it all her fault? Maybe.

Was it Adora’s? Possibly.

Could have either of them died in that battle? Definitely.

But here she was now, standing outside this door, and Adora was just on the other side, through them.

Adora had saved her life again, but at what cost now?

Catra wished she could just let her take on her own consequences, but at the same time—Adora had stuck up for her, just like she always wished she would.

Dammit.

This internal conflict would have to wait until later though, as the healers continued to talk.

“What do we do now then?”, the first woman questioned, “Should we talk to her? We haven’t had this happen in a while, but mostly, how do you say that the mighty She-Ra won’t be able to get up and walk again? More importantly—how is she supposed to protect Etheria?!”

The other woman took another deep breath and said, “No, she’s most likely confused right now, but—I think it’d be best if one of her friends told her. And we should let the Queen know first, since she’ll know how to handle it accordingly.”

“Alright then,” and then Catra heard them walk towards the door.

Catra moved away from the doors and hides within the shadows of the now dark corridor. The two woman walk out and don’t see her. Catra then silently stepped out, and went in search of the Kitchens like Glimmer had originally asked.

All the while she wondered, if Adora already knew, and how were they supposed to tell her she couldn’t just get back up and fight again?

For now though, hopefully everything would stay okay for a little while.

Chapter End Notes

And the slow burn begins,,,NOW!
Kudos are appreciated!
Whiplash

Chapter Summary

Adora catches up with Catra, and the rest of The Best Friend Squad.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Adora restlessly attempted to push herself up a bit more on her pillows with her arms, but it proved to be much harder than she thought, so Bow got up and helped her scoot back against the stack of pillows placed behind her aching chest, back, and head.

“Thanks,” she rasped begrudgingly at the help.

She felt dizzy for a second, and was glad the lights were put down low for her in the med bay. She’d had a concussion before, but right now—everything, seemed to throb despite all the pain medication given to her earlier when the healers came in to check up with her, now that she was awake.

Everything, except her legs.

She couldn’t actually feel her legs at all, not even her feet or toes.

She hadn’t tried to move them, she was too tired, and everything was too heavy to attempt standing up.

She attempted to suppress her rising panic by reminding herself that she’d been loaded with meds and has been in bed for what seemed like a long time—but she wasn’t quite sure how long? So maybe it was just that...

“So—” Adora sighed out, “how long was I out for? No one has let me know.”

The three of her friends looked at each other, and Glimmer replied back quietly, “Three days or so, we were getting nervous.”

Bow spoke up quickly, “Not that we—uh, don’t think you’re strong enough or we didn’t believe in you or anything, but, we just—you scared us I guess,” he rambled as he rubbed the back of his neck.

Adora wasn’t sure what to say to that, and small silence drifted between the group.

Catra put her head down on her arms and rested on the mattress across from the sparkly princess. She snaked one of her hands out and grabbed Adora’s wrist—a familiar gesture.

“How are you feeling, I mean, after being awake for a while?”, Catra asked her with a small sigh.

Adora looked down at where Catra firmly held her wrist, and she took Catra’s in her own hand. She then turned her head to the window looking at the night sky, and thought for a minute before replying.

“I feel like, someone, hit me with a skiff—really, really hard,” she said jokingly with a tired smile.
Catra snorted a little bit, as the other two watched in amusement, and the blonde was glad she made Catra laugh a little.

Adora wanted to keep pretending like everything was fine right now, but honestly, she was confused—and she was starting to panic a little more as she shifted around on the pillows, and found that she couldn’t exactly move her hips to wiggle up as she sunk down into the pile. Catra noticed her small issue and let go of her wrist to stand up, and sit on the bed to help shift the pillows to better support her neck.

It was like whiplash to Adora, to see Glimmer and Catra sitting in a very close vicinity to one another after all they’d been through in the last year or so. Although Adora did factor in that the three of them had been forced to work together the last couple of days without her.

“What, exactly, happened? At the battle? All I remember is—Hordak,” she finally asked after working up the nerve.

Glimmer and Bow looked at each other with concerned faces, and Catra, simply grabbed her hand this time—and looked down at her lap.

Catra slowly rubbed her thumb over the blonde’s knuckles as if she was afraid Adora would pull away. Adora welcomed the gesture, unsure if she would experience this kindness again.

‘I still have to talk to her, and probably apologize again.’, she thought.

But for now, she’d handle one thing at a time.

Everyone was still quiet so Adora pressed, “I’m sorry I brought it up, but—I just want to know what happened, everything is just—really foggy.”

“N-no, no, Adora, it’s alright…” Bow began,

“You took on Hordak’s attack for me, as She-Ra,” Catra finished for him.

“She-Ra’s powers protected you, but you got seriously hurt Adora—you got tossed across the battlefield and into a hillside!” Glimmer added worriedly.

Catra gave her a look, and then turned to Adora and sighed, “But—you gave Entrapta the chance she needed to follow through with the plan we had made,” she swallowed.

“Entrapta made her own weapon from Hordak’s blaster blueprints, and it was powerful enough to kill Hordak on the spot. He’s—gone.”

Hey! Still writing more chapters, and I have some saved up to post periodically. Right now I’m stuck on a certain part with a writing block. Kudos are always appreciated!!!
Chapter Summary

Catra tries to calm Adora’s panic.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Adora was shocked, it didn’t seem real.

Did this mean the war was over?

What would they do now?

She had so many questions racing through her head—but she now remembered how she flung her shield up, in order to stop the blast from killing Catra. It had happened so fast, it seemed like a blur before a large gap in her mind was all that was left before waking up tonight.

Adora tried to take a deep breath.

“Glimmer, you said, I was ‘tossed into a hillside’ after Hordak shot me?”, she reiterated, trying to grasp the pieces together as to what happened to her.

The princess of Brightmoon nodded slowly in return.

“How hard?”, Adora asked, almost scared to receive an answer.

“Hard enough—that you reverted… Back to yourself, and you f-fell,” Bow quietly spoke up.

“We found you as soon as it was over, and you were, unconscious—but still alive, so then Glimmer teleported you two back here with what little power she had left.”, Catra added in to help Adora understand.

Catra was still rubbing her thumb over Adora’s knuckles in little circles. She looked up into Adora’s eyes again, and yet she struggled to keep the eye contact.

“Adora,” she started speaking in a softer tone than she’d usually use, “we both know that She-Ra isn’t some invincible being you can use as some meat shield, because it’s still you just getting hurt, deep down.”

Catra took a small breath.

“And this time, you may have prevented Hordak from killing me, but you know—these things come with consequences, Adora,” Catra continued shakily.

Adora shut her eyes tight—it was like one of her worst fears was coming to life.

She gripped Catra’s hand—hard.

She knew what Catra meant. She’s stupid to think that she could just save everyone without any
sacrifice in the end. And look at where that got her, what was she supposed to do now?

Adora tried to move around, get up and protest, prove them wrong and show no weakness. But her arms were too tired and her chest was too sore. Catra put her other hand on Adora’s shoulder to push her down, but Adora couldn’t fight her right now. She tried to pull Catra’s hand away, but to no effect. She ended up whining out a sigh, as she gave up against Catra’s hold. Slumping in the pillows behind her head.

Glimmer had gotten up and stood next to Bow beside the bed with worried faces. While Catra dared to stay next to Adora, and was still holding her hand and gripping her shoulder.

“C’mon Adora, please, don’t act like this—you’ll only end up injuring yourself more if you’re this...Stubborn!”, Catra said with an edge of frustration.

It was getting harder for Adora to breathe all of a sudden, her chest aching and her eyes prickling with the thought of tears.

She kept trying to breathe, “S-so let me guess—I h-hit the ground t-too hard and She-Ra couldn’t protect me,” her breath hitched and she sniffled, trying to stay calm. “And n-now, t-that’s why I can’t feel my legs, and now I’m stuck—I’m s-stuck like this?”, she managed to stutter out.

Adora’s panic rose much to high, and she couldn’t hold it back any longer out of sheer exhaustion. She sniffled, and then hiccuped, and tears began streaming down her face, without her permission.

“Adora, listen, please—“, Glimmer tried as sweetly as she could manage, but Adora simply grasped Catra’s hand harder and turned her head to the side and clenched her eyes shut as hard as she could, trying to block everyone out as a shuddering whine came out of her in protest.

She didn’t want them to see her like this.

But she didn’t want them to leave either.

She didn’t know what she wanted all of a sudden.

Breathing became even harder as her chest and throat felt like they were on fire and she couldn’t catch her breath.

Catra watched Adora panic as her hand was caught in a vice like grip, and she wasn’t sure what to do, but she had to get them alone for Adora to calm down before she passes out.

“Look, I’m sorry Glitter, and Bowseph, but please—could you give us some privacy for a while?”, too shaken with worry for their friend and out of sheer fear of Catra, they didn’t protest and trusted that Catra knew what she was doing.

Slowly Bow turned around to Glimmer and patted her shoulder, she turned to leave hesitantly, and he led her out with a hand on her back. Leaving Catra and Adora alone.

Catra hadn’t done this in a long time, but she settled down on the bed, not letting go of Adora’s hand. She then wrapped Adora up in her blanket and carefully folded her other arm and tail around Adora’s front and gently put her forehead against her chest, as to not agitate Adora's injuries more.

She stayed there, unsure if this was the right thing to do—it felt very wrong after all they’d been through, but at the same time she missed being close to Adora and it felt right to hold her.

“C’mon Adora, I’m here,” Catra spoke softly, “hey, we’ll figure it out together this time, okay? I
promise—even if you don’t.”

Slowly Adora’s breathing hitched and slowed down in pace, it became deeper as it seemed she grew more and more tired. She had stopped gripping her hand and now instead, their fingers loosely intertwined. Adora’s chin eventually came to rest on top of Catra’s head, and exhaustion overtook her.

With Adora finally calmed down and asleep, Catra decided to stay put for the night.

She too let exhaustion from recent events catch up with her, and soon she was fast asleep—curled up next to the girl she used to sleep next to every night in their bunk—it felt as simple as breathing truly should.

Chapter End Notes

I will try to post another chapter today!
Enjoy some nice Catra and Adora moments! I promise more to come!
Kudos are appreciated!!!
Adora wakes up again, and Catra is there for her. They decide to try and make a new promise to each other.

Adora groaned as sunlight peeked through the large window in the room of the med bay. It hurt her head a little bit, but when she squinted she could manage to see her Swifty playing around with all the other horses in the stable on the green field. He was probably going to recruit them all to his horse revolution. She wondered how he was feeling after all this. She must have scared him that day. He seems happy now though, Adora thought, and a slight warmth spread across her chest. Although it wasn’t just her—she forgot there was another person tucked up onto the bed with her. Catra’s head was resting at the base of her collar bone, very gently. She didn’t like the idea of her friends feeling the need to coddle her all of a sudden—but, it didn’t seem like she had no choice now, with her in this condition. She realized now, that she would probably have to get used to asking for help more often. Slowly, she picked up her hand with the tube stuck into it, and it throbbed a little as she did so. The healers would probably be back soon this morning, to give her more medication and see how she fared the night. She had slept like a rock after she finally calmed down, although her eyes still stung and they were a little bloodshot from crying. But for now she reveled in the moment of being with Catra again, before she decided to wake up, and probably run off somewhere. Adora used her hand to stroke through Catra’s thick, messy mane of hair on her head. It was calming, and she tried to focus in on that feeling. Before long she felt a small rumble escape the other girl’s chest, and watched as she slowly shifted her head to face up with a light grumble. Her eyes stayed closed for a moment, until she brought up her hand to rub the sleepiness away from them. When she stopped they locked eyes again, like last night when Catra was trying to calm her down. “Hey, *yawn* Adora…”, Catra drawled, “How long have you been staring at me for?” “Just woke up a lil’ bit ago,” Adora whispered quietly, in the morning hush that surrounded the
infirmary.

She noticed pretty fast last night that it stayed like that till the healers came in to check on their patients, but she wasn’t sure if there was anyone still left from the battle in the intensive unit. So, she wasn’t sure if she had to be quiet, but she felt like she did.

“Do you need anything? Like—for pain? Or do you need water?”, the other girl started to ramble.

Adora actually probably did need some water, but she had something else in mind.

“No, no, I’m okay for now.”, Adora began, “But thanks for telling me—about everything. I’m sorry for f-freaking out and scaring you guys last night, I panicked. I shouldn’t have—“

Catra cut her off, “Adora, really, try not to worry about that okay? I’m sorry we—I’m sorry it came to that. But we knew we’d have to talk to you about it soon—you may be thick headed, but you’re not that dumb.”

Catra offered her a small smirk that made Adora somewhat more relieved.

“Plus,” she continued, “if anyone told me that I almost died in a battle after being knocked out cold for three days or so—I would’ve panicked too. And as for Glitter Glue and Nerd Boy? I think they would’ve flipped out the minute they couldn’t feel their toes! Haha, You’ll get through it, you always do.”

“Oh—“, Adora breathed shakily, “I believe you—I’m sorry though, this is all my fault again. I know you don’t want me to save you, but Catra—I just really wanted to protect you for once.”

Adora wondered if she should continue right now, but Catra still looked up at her with her heterochromic eyes. She wasn’t sure when they’d get a moment alone for the time being, and she didn’t want to waste it. Her feelings were still fresh from last night and she thought it might be best to get it over with now.

So she continued on with, “I know I haven’t really been so great at it in the past—a-and it lead to a lot of awful fights between us, but that doesn’t mean I want you to get hurt for things I can’t blame you for. And I want to work through it with y-you—I promise.”

Adora knew promises with Catra were like walking on thin ice right now, but she hoped it would strike the right nerve and push them forward.

“And—Catra...this time, I really promise, to keep, well—that promise.”, Adora finished.

Catra didn’t know what to say at that moment.

She’d wanted to hear that from Adora for a long time now, but, she wished it wouldn’t have to have come to this for her to say them.

But maybe it was a good step forward for both of them.

She knew she didn’t need Adora to keep her promises anymore for them to still care for each other, even if it hurt, but it meant everything to Catra that Adora was willing to try again.

“Sounds good to me, we’ll work through this together this time, and protect each other”, is what she ended up deciding to say, as she smiled back and put her head back down to Adora’s chest.

“And—Catra?”, the blonde asked.
“What, Adora?”, Catra wondered what she could need to say now.

“Can you go get one of the healers—please?”, she blushed.

“Why, what is it? Do you need something now?”, Catra got a bit more serious.

“No, it’s just… I need to use the bathroom—and I’m not sure what to do if I can’t feel my legs, or move. And to be honest I’m scared to ask.”, Adora quietly confesses to Catra, who had to fight to hold down a snicker, because that would definitely undermine her friend’s self esteem—terribly.

“Do you want me to stay with you…?”, Catra asked just in case.

“Would it be weird if I said yes?”, Adora said, as she began to nervously fidget with Catra’s hand.

“I’ll stay, and we will figure it out together, right? I’m sure it won’t be that bad,” she replied, before she squeezed Adora’s hand and walked out of the room to talk to one of the healers coming in for the morning shift.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s another one! I’ve got a lot good stuff coming up!
Kudos are appreciated!!!
Healing Slowly

Chapter Summary

Glimmer and Bow hang with Adora, and she finally gets to go back to her own room.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“So you really can’t feel anything below your waist at all? Not even your toes?”, Bow had asked as he helped her put on socks that Aunt Casta had sent as a ‘Get Well’ present from Mystacor, once she heard how Adora was fairing from Glimmer. They were a light pink and made with soft yarn to keep her feet warm.

Today Glimmer and Catra had important official meetings to discuss plans for the next few months with Queen Angella. The Queen was still a bit hesitant on having Hordak’s ex-second in command in the castle, but Glimmer had vouched for Adora’s trust in Catra. She has also been around to check on Adora herself lately in the past few days since she woke up, and every time Adora seemed to feel a little more guilty that she wasn’t able to help—or that her champion wasn’t even able to get up and walk at the moment. But at one point she did bring Adora a nice, warm blanket, and sat down with her on the bedside to keep her company while the others had to go on an aid mission to a town where a lot of Rebellion soldiers lived. That helped her to open up to Angella a little bit, even if it was still a bit awkward between the two of them.

Bow should probably be out there right now, at the meetings happening today, although he insisted it didn’t have to do much with his involvement.

So instead, he was spending the day with his other best friend.

“No, sorry…”, was all she could tell him.

“Don’t be! It’s not your fault,” he assured her.

“I wish it really wasn’t, but I’m pretty sure this is my fault—now that I have thought about it though… I probably wouldn’t have done anything differently if given the chance,” she felt bad for admitting it but she knew it was true.

Bow hummed with a nod at her answer; he understood.

“Are you excited to move back into your room? I cleaned it up for you, and Glimmer got you some new clothes yesterday at the market while we were out on the aid mission. They’re all comfy and easy to put on, annnnnd we even bought them in your favorite colors—but Glim’ insisted that we buy you this one lilac shirt because she thinks it suits you,” he sounded like he was probably more excited than she was.

Adora’s body had started to heal a bit faster with regular meals, lots of fluids, and of course medicine. The healers had done most of what they could do to help her, but she knew they couldn’t do much more than what they’ve already done. They could do some surgery to try and see if she could regain some feeling, or have a sorceress try some spells that might help temporarily, but there
wasn’t a big chance it would change her condition. They had already tried to fix as much of the internal injury as they could so it wouldn’t worsen as soon as she was brought back to Brightmoon. They had discussed starting some physical therapy after Adora was fully healed and strong enough to commit to it, but she didn’t know what that really entailed. So for now—this was going to become her new normal.

They promised her that she would get to go back into her own room by the end of the week, but she’d still need constant care. All she wanted was to sleep on her own mattress again, and maybe just to have a bit more privacy. Which was something she missed from being in the infirmary for a while. She didn’t think she’d get much independence back for a while now though. Not to mention, she wasn’t sure what she was going to do once she’s discharged.

How was she going to spend all her time now that they had banned her from being the She-Ra while she was recuperating? Could she even still manage to turn into She-Ra?

She wasn’t sure. But she knew that if she even tried to pick up the sword now, that Catra, Glimmer, and Bow would probably verbally harass her until she gave up.

She wasn’t sure what was going to happen but she decided to try and stay strong about it.

So, she gave Bow a small smile, and a nod.

~~~

Her own room felt more like home, now that she missed it so much.

The healers had helped her get clean—which was the most embarrassing part of Adora’s day so far, and into the new loose clothing her friends bought for her so that they wouldn’t be uncomfortable over any still healing injuries she had, before they set her up into her room. She had on a loose, soft, white long sleeve t-shirt, and some drawstring, light-blue pants, that were easy to slip on.

She hadn’t thought to even pull back her hair into a ponytail, as Glimmer joined her on the bed—while Adora managed to sit up in front of her with her lower half trapped under all the blankets. She was brushing out her still wet hair from earlier that morning.

“Do you want me to put it up?”, she asked twirling Adora’s hair after she had been zoning out at the wall for a while.

Adora looked down at her lap and picked at the bandages covering her hand that once had the tube hooked into it back in the infirmary.

“No, it’s not like I’m doing anything that needs it to be up I guess…”, she thought aloud.

Glimmer frowned a little bit.

“That doesn’t mean you have to have it in your face either, Adora. At least let me braid it?”, she asked, then adding a “Pleeeease?”

Adora took a moment and nodded, as Glimmer began to separate her hair into three sections to make a loose braid that would now fall over her shoulder, since her hair had been growing longer than when Shadow Weaver would normally demand she cut it for practicality. She didn’t want to think about that right now though, so she decided to change the subject.
“What’s a braid?”, she asked quietly.

“No one in the Horde ever taught you?”, Glimmer acted surprised.

Adora shook her head, “No—no one’s ever taken the time to do my hair before. I’ve always just put it in a ponytail like I was taught.”

“Oh, well—here!”, Glimmer said as she came around out from behind Adora and let her scoot back on the pillows stacked up on her bed. She still held the halfway done braid and tried to bring it into Adora’s view.

Adora could see three interwoven sections of hair that Glimmer kept entwining by tucking them under and over each other, and before long, she took a grey hair band and tied the ends together. She let go and let the new braid rest on Adora’s shoulder. Adora smiled as she looked at it—maybe change was nice.

“Thanks, Glim’,” she offered in return, and she leaned forward and wrapped her arms gently around Glimmer’s neck in a small hug that she reciprocated around Adora’s waist. It was comforting and she wasn’t sure she wanted to let go of her friend.

They pulled back after a minute and a small piece of hair fell into Adora’s face, out of its hold.

Glimmer giggled, a lovely sound, and tucked the rebel hair behind her ear.

Chapter End Notes

I love this fluffy chapter hehe...
Kudos are appreciated!!!
Glimmer had left to go grab she and Adora some lunch from the kitchens, but when she came back, she came with more than just some elderberry juice and cucumber sandwiches for the two of them—like she said she would.

Instead Glimmer was nearly knocked over as a certain revolutionary alicorn burst through her bedroom doors, his hooves click-clacking against the floor, while Catra and Bow walked in afterwards.

“ADOOOORA!”, he shouted excitedly.

She had forgotten that he hadn’t been able to see her since the battle and so she suddenly felt guilty for not checking in on her empathetic horse friend.

Glimmer set down the food on the bedside table, as Swift Wind came over beside her and smiled at seeing her sitting up.

Adora smiled back at him and a small laugh escaped her as he gently nudged her with his nose until she opened up her arms and enveloped his head into a solid hug. He backed out of Adora’s arms after a good moment, and looked her over.

“You had me so worried! I’ve been feeling drawn to you since the battle ended, but you know! This castle seems horse friendly—but, they wouldn’t let me come see you in the infirmary! How speciesist of them—I swear! I have concern about you just like the rest of them,” he sputtered.

“I’m sorry Swifty, I missed you a lot, seeing you outside,” she laughed. “I’ll make sure they know you’re always welcome to stay with me,” and Adora scratched the spot behind his jaw and ear, which made it flick like it always did when he was happy.

“Thank you, Adora—glad to know that someone in this castle is considerate,” he scoffed.

“HEY!”, both Bow and Catra retorted, their glares at Swift Wind showed they were mildly offended.

Adora laughed harder this time.

“I’m sorry if you’ve forgotten, but I think Bow boy over here was the one who made sure you had a place to eat and sleep this week—AND thought to escort through the castle to come see your precious Adora,” Catra said with the snarkiness that Adora remembered very well.

Swift Wind puffed out his chest and lowered himself on the floor beside Adora’s bed.

“I’m Swift Wind, no ordinary horse, and although I am very grateful for your generosity—I’ll have
you know that I could have very well have taken care of myself without Adora around you
know…”, he noted.

“Sure, sure you could bud,” Bow snickered.

Glimmer sighed and looked at the food she’d brought in and nearly forgot about. She picked up a
tray and handed it over to Adora where she sat in bed. And then grabbed the one she brought for
herself, sitting down beside Adora as the three of them kept bickering.

“Okay—so, I’m glad we’re all here now, but Adora should probably have something to eat soon, so
you know—she can stay healthy, and maybe we can have lunch now… Then finish all of thiss—,”
She waved her arms around at everyone, “later!”

Adora had to hold in another snicker as she looked at everyone around her and then picked up her
cup of juice.

“Thanks guys…”, she smiled before she took a sip.

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“Hey—uh, Adora?”, Catra whispered as she carefully opened the door to Adora’s room.

She wanted to be quiet just in case Adora had fallen asleep early tonight, but instead she was laying
down in bed slowly flipping through an old book that Glimmer had probably retrieved from the
library for her to read if she was alone and bored.

Adora stopped turning a page and turned her head on her pillows to find the body that matched the
voice she had heard. She smiled a bit to find that it was Catra coming in.

“What’s up?”, she asked her.

Catra walked into the room with a small bag of her own belongings and set it down on the vanity’s
chair. Then she walked over to the bedside and sat down with a small sigh.

“I was wondering that, um—since you’re in your own room again, I—uh…”, Catra tried to say, but
something kept her from completing her thought.

Adora set down the book on the bedside table and reached for her wrist.

“Wondering… if I need someone to stay with me for the night?”, she tried.

“Uh… Yeah… that,” Catra nodded, not looking Adora in the eyes. But she grasped back at Adora’s
wrist—a familiar touch.

Adora didn’t really want anyone to have to feel like they had to have the responsibility for taking
care of her, but it seemed like Catra was kind of lost in the Castle, without a place to be.

“You don’t want to sleep in your new room?”, Adora wondered.

“Not really,” Catra groaned, “I haven’t really slept anywhere but where you’ve been the past week
or so…”

“Oh… Well then, yeah,” Adora caught on, “it’d be nice if you would stay with me, just in case I
need help during the night—thank you,” she said hoping that would make Catra feel welcome and
not undermine her confidence. Even though it slightly made Adora feel a little weak, it felt better to
make Catra feel like she needed her.
Catra stood up from the side of the bed and turned out the lights across the room, and she sauntered back. As she was about to curl up at the end of the bed by Adora’s feet, she instead found Adora holding open the blankets into a little cave and patting the space beside her.

“I’m a bit cold—would you mind? I remember you always being warm when we shared a bunk together,” she asked softly.

Catra snickered quietly and crawled into the bed and under the sheets, right next to Adora, like they sometimes would if the other had a nightmare when they were little.

Catra thought about turning over on her side to face away from Adora—but she decided to open up a little bit, and instead turned toward her. She slid arms around Adora’s middle, while the blonde snuggled into her hold, and she found Catra’s hand to hold onto under the covers.

Catra’s chin rested in the crook of Adora’s shoulder, and Adora could feel Catra’s breath slow down to a sleep like pace in her ear. This was a new feeling for both of them.

It wasn’t quite like when they were children anymore was it?

They’ve been through too much for it to be the same.

But something about this change felt… Comforting.

So they stayed together the whole night, once again.

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“Adora…”, his voice echoed in the infinite darkness that surrounded her.

Adora’s body automatically stiffened at the sound. She couldn’t find where it was coming from, until a large, bright flash of red light revealed an ominous figure standing, imposing and strict, in front of where she was on the ground.

The world around her glowed green. And as the figure moved forward, into the light, it revealed her worst threat—Lord Hordak.

“Sweet little princess—don’t look so shocked to see me…”, he growled.

Catra had told her he was gone, so this couldn’t be real—could it?

It certainly didn’t feel like a dream.

She attempted to move away from him, get up and run as he sauntered towards her, but even in wherever here was—she was still paralyzed.

She pushed herself up as best she could and she crawled on her hands as he kept closing in on her.

“Oh—Adora, what have you become?”, he asked looking down upon her, without expecting an answer in return.

Adora was panicking and beginning to lose her breath, and she didn’t know where she could hide or even go, for that matter, everything was empty and open.

She was highly vulnerable here.

“So weak and crippled now, that she has to run away from a fight? That’s not the mighty champion I
knew, now is it?”, he continued to taunt her.

Adora flipped around onto her chest and stomach, commando crawling like they used to do for training exercises in the Horde. Her lungs felt like fire and her arms already ached.

She just wanted to curl up.

She wanted Catra—or anyone to come save her this once—but, no one but she and Hordak were here.

She was alone.

Suddenly, the wind was forced out of her lungs as a large metal foot dug into her back and her chin smashed into the ground she was crawling on.

She gasped for air, as she scrambled to escape his weight—but she was trapped.

She couldn’t run.

She couldn’t fight.

She was alone.

She crumpled under his gaze and the pressure he forced her down with, and she stopped searching for a way out. Nobody would save her here.

“Isn’t it funny She-Ra—how a you’re a warrior who’s strength comes from the attachments of the people you surround yourself with, and don’t let go of. But…”, Hordak trailed off to a pause.

He raised his arm, as it mutated into his signature energy canon, radiating red electricity.

And he aimed it straight ahead, to where her friends appeared from the shadows, all tied up and unconscious—far from her reach on the ground.

“Do you know what is so trivial about the power you hold little princess?”, he snarled.

Adora shut down, there was nothing she could do to save them, and tears began to stream down her cheeks from her eyes.

She was living her worst nightmare.

Hordak pressed down harder onto her spine and told her, “It’s that your attachment to your friends are also your greatest weakness, Adora—and it seems it has been your downfall. What a shame.”

Adora whimpered.

He clenched his fist, and released the shot.

She watched in horror—and screamed like she never had before.

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Catra bolted awake as Adora screamed aloud and shot up in bed with a cold sweat and bloodshot eyes—as if she’d been crying. Her breath was frantic and she couldn’t control her heartbeat as everything around her was racing, still fresh from the dream.
Adora looked around herself frantically, for anyone—and luckily Catra was still beside her like when they fell asleep.

Adora caught Catra’s eyes in the darkness of her room, and latched onto her as quickly as she could. The other girl was still surprised by the abrupt awakening, but she simply rolled with it and wrapped her arms around Adora tightly; stroking the back of her head as she began to shake and whimper, trying to hold back tears, no doubt.

“Hey—woah, Adora it’s okay! Take it easy…”, Catra hushed.

Adora sniffled and sputtered, as if she was going to try and say something to Catra but instead she brought her head down into Catra’s chest and clamped her eyes shut as she tried to breathe, but tears began to flood down her face—making it more difficult for her to calm down from the panic.

Catra kept holding her close and started to gently rock back and forth, trying to stall in order to think of how to help her friend.

“Did you have a bad nightmare?”, she tried to ask her softly.

Adora nodded slightly against her chest and continued to melt down.

“Well, it’s okay now, don’t worry—you’re awake, and that’s what I’m here for. I promised I wouldn’t let you work through things alone, and I’ll keep my end if you keep your end… But you have to tell me what’s wrong if we are going to work together here,” Catra hoped that would help.

Adora lifted her head up for a minute and looked back into Catra’s eyes, before her face contorted and her eyes clenched close again as a hiccup escaped her mouth when she tried to open it.

Catra reached for the cup of water on the bedside table Glimmer had left earlier. When she grasped it she put it to Adora’s mouth.

“C’mon take a sip, and you’ll feel better…”, she told her, and Adora obeyed.

She took a sip, and then downed almost the entire glass before Catra took it away and placed it back on the table next to the long forgotten book.

“How about now?”, Catra asked for her to try again.

Adora took in a deeper breath this time and managed to slow down. She was still shaking but it seemed she wasn’t hysterical like before.

“I-I couldn’t do a-anything C-catra. I-it was a-awful!”, she managed to say.

“You couldn’t move?”, Catra wondered.

“I c-couldn’t move, I-I couldn’t defend m-m-myself because I’m weak, h-he said—a-and it’s all my f-fault!”, she continued to stutter.

“Who told you that it was you fault? Did ‘he’ try to hurt you?”, Catra was starting to get worried about this nightmare, it didn’t seem typical.

“Adora?”, she pushed when she didn’t answer her.

Adora shrunk back down into Catra’s chest and and shook her head, saying, “No—but I couldn’t save all of you from h-him.”
Catra still didn’t quite understand, but it seemed like this was Adora’s worst nightmare.

And it was her not being able to fight to protect herself or her friends.

Catra sighed and tucked her head down onto Adora’s level and rubbed circles into her shoulder blades softly.

In a moment—a bright light entered the room, and two figures manifested near the bed, startling Catra—but she didn’t leave Adora.

Glimmer had teleported into the room with a worried look on her face and the Queen to her side didn’t seem to have a much brighter presence.

“Is everything all right? We heard a scream...”

Catra didn’t know for sure.

Chapter End Notes

WOOoo, this chapter felt much longer.
Things get a little rough but there's still fluff! Just my style.
Kudos are appreciated!!!
A Little Distant

Chapter Summary

Adora is distant while haunted by her nightmare, and the doubt that she'll ever be able to protect her friends again. Catra and the gang try to reassure her that everything will be okay.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Adora had barely spoken a word to anyone—all day.

Queen Angella excused herself from her court duties for the day and decided to stay with the girl, since Glimmer and Bow had to leave on a supply mission to a nearby town early that morning. Catra was supposed to go and aid with transferring Horde soldiers to temporary homes, but she decided she should probably stay with Adora so she wasn’t left alone with just the queen.

Although she knew Angella had taken Adora under her wing, Catra got the idea that Adora felt slightly uncomfortable around her when they were left alone without someone like Glimmer around. Heck, she still felt uncomfortable living around the imposing immortal woman.

It didn’t seem like Adora really wanted to do much of anything, as she shifted onto her side in bed—away from both Catra and Angella. Adora wasn’t even trying to sleep, but just zoning out to the point where it was like she was in a different dimension. She still hadn’t touched the breakfast Catra fetched for her from the kitchens today, and it was now well past lunch.

None of this was normal Adora behavior.

Catra knew it had to do with last night’s night-terror episode. And she had tried to understand what Adora had managed to tell her, but she still felt like she didn’t have the whole picture.

The best thing they could do for now is give Adora the space she needs—she thinks...?

Catra knew she wasn’t the best at this whole feelings thing herself, but she wasn’t sure if Adora was just trying to hide the fact she need attention, or if she really needed to be alone to work things out.

It had been a bit more than a week and a half since the battle, and Catra was surprised how well she had kept herself together with all the stress of managing the remainder of the Horde with Scorpia.

Shouldn’t she have nightmares? She almost died—if Adora hadn’t sacrificed herself for her then she probably would be.

She imagined it must be, that unlike Adora, she was being kept so busy around Brightmoon that she really hadn’t had the time to let much of what happened sink in. And it didn’t help that with Adora being the She-Ra, and that it’s just her nature—she’s going to blame herself for everything.

Even though Catra suspected that Adora withdrawing from the action might help her to see that, just maybe, the world would keep turning if she didn’t try to throw herself at every possible challenge—it
seemed to instead scare Adora that she couldn’t do anything at the moment.

Probably because she felt she couldn’t always just be there to protect her friends anymore.

That’s always where Adora’s She-Ra Powers had come from.

But it was also Adora’s confidence and fighting spirit.

‘Then that must be it…’, she guessed, thinking back to last night’s ramblings.

Catra realized she could sort through her own issues later—as two depressed teenagers would do nobody any good around the castle.

But, now—she had a plan.

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Queen Angella had left the room a while ago to go check what’s left in the inventory of the armory after the battle, seeing that Adora didn’t demand she be in the room with her—and rather it seemed, she’d probably like for her to leave her alone. Although, as she was striding down the hallway back from her small excursion to manage her kingdom, the young cat girl stepped out of Adora’s room to stop her.

Angella still wasn’t quite accustomed to seeing the ex-Horde officer—who kidnapped her daughter, living within the walls of her own home.

She reminded her of an old friend too—she noticed, but she didn’t dare ask the girl quite yet if she knew about her family or where she was from with the risk of getting a visceral response. So perhaps she’d talk to her in private… Another time.

Catra came before her and crossed her arms, acknowledging her with a nod, “Your Majesty,” she drawled.

“What is it that you need, Catra?”, Angella asked, hoping it was just Adora finally asking something of them.

“Look, I know Adora isn’t turning eighteen for another few weeks or so but uh—“, Catra was cut off.

“Pardon me? But—you mean to tell me that Adora’s birthday is coming up? The poor thing never even told us her birthday!”, Angella interjected.

“A what now?”, Catra asked.

“Oh—don’t worry about it, we’ll talk about that some other occasion, I’m sure, but what were you saying?”, she said putting them back on topic.

“Well—*ahem*, I was wondering if there was a way I could contact your princess and Bow to discuss picking something up for Adora while they’re out?”, Catra wrapped her arms around to her back and she held them there.

“Well, I don’t suppose why you can’t, there is a communicator in Glimmer’s room that should connect to Bow’s own device and you can call him. Her door should be open for you to go grab it,” Angella offered.
“Alright—well, thank you—for the help, uh, ma'am,” and with that, the strange little feline girl turned around and took off in search of Glimmer’s room down the hall. She didn’t see it, but Queen Angella smiled at her.

She knew Catra wouldn’t admit it but—She saw through Catra’s ‘cool’ guise after a few days and recognized the budding of something more than a friendship within the girl.

She hoped that soon enough both Catra and Adora would see it too.

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“C’mon Adora, you should really eat something today—or at least like, try to shift onto your other side?”, Swift Wind said trying to pry Adora out of whatever was gripping her. She didn’t try to say anything back to the alicorn standing in her room, let alone even turn to look at him. He sat down on the floor and waited to see if he’d ever get a response from her any time today. Finally she decided to acknowledge him when he wouldn’t leave.

“Not hungry,” she whispered just loud enough for him to hear.

“Well… That’s an obvious lie, now isn’t it,” he retorted, “You’re always hungry!”

“Why does it matter? I don’t deserve it,” she spoke up.

“Y-you don’t deserve it?! Why would you even say that Adora—you have to cut that out!”, Swift Wind said worriedly.

“I don’t deserve it, because there’s TONS of other people who are actually being useful, helping people! While I’m stuck here because—it’s my fault, and I let everyone down because now I can’t even do the one job I’m meant to do... Be She-Ra and protect everyone!”, Adora snapped back at him.

Those were the most words she’d spoken all day.

“Well, that—sounds a bit more like you...”, the alicorn said after a minute of quiet drifted between them, gathering his thoughts on what he was going to say to her next.

“Listen, Adora. I’ve only had comprehensive thought, since the day you gave it to me, for about a year now, and I can tell you that anyone of your friends—like Glimmer, Bow, or Catra, would agree with me that you matter to them. And that’s a good enough reason in itself for you to deserve to eat and take care of yourself. At least if not for your own well being, do it for them Adora. The only way you can ever let them down is if you give up! And something you forget is that you underestimate them, and they don’t need you to be She-Ra and constantly protect them for you to be their friend. They love you—for you.”

Adora uncurled a bit and craned her neck to finally look her Swifty in the eyes, looking to see if he really meant what he said.

“You sound like you’re telling me I’m moping again,” she sighed, “but I know that deep down, I think. It’s just—I’m scared now that I’m not there to protect them.”

Adora couldn’t help but shudder and grip the bed sheets until her knuckles were white, thinking back to the nightmare.

“That’s very understandable, but you know—that’s why there’s The Princess Alliance! You know, the one you helped to restart? That way all the princesses can protect each other, Adora—including
you. You just have to let them.” Swift Wind nudged her on the shoulder begrudgingly.

Adora remembered her promise with Catra from when she’d first woken back up in Brightmoon. She promised that they’d protect each other, and so she had to let Catra in order to keep her end of the promise. She wouldn’t let her down this time.

And she knew from now on that she needed to trust that The Princess Alliance could hold its own without her, and that She-Ra—herself—would never have to tackle obstacles alone.

She was still anxious about what the future would bring for her and her friends, but she felt a little better after what Swift Wind had said.

“Hey, Swifty?”, she asked.

“Yeah Princess?”

“Thanks for knowing when I need you the most,” she said with a small smile that dawned on her face for the first time all day.

“Of course, Adora—afterall, we are still linked,” he tapped his head with his wing, “so I have quite the Adora radar.”

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It was getting late now, and Catra wondered if Bow-zo and Shimmer would pull through tonight. She had called them a while after lunch and it was now approaching on ten o’clock at night.

“Who’s this?”, Glimmer had asked earlier, picking up Bow’s communicator before the holo images of each other popped up, projected into the air.

“It’s your worst enemy—Catra,” she’d replied back with a snicker.

“Oh—uh, wait… Why are you using my communicator, and in MY ROOM?!”, Glimmer had begun to shout in the middle of the woods, who knows where.

“Your mom told me too, it’s not like I broke in and stole it or something, also—your diary is quite the material... I’ll say princess—”, she was cut off.

“DON’T YOU DARE!”, Glimmer shook the communicator and Bow had to take it from her little hands before she broke it to get at Catra.

‘It’s way too easy to tease her’, Catra thought.

“Glimmer, chill—what do you want, Catra?”, he asked her.

“Look, okay—so,” Catra took a breath to get serious, “since last night Adora’s been having a really hard time. She’s feeling like she can’t do anything to help, and I think she’s scared that she can’t be there for us. And she’s been all mopey in bed today, you know—the usual ‘shut everyone out because I’m too stubborn to talk about my feelings’ sorta deal she does.”

“That—sounds about right, we know what your saying,” Bow replied, and Glimmer listened.

“Good—so uh, I think we need to do something for her. Something that can help her get some freedom back so she can feel a bit more herself, rather than thinking she has to be confined to her bedroom or the Castle for the rest of her life…”, Catra proposed a bit nervously.
“What are you thinking we should do?”, Glimmer spoke up.

“What about those, uh… Thingies, that back in the Horde they might take a soldier to the infirmary wing that wasn’t a stretcher, but like, it had wheels and stuff—what’s that called?”, Catra tried to explain what she was thinking of but she didn’t know that name of it. She wanted to facepalm for her unusual naive-ness, but she wouldn’t do it in front of these two dorks.

Both replied at the same time after looking at each other, “You mean a wheelchair?”

“Yes…?”, she guessed.

Bow glanced at Glimmer again and then to a blinking map device at his side before answering.

“There’s a village or two on the way back we can stop in. I know a guy I can talk to who can help me figure something out—I think he’ll want to meet Adora later, but maybe I can pull a favor for aiding the village earlier! Glimmer and I might be a bit, but we’ll see what we can bring home!”, he responded excitedly.

“Are you sure about doing this today?”, Glimmer asked him.

“Yeah! The sooner the better for Adora, annnnd—he’s a guy I know from the inventors guild!”, he smiled reassuringly back at the girl.

“Cute, so be safe or whatever, and see what you can do,” Catra said quickly before they got too carried away.

“Awwwww… look she’s really warming up to us Glim’,” he said to get on Catra’s nerves.

Glimmer just snorted and giggled in reply.

“Don’t get too touchy—just get back here, and you guys better bring something home with you for Adora or I’ll slash your hamstrings and see how YOU like walking after that…”, she snarled back at them.

“Oooohh, AdOoora—“, they both started to coo at her but then she decided to hit the button and end the call, turning the communicator off by closing it shut quickly—before they could finish their sentence and take away any more of her pride.

Thinking back to the conversation made her wish they’d get here faster before Adora decided to try and sleep—though she doubted Adora would sleep without her by her side after last night.

Catra got up from the window of the Castle she was sitting in and looking out of. And sauntered down the hall in search of Adora’s bedroom door.

Suddenly, just when she reached the handle—Swift Wind pushes open the door with a food tray dangling from his mouth.

“Uhhhh…”, Catra started only to be cut off by the not-so-typical horse.

“Oh good! I was just about to go drop this off at the kitchens! I think Adora would like to see you,” he managed to say through his teeth before gallivanting back down the hallway.

Catra held the door, and walked into the now darker room, that was illuminated by the moons light outside through the windows and one of the small crystal lamps by the bed, where Adora was now actually trying to read the book she had been flipping through prior. She probably shouldn’t be reading just in case it aggravated any symptoms of her previous concussion she had just recovered.
from, although Catra was just relieved to see her doing anything at all.

Adora still looked a bit dishevelled from not taking care of herself today, but her mood seemed happier—which made a weight lift off of Catra’s chest.

“Hey, Adora,” she whispered softly as she approached her.

“Hey,” Adora returned, as quietly as she had.

“Don’t tell me your weird horse was the one who got you to come back to this dimension”, she sighed as she sat down on the edge of the bed and leaning back into the mattress.

“He’s not MY horse, and he’s quite alicorn if I do say so myself, but—he has his ways,” Adora joked a little and Catra couldn’t help but smile a little bit, breaking her cool facade.

“Well then—welcome back to this dimension, princess,” Catra said to her as she leaned over Adora’s lap and reached for the hair framing her face, and then pushing back and then behind her ear. Most of it had fallen out of Adora’s braid.

It was quiet for a moment, as Catra kept her hand by Adora’s cheek, just taking her in after being distant for the day. And Adora let the book sit on her lap and she brought up her hand to hold Catra’s hand where it was. She leaned into it apprehensively, and sighed a bit of relief at the touch.

They were much closer now after all they’d been through, even if they still had to work through some of it, they would. But for now things seemed different, but not quite in a bad way, that Catra had expected when she first deserted Hordak and cooperated with the rebellion, then coming to Brightmoon in order to stay by Adora while she was out of commission. She thought she’d never be seen as anything but for the horrible things she’d done with the Horde, but—it really did seem that Adora was onto something with the attachments she’d made. Before Catra had cut everyone off, but slowly she began to rebuild some ties of her own, and in the end they got her here—back with Adora. They seemed to give her more power than Hordak could ever have handed to her.

And that’s why she pulled her hand away from Adora’s face and snaked her arms around the blonde’s waist, pulling her in for a bone-crushing hug that she never knew if she’d be able to tear away from.

Adora was surprised, but then she accepted it and pulled her arms around Catra’s neck, and snuggled her face against the side of the other girl’s cheek.

They stayed like that for a couple of minutes, until Adora whispered, “I’ll keep my end of the promise.”

“And I’ll keep mine, don’t worry, Adora,” she whispered back.

Before long, they heard a knock on the door to the bedroom.

The two girls separated then, but their hands came down to stay together and intertwine.

“Come in!”, they both called.

Glimmer peeked through the door with it cracked enough for her to slip through.

“Hey Catra,” she smirked at her, “we got what you asked for.”

Glimmer put her hands on her hips, and waited for a reaction. Adora looked a little confused and
asked what Catra had plotted without her.

“What’s she talking about…?”, she asked Catra suspiciously.

“She’s talking about this beauty,” Bow announced as he walked in with a brand-new wheelchair in tow.

“Custom made for you, today—by yours truly—and a buddy of mine, who will be stopping by the castle sometime later this week to help you out!”, he boasted proudly at his handy work.

“Ta-da!!!”, Glimmer beamed happily.

Catra felt Adora’s hand grip hers tighter and so she looked over at the other girl beside her. Her mouth was slightly left open, and her eyes glaring at the new piece of equipment like it was the most unusual device she’d ever seen. A blush slowly rose to her face and she searched for something to say, as they all waited for her to give some sort of reaction.

“I-I don’t know what to say,” she eventually sputtered out, “but, uh—thanks guys…”

She sniffled for a moment, but then it turned into a hiccup, and a few rebel tears forced past her eyelids and down her cheeks. She tried to rub them away furiously, but Catra pulled her forearm away from her face before she rubbed it too hard.

“Hey, hey, whoa—you good there, princess?”, Catra asked looking Adora in the face.

“Yeah, n-no, I’m not sure—but I p-promise I’m not sad guys, it’s just—you’re all too t-thoughtful.”, she tried to smile to show she was fine although her voice wavered.

“Aw, thanks—well, it was all my idea, just saying,” Catra snickered.

“EXCUSE US?!””, Bow and Glimmer exclaimed towards Catra.

Adora just broke out into a fit of laughter at her three friends—and pretty soon, the rest of them were snorting or giggling along with her in the quiet of her room, before they all passed out for the night after a very long day.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the wait! I’m starting to slow down while writing, but I have a lot more planned and written already!

Enjoy!

Kudos are always appreciated!
Catra and Adora spend some quality bonding time in their room, getting ready in the morning as Adora is restless to get back into the swing of things.

It had been a difficult week of waiting for Adora. The healers had wanted her to have a week of bedrest before she was out and about. Although Adora was still technically recuperating, she was restless and desperately wanted to try out the new wheelchair.

Bow had told her to be patient and take the time to get stronger, so that when his inventor’s guild friend came over, he could help Adora get situated and comfortable in her new apparatus.

So when Adora woke up this morning, after waiting what felt like months for Saturday to come around, she was more excited and nervous than anytime she’d been in the past few weeks.

The only thing stopping her right now was—Catra. Catra had taken to sleeping curled into Adora’s side, and she usually awoke to have ended up sprawled against her chest. And this morning, was no exception.

Adora managed to take her non-squished, half-asleep arm out of the covers and lightly began to brush Catra’s wild mane of hair from her face. It was still as dark, thick, and course as it had been when they were just toddlers. It too, had grown a bit longer since the last time they saw each other. She wondered if Catra would let her learn to braid her hair like Glimmer had showed her.

Adora had become distracted for longer than she wanted to be though—she had a mission today. Bow’s friend was supposed to come to the Castle today to see her, and help her fine tune the new pair of wheels they’d custom made for her. And in order to do that, she had to have the healers come to check-up on her first, and then get ready to face the outside world for the first time in almost more than two or three weeks. Which meant, getting clean and putting on actual clothes.

Which also sadly meant having Catra wake up, and help her accomplish those things!

Which was also—not an easy feat.

“Hey—Catra,” she whispered into the cool morning air that came through the windows of her room. The girl stirred, but no signs of consciousness yet.

“Catra!”, Adora tried a little harsher this time.

Catra stirred again but this time she lifted her head up and let her chin rest on top of Adora. Not yet opening her eyes.

“What’s up with you, princess?”, she mumbled sleepily.
“We have to get up!”, Adora reminded Catra, “I have to get checked out in order to actually go out into the world today! And also make sure I look okay enough to go into the outside world! And I’m going to need your help!”

Adora attempted to worm her way out from under Catra but there was only so much she could do.

“Alrighty, alright I get it—you’re excited,” Catra yawned, “I’ll get up and the day can start, I guess…”

“Ugh, Thank youuuuu…”, Adora giggled as Catra slid off of her, allowing Adora to pull herself up on the bed.

She sat up and watched as Catra yawned again, and stretched her back by pulling her arms over her head to their full extent. The nightshirt she put on before bed was a simple, red tank top, and it showed her back muscles as they shifted around her shoulder blades.

Adora caught herself staring after too long, and poked at the other girl’s exposed back as if to remind her that she was still waiting for her to get off her butt.

“Hang oooon, Adora—I’m going, geez,” she grumbled as she got up off the bed and went off to begin the morning.

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“Just don’t over exert yourself, and be tender on areas that may still feel weak or sore around your core—you are still healing from a Grade B spinal cord injury in your Lumbar nerves Adora, remember that. You may have mostly recuperated miraculously fast in comparison to others, due to She-Ra’s slight residual healing capabilities, but understand that you are still not invincible! Listen to what your body says,” the woman she had come to know in the past weeks as the head of the medical ward, said this to her, holding a serious gaze into her eyes.

The healer knew how stubborn Adora could be, so she had to be as direct and curt as possible with the teen, as to see her not put herself in harm’s way the first day they let her go gallivanting about.

“I won’t—I mean, I won’t and I will! Thank you, Ma’am… It means a lot,” Adora said back to the woman.

She had been the one to kindly look after Adora’s needs, other than Catra, Glimmer, Bow, and Queen Angella of course.

“Alright—take care, Adora. I’ll still be checking in with you every week. And you know where to find me if you have an issue, dear?”, she returned.

“Yes, of course;” Adora said nodding her head.

The woman got up from the chair beside her bed and patted Adora’s shoulder gently, as she smiled, and saw herself out.

Adora whooped out loud as soon as the healer was out of earshot, and threw her arms over her head and she softly fell back against her bed’s pile of pillows, as Catra walked back in from hanging outside the door.

She smiled at the dork she saw before her, snorting a little at the sight.

“Well, as much as I can be, I’m free from the grasps of constant medical attention—at least, weekly,” Adora joked to Catra, who came over to sit adjacent to her on the bed.
“You want to actually get ready for the day now, I’m guessing?” Catra asked her.

“Yeah—that’d be nice,” Adora chuckled.

Over the last week, Catra and Adora had fallen into a small routine in the morning. Catra would carefully scoop up Adora, who was much lighter than she remembered, and bring her to the bathroom. She made sure Adora had everything she needed in there, and stayed outside the door to give Adora privacy, but to also be there if she fell or, something like that. Once she was finished up, she’d call for Catra, and she’d wet a washcloth to clean her hands with soap. Then they’d brush their teeth, Catra would hand Adora a glass of water.

Adora still felt embarrassed about Catra needing to help her with mostly everything, at the moment, but nothing amounted to how she felt asking for someone to help her wash her hair. The first time in the infirmary was slightly traumatizing.

She and Catra grew up taking community showers in the locker rooms back at the Horde’s train bases in the Fright Zone, and it went all the way back to how they would get clean together as toddlers. But no matter how Adora looked at it, it still made her turn pink for some reason.

“Oh—okay, so, I haven’t done this yet—but uh, we can do this…”, Catra tried to diffuse the situation.

“When the healers did it for me, they were just in their scrubs, and made sure I didn’t slip in the water,” Adora mumbled as Catra figured out how to draw the bath.

“Well, how about I’ll get in with you, and I’ll do your hair—and you can do mine, if you want to… I mean…”, Catra offered, a bit hesitant. It only seemed fair to her to make Adora feel a bit less timid.

“Um—only, if you feel comfortable doing it, I mean we grew up together doing this so I’m not… you know,” Adora sputtered.

“Alright, I’m fine with it,” she smiled apprehensively.

Catra began to strip off her night shorts and tank top as Adora lifted the hem of her loose shirt over her head, from where she sat on the bed.

Each stole quick, and nervous glances between the two of them.

If this was so familiar, then why was it so tense?

They hadn’t been like this in a very long time—had they.

Neither had lived in the same proximity of many people as they had over a year ago, they’ve gotten used to having private quarters.

She knew she had nothing to fear anymore about being vulnerable around Catra but something still made her a bit scared sometimes. She wish she could pinpoint why, but she knew they were a complex relationship, and had a lot of ‘stuff’ still between them. So, she wasn’t ready to figure out why.

Adora had managed to slip the drawstring pants off of her legs, and she wasn’t quite sure what to do now that the both of them were in their underwear. But, Catra wasn’t as flustered, and simply took them off and threw them in the pile of her clothes without regarding Adora. So—Adora did too.

‘She could do this—she could be open to Catra, it’s okay’, she told herself.
Catra came over near Adora, with a cool guise on her face, probably trying to push down any invading thoughts or to keep her timid emotions at bay.

“You alright if I pick you up now?”, she asked.

“Y-yeah,” Adora replied quickly.

Catra mindfully lifted her, and Adora held onto her neck with her arms around them. Then, they walked to the edge of the bath, and Catra gently lowered her into the warm water—making sure she was able to hold onto the sides before she herself could climb in.

Catra bristled as she touched the water, all too well remembering how much she hated it. Adora noticed as she got in behind her.

“You okay?”, she asked softly, turning around.

“Yeah, don’t worry about it…”, she grumbled.

“I do, though,” she said turning back to face away from her as Catra grabbed the shampoo bottle.

“Alright then, princess…”, she sighed, “Can you lean back, and get your hair wet?”

“Yeah, hold on,” Adora said, tipping back into the water for a second, then working hard pull herself back up with the the edges of the tub.

In a moment, she felt Catra’s hands gently rub the shampoo into her hair and massage it into her scalp. She closed her eyes and took in the feeling. Before, she felt a large amount of apprehensiveness about being so close to Catra in this way, despite their history. But now, she was unapologetic to how much she enjoyed this new feeling.

It felt comforting again.

Water was washed over her head without warning and trickled down her face, so she wiped her eyes clean of soap with one hand. Catra laughed—a real laugh of her’s—the high pitched giggle.

Catra rinsed out the suds and pushed back Adora’s long blonde locks, out of her face.

“You have thick hair too you know, and it’s gotten a lot longer—I don’t know if anyone’s told you,” Catra said quietly.

“I noticed—I haven’t actually cut it in about a year now…You know, I didn’t really think of it,” she sighed.

“Maybe it would be easier to take care of like this, if it was shorter… it’s a lot for me to wash,” the girl behind her smirked, looking at Adora.

At least she implied that it wasn’t too traumatic of an experience for her so far, because it sounded like she’d be willing to do this again.

She then thought back to her hair, and pulled the wet strands over her shoulders and looked at it. It was nothing quite like She-Ra’s golden yellow locks that cascaded in waves down her back and flowed around her head like a halo.

Catra took the time to stare at Adora’s back, where she found ten long scars, reaching down her back from her shoulder blades—to her waist. She traced her fingers over the scars she’d left to show Adora how hurt she really was. She regretted them just as much as Adora regretted not letting Catra
come with her to find the sword in the first place—rather than leaving her behind. Adora felt her hand on her shoulder and glanced back at her.

She should probably not start to talk about it now.

“Hey,” she spoke, “it’s your turn.”

“M’kay,” Catra murmured.

Adora managed to turn around and she reciprocated Catra.

After—they washed their faces and Adora put conditioner, that they didn’t have back in the Horde, in Catra’s hair to see how it might affect the course, frizzy mane on her head. And soon enough Catra stepped out, and carefully lifted Adora from the water and into a warm towel. They wrapped up, and stood (or sat) in comfortable silence for a bit as they dripped water onto the tile floor.

“We should get dressed, and then go grab some breakfast,” Adora suggested, breaking the quiet of the room.

Catra looked down at where Adora was sitting on the floor waiting, and nodded.

She brought Adora to her bed, and opened up her wardrobe.

She spotted a lot of the new clothes Bow and Glimmer had purchased recently for Adora, each piece was easy to move in and made of comfy material. And in the back, were some older pieces of clothes, such as Adora’s signature outfit, Horde uniform, her prom dress, and a light-purple robe.

“How do you fancy, M’lady?”, Catra swept an arm dramatically over the clothes selection.

“What, oh—uh, I trust you, you’re usually better with clothes than I am, it seems,” Adora replied.

“Ahhh, okay, then I choose…”, Catra have her the best devilish smile she could muster.

“This!”, she had pulled out the red prom dress.

That brought up a lot of cringey memories.

“Haha—very funny Catra, but that’s not what I was expecting in trusting you with making me look decent,” she snorted.

“Fine, fine—but what were you expecting, honestly Adora, you’re too easy,” she mocked, putting it back on the rack.

Catra looked over her options again, this time a bit more seriously. She pulled out Adora’s old, signature, white athletic shirt, and put it underneath a loose, cropped, red t-shirt—it seemed thin and easy to move in. Then, she picked out a grey pair of drawstring pants that didn’t quite hug the thighs but had elastic at ankles so they weren’t quite as loose. She looked through the bottom drawers of the dresser and pulled out a pair of white socks, and found a new pair of shorter, darker-grey boots—although she opted to go with the classic red boots Adora always wore. She walked back over to the bed and put them down beside where Adora was already sitting, back in her underwear and hiding under her towel.

“How’s that for decent?”, she snickered.

“That looks… Good! Thanks a bunch,” Adora smiled as she began to pull on the shirt.
Catra went to pick up her sleep wear, and throw it in her bag. Unfortunately she didn’t have anything other than the old Horde uniform, a white sleeveless undershirt she’d managed to grab, and her headpiece, which she’d abandoned pretty much since her first night in Brightmoon. Opting to let her bangs fall onto her face instead. She felt like she needed change—maybe Adora would let her borrow a shirt, or something.

“Hey, Adora?”, she asked after a moment, “Could I borrow some of your clothes, maybe?”

“Oh um, I mean sure! But, didn’t they give you anything else other than the sleep wear?”, Adora wondered aloud as she struggled to get one of her legs into the corresponding pant leg.

“No, those were a gift from your friends after the night you had just woken up,” Catra answered her.

“Well then,” Adora had managed to pull the waist of the pants up to her abdomen, finally—“your welcome to share the closet!”

“M’kay,” she turned around to see if anything might match her style.

Catra grabbed her the white undershirt, which she’d never worn before and threw it over her head. Great now she had a shirt and underwear on—a perfect outfit.

She spotted a loose, red long sleeved shirt. She pulled it out and felt that it was pretty lightweight so she threw it over her sleeveless top. It had a large round neck so it slightly slouched and showed her shoulders—just her style. It contrasted how her undershirt came up to her neck. Now she needed pants… she pulled out a pair of skinny ebony-red pants. She tore her now horribly ripped leggings, so that she didn’t need the top part, but the bottoms of the feet. She slipped them on and then pulled on the pants, cutting a small hole for the tail with a claw—oops. Then she rolled up the ankles a little and showed off her (newly diy-ed) red socks underneath. She let the shirt hang down without tucking it in, and it came to the top of her thighs in the front and back. It was still a bit baggy at the waist so she grabbed out her old belts to accessorize.

Before she could look at herself in the mirror, a successfully, now fully dressed Adora made a surprised sound that caught her attention.

“What’cha looking at me like that for?”, she asked.

“You look... cute,” she slipped out after a second, “I-I mean nice—uh, good! It’s different!”

“Um—Thanks, I guess?”, she blushed a bit.

She turned to the mirror to look and make sure she wasn’t dressed like some dumb fool, but when she saw herself, it was like looking at an entirely new person she’d never known. She wondered if Adora would relate to that.

“Hey, wait—come here!”, she patted the bedside.

“What now?”, Catra laughed as she walked over to her.

“Sit for like, one second!”, Adora have her a pleading look and Catra gave in.

“—One,” she counted.

“Oh, shut up!”, Adora giggled.

Adora swirled her finger in the air to motion for her to turn around. Once she did, she felt Adora’s
hands run through her still damp hair, pulling it up and twisting it around a bit. She secured her work with a band on her wrist and pulled out some of the strands, so it became a bit looser.

“Glim’ taught me how to do it yesterday, go see if you like it—in the mirror,” Adora smiled.

Catra sighed, and got up from the bed and walked to the vanity. She looked at herself once again. But this time, her normally spontaneous hair sat contained on top of her head and a few loose ends sticking out of the elastics hold, making it look messy, but good. She liked this—she liked how she looked.

“It’s called a messy bun,” Adora snickered, “and I like seeing your bangs again.”

“Thanks—Adora,” Catra replied, taking one last look in the mirror before turning back around.

“Let me help you get your boots on and we’ll see about breakfast, like you’d said,” and she smiled.

Maybe good things can come from change, and today was proof.

Chapter End Notes

Eeeeee I’ve been busy lately sorry, I have like seven more chapters to post!!!
Kudos are appreciated!
Garden Stroll

Chapter Summary

Adora meets a new friend, who’ll help her out in the long run and give her some freedom back. He may understand her situation a bit more than the average person in Brightmoon...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Adora was nearly vibrating, trying to contain her nervousness on the bench they were sitting outside on, next to Catra and Glimmer.

Bow had gone to go fetch his friend at the Castle doors and into the courtyard gardens, where they agreed to meet. But, it seemed to take them a while to get back here. So, Adora just had to wait patiently.

The two other girls next to Adora, hoped that they’d come around soon so that she wouldn’t turn into a nervous puddle.

At least it was a nice day outside, and it was Adora’s first outing since the Battle. So, it’d be good for her to take in the sun on her skin—but she had other things on her mind.

“Do you know what’s keeping them for so long?”, Catra glanced at Glimmer.

“Not really, although, I think—well, you’ll see when they finally get out here,” Glimmer tried to explain.

“What are you talk—ing about…”, Catra was about to growl back at the princess but lost her thought as Bow rounded the hedges with another young boy in tow.

He had dark hair, and green eyes—and his cheeks were spotted with freckles from the sun. The boy had a kind, soft smile, and looked to be a bit quiet. Although, not quite so much around Bow it seemed.

The biggest thing that stood out to Catra and Adora though—was the fact that he himself was in a wheelchair.

“See what I meant? Bow wanted it to be a surprise for Adora…”, the princess whispered to Catra.

Catra looked at Adora who was in fact quite shocked, and she looked very fascinated as he pushed his way over the cobblestone path with only the strength of his arms. She wanted to be able to do that.

“Hey guys! Sorry we took so long—haha, um, well I had to take this guy around back the looooong way because of the big staircase leading into the gardens being a bit of an obstacle!”, Bow laughed awkwardly.

“I hope you can forgive us,” the boy said with a smile towards Adora, “I can’t help it much!”
“I understand—completely,” Adora replied, reciprocating the friendly smile. She held out her hand and he rolled over to meet her where she was on the bench, holding out his own. “My name’s Adora! What’s yours? I’ve been waiting to meet you, especially since Bow seems to think you’re pretty neat,” she asked him.

“I’m Ferris, and I met Bow in the inventors guild! His arrows are pretty cool—if I do say so myself!”, he chuckled. Bow blushed a bit at the complement.

“Aw, but really nothing compares to the work you do! Adora—Ferris makes incredible stuff for the differently abled, and he specializes in wheelchairs!”, Bow exclaimed.

“I do have quite the experience in one, so I thought—why not learn to make them? And make them better?”, he patted his chair for emphasis.

“That’s so cool—do you mind if I ask, what makes it so you need to use one?”, she asked him apprehensively.

“Oh, yeah! Of course! I have a condition called Spina Bifida, which affected the membrane on my spinal cord from before I was even born, it can happen in varying degrees but in my case it left me partially paralyzed,” he did a small spin on the grass to show himself off. “But as you can see, I get around just fine. And you will too! What do you need a chair for—that is, if you feel alright telling me?”, he asked, reciprocating the question.

“In the last battle to hopefully end the war—I got hit by Lord Hordak armed with blaster canon… And in short, She-Ra saved me, but I fell pretty hard onto the ground from high up and managed to get a Grade B spinal cord injury down in these lower nerves,” she put a hand to her lower back to draw emphasis, “leaving me paralyzed from around my hips down,” she finished explaining to him.

It felt weird to talk about her condition to a stranger for the first time, but she let it pass—Ferris seemed to be the most empathetic person she could possibly talk to right now.

“Oh ow, that’s no fun either, is it?”, he joked.

“Yeah, no—but I know I’m lucky to have my life, and still be able to be with my friends,” she motioned to the three—who were all staring intently at the two—standing around them, with her hand.

“That’s the spirit I always like to see!”, he laughed.

~~~

Now that Adora was sitting in the chair, she was starting to get the feel for it.

Ferris had worked on adjusting the back of the seat so it supported her waist, while Bow worked on making the foot pedal the right length in order for her to fit her legs on it so that she could keep them from getting in her way.

Soon enough, all the work that needed to be done—was done. And everyone looked at Adora expectantly to do something now that she was free to try out her new wheels, but she was a bit hesitant to try anything.

So, Ferris helped her out.

“You wanna learn a few things from an old pro?”, he asked her.
“I guess I should…”, she laughed. He moved to sit across from her, but not too close.

“Alright so, first things first—these are your wheels, and they have these handle like grips on the side that make it easy to push and hold onto while rolling,” he demonstrated by moving forward. “Then if you push the left side more, you'll turn right—and it’s vice versa,” he turned left and right, then finishing with a little 360 degree turn. “And this here? This is going to be a good friend of yours—it’s a brake for the wheel to lock here!”, he played with a lever by the wheel that clicked and kept the wheel from moving forward or backward.

She tried her own brakes out, pushing the small lever and wiggling the wheels. Then pushing it back, apprehensive to push forward.

“I think you’re ready to go, Adora, you’ll be fine!”, Ferris coaxed.

“If you say so…”, Adora gripped her wheels.

Catra got up from where she was sitting on the bench and walked up beside her. “Look—you guys can give me a tour of the gardens, if—Adora will lead us around,” she sighed. Catra really didn’t care too much about the landscape, but if it got Adora willing to move then it’d be worth it.

“Oh, okay, just don’t rush me,” Adora huffed.

Then, she gave a small push.

She moved forward a small bit.

It was much harder to push than she thought—she hasn’t quite been in the shape she used to be.

The grass gave a bit of resistance, but she gave herself another push and went forward to the cobblestone path that led through the garden. The stones were bumpy underneath her but easier to ride upon than the soft grass.

“Yeah! GO ADORA!”, Bow hollered.

Glimmer beamed with Ferris, while Catra gave a smirk and followed beside Adora as she began to move on down the path towards the archway that led through some rose hedges.

Ferris started pushing forward to follow them as well, and Glimmer and Bow trailed behind.

They crossed the threshold of arch, covered with lattice and prickly, white roses, and Ferris came up to the other side of Adora as they stopped to look at a small fountain with birds in the middle of the small clearing they entered.

“See, you’ll be just fine—I promise,” he gleamed.

“I think I will be—thank you…”, Adora smiled at him one last time, before going back to pushing herself down the garden path.

~~~

“Oh—thank the First Ones…”, Adora groaned as she and Catra finally reached the last hallway before their room. She and Catra had to take the long way back through the castle, and even be carried up one flight of stairs, as it had begun to grow dark outside and the moons in the sky began to rise. Adora was very, very, fatigued from a long day of being outside for the first time in a while.

The two of them had reached the doors to the room and Catra quietly held one open for Adora to
They got settled inside and started their new nightly routine together, which of course, ended with both climbing into bed for the night.

Adora was able to handle herself a bit more, now that she could move around to go brush her teeth, or grab her own night clothes. So the process went a little faster. Adora had settled her new chair by the end of the bed and waited for Catra to lend her a hand. She held out her arms and let Catra hold onto her as she picked her up and transferred her to the bed; Adora managed to wiggle herself under the covers and Catra slid in beside her like they had gotten accustomed to. Adora leaned back into the mattress and pillows and let her head fall to the side facing Catra, while Catra turned on her side facing Adora, and put her arms around Adora’s waist. She tucked her chin in Adora’s shoulder and wrapped her tail around one of Adora’s wrists that had gotten trapped underneath Catra.

They seemed to fit together like a puzzle.

Or they seemed to fit together—while being complete opposites, like night and day.

Adora didn’t know why, other than her being tired from a day of physical activity, that they had seemed to follow their routine silently. It wasn’t uncomfortable silence, but just a quiet night after a busy day.

Both of them started to close their eyes with sleep without saying a peep to each other. Both of them snuggled up together, left them content enough. Although before Adora had succumb to sleep, she faced down and looked at Catra who was already out like a light. A slight warmth spread throughout her chest—although she wasn’t sure what for.

She gave her a careful, small goodnight kiss on the top of her head.

“I don’t know if I said this enough to you today… But, thank you, Catra,” she whispered as quietly as she could, in hopes that she wouldn’t wake up.

Catra was still aware when Adora whispered to her, but she didn’t want to wake and ruin the moment, having heard Adora whisper. She reveled in it instead—and pulled Adora closer.

Chapter End Notes

Eeeeee I made up Ferris, but I just thought it’d be cool to have another rad differently-abled character in here.
Now Adora has WHEELS!
Kudos and comments are always welcome!
Adora has another strange dream and begins a new mission to look for answers—in Brightmoon’s library... Catra still worries.

When Adora slowly opened her eyes in the middle of the night, she didn’t quite expect to find herself in a different room—and this was not her room.

She gasped loudly when she realized this.

“Wh—where am I? Catra…”, carefully grabbing the sheets of the foreign bed she was in, she found she was alone—Catra wasn’t by her side like when she’d fallen asleep.

This must be a dream right? It had to be, she thought.

Why was she having all these weirdly detailed dreams as of late?

Was it just a She-Ra thing she had to get used to?

She quietly hoped so—she didn’t want to think she was just going crazy all of a sudden.

Adora lifted herself up and into a sitting position to look around the mysterious room she was in. She looked upwards first, finding light spilling in from a golden skylight in the ceiling—from millions of... Stars...

How could that be?

There are no stars on Etheria, thanks to Madame Razz’s Mara.

No, there were no stars—thanks to She-Ra.

Adora tore her eyes away from the spectacle of the purple-hued night sky, despite the eerie familiar feeling she felt when she stared out the window.

She’d seen it before.

With Light Hope, and Madame Razz—she couldn’t quite place it though.

Adora looked around the walls confining her in the room, a golden dome ceiling, reaching down to the floor with strange ridges and carving etched on them. The furniture looked similar to that she had in her room back in Brightmoon, but it looked regal and detailed. She had a wardrobe, and a vanity—and of course the large bed she was sitting on. It was much too soft for her liking, but firmer than what she had been given her first night at the castle.

That’s when she looked over her shoulder, and found that the other side of the room had another set of furniture. Two of everything—a whole other bed. Someone else must be here.
Adora tossed the light-pink covers to the side and saw that she was in a simple white nightgown with long sleeves, an empire waist seam, and a round collar.

“I don’t understand—why am I here?”, she asked quietly to no one in particular. “This better not be another nightmare—please don’t let it be another nightmare…” She pinched the bridge of her nose and squeezed her eyes shut as she calmed her rising anxiety in order to figure out her next course of action.

Suddenly, breaking her out of her thoughts—a knock sounded from the large, double, arched doors at the front of the room.

Shoot.

It must be whoever the other bed belongs to.

“Adora?”, came a voice she didn’t recognize, it kind of sounded like hers but with deeper undertones—it was a kind voice too, she felt.

The person the voice belonged to pushed open the door a bit and it creaked, causing Adora to slightly panic as the figure slipped in.

She found it was a young boy that looked to be her age… And quite freakishly looked like—herself.

He had sandy-blonde hair that fell into his face and was worn back in a small ponytail at the nape of his neck. He also dawned light grey-blue eyes, that shone like her own. And he wore a long white nightshirt, with a round collar like her own, and loose white pants underneath that reached his ankles.

They were looking directly at each other, both quite confused and bewildered. He walked over closer to where she sat.

“Adora—where in Eternia have you been?”, he asked, “Mother and Father have been worried sick! They’ll want to see you…”

“Mother and Father?”, she thought aloud.

“Yes! What have you been doing all this time?”, he asked again, sounding a bit more frustrated with his tone.

Adora looked down at her feet, and wished so much that she could just walk away from this confusing dream.

Then they moved—her toes.

Adora’s mouth went wide open with a silent gasp and shock. She stared at her legs with grotesque fascination, and she slowly but stiffly managed to move them both over the edge of the bed. The boy looked on, quietly curious what was so fascinating about her moving to sit.

Adora looked down at her lap, and thought—she could walk here.

She pushed off the bed, carefully—and stood up on shaking legs. They trembled as she tried to find balance and tried to take a step—but it proved to be too difficult for the time being and her muscles gave out while her knees buckled. She fell to the hard tiled floor and the boy watched her go down. She caught herself on her side and her arms braced her fall underneath herself, and she took a sharp breath in to deal with the pain she felt shoot up through her body.
It was an odd but familiar sensation to feel again.

The boy quickly came down beside her to touch her shoulders with his hands, “Adora—what’s going on, what happened?”, he pushed—slightly nervous.

“Don’t touch me!”, she brushed him off by scooting away from the stranger. Adora took in another shuddering breath, and she wanted to go home now—she wanted to wake up again. “I don’t know! How do you know my name? Who even are you?!”, she yelled, frustrated.

“Who am I?! Adora—look! It’s me, Adam, your own brother! Now wha—“, he started but was cut off by Adora.

“BUT I DON’T UNDERSTAND! I DON’T HAVE A BROTHER!”, she yelled at him, as her anxiety had reached it limits.

She then clenched her eyes closed and curled up, blocking out the foreign world around her on the floor of the strange room, and willed with all her might to wake up—she just wanted to go home.

~~~

Catra awoke in the morning to right as the sun was about to dawn through the curtains of the room. She cracked her eyes open to look at it from the pillows she was resting on. It seemed that she and Adora had shifted in their sleep last night. She looked down and found Adora’s face shoved against her own chest, arms wrapped tightly around her waist, and she had managed to turn into her side. Her eyes were clenched shut to the early morning light and her face seemed to be stuck in a somewhat pained frown with her eyebrows furrowed.

Catra reached down and detangled herself from her vice like grip, and held Adora to scoot the blonde back against the pillows with her. Adora groaned and whined at the light and the sudden movement. Her face twisted until she found Catra, leaning up on her elbows beside her, under the covers with her hand. Adora’s eyes looked a little red and she still looked tired from the day before—if not more.

She worked hard to blink them open and turned her face towards Catra.

“Good, it’s just you…”, Adora slurred quietly.

“Yeah—who else would it be?”, Catra snorted, “Are you sharing a bed with anyone else I should know about?”

“Haha, no—it’s nothing… Sorry,” Adora groaned again, wiping the so-called sleep she had from her eyes with her hand.

Catra could still tell Adora wasn’t really at one hundred percent, she looked like she didn’t sleep at all—so she pursued an answer, “You sure it’s nothing?”

“Yeah, I’m sorry—really Catra, I-I’m all good,” Adora sighed, looking out the windows of her room, not at Catra.

“Alright, but—don’t keep things a secret from me, ‘kay?”, Catra pushed—a little frustrated that she knew something was on Adora’s mind, but she was holding it back again, “Promise?”

“Promise,” Adora mimicked, trying to give her a little smile.

~~~
“Do you need anything before we head out?”, Catra asked Adora in the corridor, just outside the alliance meeting room where they were discussing their latest aid mission they were about to leave on. They—meaning, Catra, Scorpia, Glimmer, and Bow—with some back up from the rebel and ex-Horde troops. Further meaning, that Adora would be left alone in the castle for the first time in weeks. And Catra was still frustrated that Adora still hadn’t mentioned what had shaken her from this morning—it made her anxious that she was keeping something from her.

It irked Catra that she now felt responsible for Adora’s wellbeing—and she liked the feeling of trust that only she and Adora had, since it made them special, but it had begun to add extra stress when she realized that if anything was to be done with the Horde… She probably would have to leave Adora to go on missions with the rebel nerds to help bring aid to her people.

The need for the Horde to be reformed into a safe place for its refugees, cooperating with the Rebellion and the Princess Alliance despite not being part of it herself, and Adora’s need for someone she can depend upon—weighed on her shoulders.

She had wanted this sort of respect and power so much so that she was grateful to have accomplished it, but, it was starting to make her more nervous as time went on. She didn’t want to give anyone else her responsibilities, but she worried that she wouldn’t be enough, deep down.

Shadow Weaver may not have left so many physical scars as she did leave mental ones, she thought.

Adora managed to bring her out of her stupid head and back down to Etheria, “I think I’ll be okay while you guys are out, although, I’m not sure what I’m going to do without you guys around…”

Catra smirked at her—what a dork—she still doesn’t know any better than how to use a silly princess sword. She patted her shoulder and snorted a little.

“Well Adora, I believe I have quite the task for you if you are up for it—since it’s only something that you can accomplish…”, The Queen said as she exited the meeting room and into the corridor with the two teens, followed by Brightmoon’s head general. It startled both Adora and Catra into attention at her abrupt presence.

“What do you need from me, your majesty?”, Adora answered, eager to be helpful in any way.

“I have a collection of tomes written in First Ones language in the castle’s library archives, and you’re the only one here who can read them,” the queen explained, “I was wondering if you’d like to transcribe them for me so that we can use them as resources. You have recovered well, and you seem eager for a task, so I thought I might confide in you. You haven’t felt any symptoms of your concussion in the past few weeks—have you not?”

“No your majesty, I haven’t had any issues for a couple of weeks—I’m up for any task you give me!”, Adora beamed happily.

“Well then, I’ll be happy to accompany you to Brightmoon’s archives and see that you are comfortable to work?”, she smiled back as she asked.

“Okay, um—excuse me a moment?”, Adora pivoted towards Catra and reached for her hand, grasping it, and looking up at Catra’s face.

“Be safe alright? I’ll be right here when you guys come home, and—I’ll miss you,” she said softly, as to not make a scene in front of the queen, even though Catra was already flushing with a bit of embarrassment.

“We will—promise. I’ll be home, hopefully, by when you wake up tomorrow,” she gave Adora’s
hand a firm squeeze.

And with that said, the head general of Brightmoon escorted Catra off to meet up with Glimmer and Bow who were preparing to leave outside—leaving Adora and Angella behind.

“Ready, Adora?” she asked once the other two had exited the hallway.

“Um… Yes, of course,” and then they departed down the hallways of the castle together, to the library.

~~~

Angella held open a large door towards the back of the castle’s library for Adora to enter through, and on the other side, were hundreds of old books, scripts, tomes, and tablets filled with First Ones writing.

Adora looked around the room lined with shelves, and let out a small gasp in awe at all the potential information—hiding within the pages of symbols surrounding her.

“Quite the exciting collection, no?”, Angella laughed a little at Adora’s response to the archive room.

“It’s a lot more than I expected…”, she pushed herself around the room to examine the different bindings lining each self at her height.

“Well, when you’re immortal, you tend to end up holding onto a lot of things,” the queen sighed, “I’ve just never been able to read them, until you finally came around—just try not go around telling everyone about this room… It’s no secret of mine or the castle staff, but we don’t want this information landing in the wrong hands, do we?”

“I guess not… I promise I won’t, your majesty—I guess I should get to work then,” Adora wondered aloud, seeing that there were a lot more than a few volumes for her to translate from First Ones language.

“Well, there’s a large table for you, and I imagine it’s at good height for you here to work at—correct?”, Angella asked the girl.

Adora pivoted and moved towards the table with chairs and a lamp in the middle of the space, and it seemed to come not too high on her chest—good enough for her to read and write.

“Yeah, this should work just fine,” she answered looking around, “do you have a—“, she was going to continue before she was interrupted.

“Here!”, Angella already had what she was looking for in her hands, presenting it to Adora. She held out a large red leather notebook, sealed with a metal clasp to keep it shut. Along with it was a wooden pen, it all looked new and shiny to her.

“These are for you to keep your notes and writing in,” she further explained.

“Oh, um, thank you your majesty—it’s quite lovely,” Adora said as she took both objects from the queen’s grasp.

“I wouldn’t just let you scribble down thousands of years old information all willy-nilly, would I?”, she attempted to joke.

“No, I suppose you wouldn’t?”, Adora smiled back.
“Alright well—I’ll let you start where you please, and do not rush, I’m not sure what’s what, so I’ll let you decide what’s important information in here. And you can have full access to any library resources you need… I’ll leave the door cracked so you can have privacy but be able come get someone if you need anything,” the queen smiled back, “thank you for your help once again, Adora.”

“Anytime, your majesty,” and with that—the queen waved to her and she left the room to go off and rule her kingdom—leaving Adora truly alone.

For the first time she could think of, Queen Angella’s presence was almost increasingly comforting—and she wished she could’ve stayed here with her.

But that was a selfish thought it seemed.

Adora was finally given a productive job to do, and Angella had a kingdom to look after on top of looking after far too many reckless teens.

She could handle this challenge herself, she always had.

“Time to get to work, I guess…”, Adora sighed as she rolled over to the first book case in search of an intriguing title.

Chapter End Notes

This was so much fun to write, and things will probably kinda kick up into a more slow plot driven thing after this. I like to write some fluffy filler chapters mixed with more plot related ones. Soon I should make a chapter about what Catra’s perspective is on a mission, but EH. Later.
Kudos are always appreciated, and feel free to leave a comment!
Chapter Summary

Adora starts to fall back into old bad habits, and she and Catra have an unintentional conflict.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After a bit of searching, Adora settled on a stack of books, and with some effort she piled them onto her desk. She scanned the titles and found ones that sounded interesting to start off with. Some of these included; “Stars and Their Constellations: A Natural Map and Guide”, “A History of Etherian Legends and Mythos”, “The Natural History of Etheria”, “Space Travel and Interdimensional Theory”, “Magic and Technology: The Nature of a Planet”, and finally—“Ancestral Music”. The music book didn’t seem very resourceful, although it was more intriguing to Adora’s curiosity to learn more about music since it couldn’t be found in the Horde.

She slipped out the “Ancestral Music” book from the stack. It had gold symbols lining its spine that read its title, and some on the front. It was a small sized book compared to the rest of the few she had picked out. Opening it up—the cover creaked and the pages crinkled a little with age. Inside the front were a few notes written by hand.

Adora smiled to herself, thinking of how it must’ve belonged to someone thousands of years ago...

The sketchy symbols made sense to her, and read out, “To my daughter, in hopes that maybe one day you’ll learn something that brings others joy in this new world.”

’Wow’—she thought as she read the old message.

Adora looked through it further, finding diagrams and passages discussing terms like notes and scales, as well as chords on several different instruments that were similar to one’s she’d been introduced to here in Brightmoon. She opened her notebook and translated a few passages she wanted to remember for herself, and ask Glimmer or Bow about—particularly passages about the stringed guitar-like instrument, and the piano-like instrument. They sounded like they’d be beautiful to hear or learnt to be played.

Going deeper she found a dent in the pages as she flipped through it. Coming upon closer inspection, something was hidden in the pages of the music book. She jumped to where she found the open crevice left by the object, and she saw an old, very small notepad. It was hand-bound with string and was made from leather like her new notebook. She carefully picked it up, while turning it over to inspect it closer.

Adora slowly lifted the cover of the pad and looked over the old paper to find dozens of pieces of paper scribbled upon in First Ones language.

Although the most alarming part of this was the symbols that spelt out one name on the first page—Mara.
'Could this be Madame Razz’s Mara?’, Adora thought in shock.

If so, she had found a thousand year old notepad left behind by a previous She-Ra…

This task had already proved to be more daunting than she had originally thought.

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Adora grew slightly frustrated at the fact that most of Mara’s scribbles she’d deciphered were just mutterings of an instrument called the ‘harp’. She only knew a few instruments from her time here in Brightmoon—but she had never gotten to see a ‘harp’ up close yet, so she’d have to ask Glimmer or Bow about it later.

She’d looked for at least an hour and there was nothing to do with being She-Ra—or maybe even on how to magically heal the planet while being confined to a wheelchair…

She scanned the pages again, looking for—something... Anything at all... Anything that might give her some form of answer.

She was about to give up when she found a word she recognized… Stars. It seemed to be written in with a bunch of lyrics to some sort of song. Looking further through Mara’s poetic verses, Adora scanned for any other familiar terms she could read. Soon she stopped on a word that seemed more like a name…

“I wish to travel the stars and return to my sweet, sweet, home—Eternia—one again?”, Adora read aloud. She knew that name from somewhere, possibly from her dream—though she couldn’t quite place it.

She had said it aloud after reading it on one the temple ruin doors before—right?

“What’s this all supposed to meannn…”, she groaned as she let her head fall flat on the table’s surface.

By now she had dozens of notes taken on Mara, and so she lifted her head back up; she wrote down the symbol for Eternia and scribbled it’s name in big letters underneath. All she could infer was that this was some place far away, through the stars. But there weren’t any stars anymore—and she was one of the only people who knew that—so how far away could this place be?

She needed to find out more.

She decided she would find out more if she started looking at the other resourceful books left in a pile off to her side…

She forgot she had a job to do.

So she plucked “Space Travel and Interdimensional Theory” from the stack and began to focus on reading once again.

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Catra hadn’t been this tired in a while—maybe Adora was making her go soft… They’d been walking for miles back home into the night, after their aid mission was over. All she wanted to do was to climb into bed and curl up next to Adora, if she hadn’t already woken up yet, and sleep forever.

Glimmer, followed by Bow, and Catra slowly stumbled back down the hallways to go their separate
ways. Bow was going to crash in Glimmer’s room on the couch instead of walking home in the early morning.

She finally reached the door to Adora’s suite and pushed it open—only to find the room completely empty. Looking around, there was no trace of a wheelchair, or that anyone had been here all day. The bed was made, just how they left it when they got up the other morning.

Slight panic rose in Catra—why was she not asleep this early in the morning?

She walked back out and into the hallway, and wandered around, thinking maybe Adora had gotten up to move around the castle because something was bothering her. She hadn’t been able to do that for a while so Catra thought it was a possibility. But after a few minutes of increasingly frantic searching—Adora wasn’t anywhere she had checked.

Suddenly in her own anxious thoughts, Catra failed to notice the woman ahead of her, down the hallway. It was the queen, standing at a mural of her dead husband—king Micah. She might know where Adora could be hiding.

“Majesty—Adora’s not in her room, do have any idea where she is?”, Catra asked Angella, exasperated upon approaching her.

She looked taken back for minute, pulled from her silence with Micah, and thought for a moment. “You said she’s not asleep in her room?” she seemed confused.

“No… I can’t find her anywhere,” Catra drawled, “that’s why I’m asking you…”

“Well, last I saw her was—last night, still working in the in the library—although I haven’t been around that wing in hours,” the queen answered.

“Still working?”, Catra’s eyebrows raised.

“I would have supposed she went to bed after too late, and I had a busy night so I never checked in with her after dinner was brought to her, so I’m not sure—I’d check there to make sure she didn’t fall asleep in the books,” Angella clasped her hands together at her front and looked at her softly.

Catra groaned. Of course she still had to be in the library, because that was just how Adora was—always overdoing it. She leaves for one whole day, and Adora can’t even take care of… Catra decided not to complete that thought, because even though she wished it wasn’t true, it still would be for a while.

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Catra sulked into the castle library and through it, till she reaches the back where there is a large pair of closed ominous doors. She put her hand around the handle and turned it down to pull open the door to enter a seemingly dimly lit, smaller room, with one window, and bursting bookshelves lining the room. In the middle of it, was a rectangular table with a lamp, and a few chairs.

And of course, Adora was still sitting in her wheelchair, asleep with her face buried in her arms on an open book.

What a true dork—a pen was still stuck in her hand, and Catra came around to spy at the notebook she had been writing in off to her side.

Careful as not to wake the blonde, Catra quietly picked the notebook out from beside her and held it up to read what took her all bloody night to work on.
In it, there were many little scribbles of indecipherable symbols with phonics she couldn’t quite comprehend on her own accord. Under them though, were Adora’s notes on certain words or phrases, or even book passages.

One word she could help but notice Adora seemed transfixed on was ‘Eternia’.

What was that supposed to mean?

Adora had many frantic notes surrounding it; ‘Linked to whatever Greyskull is?’, ‘Possibly connected to the First Ones? Like the temple ruins in the woods…’, ‘Where Adam in my dream is from?’, ‘Mara seemed aware of this place’s existence…’, ‘They have stars so they aren’t around here or close by—’, and finally ‘Does this have anything to do with me and my past?’.

That seemed to strike something within Catra.

Maybe Adora might be able to help her find out more about herself by doing some research here—although she doubted it deep down. There didn’t seem to be any trace of who she was or who her family might be. Both of them had fought against great odds but never expected to know where they came from—that’s how most of this started over a year ago… Adora needed to know more about herself. And Catra finally understood how much it meant now.

She set back down the notebook on the table, and sighed, realizing again just how tired she was. At least now she understood what might have been troubling Adora earlier—even if she didn’t get to hear it from her, which made her frustrated. But for now, what made her more frustrated was the fact that they were asleep in their own bed.

Catra finally rested a hand on Adora’s back and shoulder and gently rubbed small circles, trying to rouse the other girl so that they could go back to bed for the morning.

“Adora come on—wake up!”, she whispered to her.

Adora whimpered for a moment and released her pen from her hand, as she moved slightly, shifting her head in her arms. She ended up coming to after a moment more, and turned her head towards where she heard the voice and peeked through still slightly closed eyes.

“Catra? What are you doing here… What time is it?”, she groaned.

“It’s almost five in the morning ‘Dora. You should be in bed”, Catra drawled back at her, with a bit of frustration leaking through.

“Really?”, she asked confused.

“Really.”

Adora moved to sit up and looked at the frantic mess of writing and reading on the desk before her that she’d been working on all day and night. It seemed as though she made it through a few other books on space, theories, and legends, but hadn’t yet touched any of Etheria’s natural history.

She still had so more to touch upon—this was only the beginning of what these archives could tell her—things that Light Hope refused to give her.

She could find out more information about She-Ra from these writings, and maybe even more about herself...

“No, I-I can’t, I need to stay here for a bit longer and finish this stack and then I can rest…”, she said with a sigh as she began to clumsily gather her notes into a neat pile.
“W-what?”, Catra stuttered, surprised.

“I need to continue to work—I’m not done here yet,” she enunciated to the other girl.

“No you don’t!”, Catra protested.

“Yes I do! You don’t underst—“, she had tried to retort.

“I do! And I know that all of this will be here when you come back here after sleeping a few hours! So it’s you who doesn’t understand!”, the look in Catra’s tired eyes hurt a bit.

“But it’s important to me! These books are helping me understand more about EVERYTHING,” the now hysterical blonde gestured her arms around them wildly, “than Light Hope has told me in over a year! I need to know these things! Unless you want me to somehow disappear into a temple to train like THIS, for multiple years!”, Adora’s voice cracked and wavered.

“No! I don’t want that! But what you can’t seem to understand that YOU—are important to me!”, she paused to catch her breath for a minute, while Adora stayed still, shocked.

Well, oops—she didn’t mean for that to slip out right then. Although, something—maybe the frustration and lack of sleep—made Catra continue on with it.

“You just can’t disappear into a library either Adora—it’s just as bad. You should know better than anyone that people need to take breaks whether they like it or not, and that doesn’t make you weak. I learned that from YOU—and your friends, while I was here. Learning more about She-Ra, or your past, is super important—but you need to focus on what’s happening right NOW. And right now—we are both overly tired… And what you need is to sleep, so you can stay healthy after just recovering from a near death experience you had weeks ago,” she let out a sigh she didn’t know she had the breath for, “we protect each other—do you understand, Adora?”

Adora stared into her unwavering and determined eyes for a moment to look for any way she could assert herself here. But she knew any retort would be shot down by Catra anyway. But, out of sheer disobedience, she didn’t want to move because she wished to make this choice for herself. Why couldn’t Catra just leave her here and go to bed? She’s tired, if not more than she is… Adora knew she should just listen to Catra, but she felt strongly that she was capable enough to know what she could handle—so she couldn’t decide what to do.

After another minute of staring at each other, neither one refusing to stand down—Catra made a decision for her.

She quickly wrestled her arms behind Adora’s back and knees, and with whatever strength she had left, she hoisted her up into her arms and began to leave the room with a shocked Adora.

“CATRA, WAIT—STOP!”, she yelled shaking Catra’s shoulders.

Catra kept going, not looking down at Adora.

“CATRA, PLEASE THIS ISN’T FAIR! JUST PUT ME DOWN!”, her voice echoed in the empty library, as she tried to pry off Catra’s hands and squirm out from her grasp.

Catra closed her eyes and took a shuddering breath as she quickened her pace into the castle hallways.

Adora stopped yelling at her—giving up, and out of exhaustion she put her head down onto Catra’s chest and started to repeatedly hit the other girl’s shoulder in attempt to make her listen.
Catra reached their bedroom doors and pried one open with her foot, rushing towards the bed. There, she finally set Adora down to lay in the bed—only to find tears streaming down her face that the blonde quickly moved her hands up to cover.

She peered at her friend with an indecipherable look, and saw that she had made Adora vulnerable, rather than helping her—hadn’t she.

“Adora—I’m sorry but—“, she tried to say before Adora interjected.

“I would’ve just c-come with you if—if you had just let me!”, Adora sobbed.

“I-I didn’t know that, I just thought you’d ignore me!”, Catra panicked.

Adora decided she didn’t want to respond.

“Adora?”, she tried again.

Adora kept hiccuping and crying, and Catra decided it was best to leave. She hurried towards the door to their room—and glanced back, without trying to cover up her guilt for once.

She opened up the door and walked through it, only to then slam it closed with frustration.

She shrank down small, and curled in on herself as she slid down the door on her back till she sat on the floor.
She didn’t mean to do any of that.

She didn’t want to make Adora feel that way.

Obviously they were both tired and something had been bothering the two of them for a while.

But it still didn’t give her the excuse to forcefully take away Adora’s consent to something, let alone exploit her weakness—did it?

She didn’t want to fight Adora again.

Catra sniffled, which then turned into a shuddering breath—and then came a few stray tears.

She didn’t want to fight again.

She might as well be just as bad as—Shadow Weaver, she thought.

Chapter End Notes

Oof.
Kudos and comments are appreciated!
“Catra?”, she heard a soft voice call.

“Catra—what are you doing out in the hallway?”, the voice chuckled—albeit a bit concerned, it sounded like tinkling bells. Only one person she knew could have that sweet of a laugh.

Catra lifted her head and looked out in the dim light of the morning in the corridor through scowling eyes.

It was princess sparkle—great, just what she needed right now.

Glimmer had padded over in her socks and squatted down in front of Catra in her purple pjs, with pink frills on the shorts and t-shirt. Catra snarled and tightened in on herself, putting her head back down.

After a moment, a small tentative hand came to rest on her knee. She didn’t even bother to try and scratch at it, or swat it away.

After a moment of no reply, the princess spoke up.

“Bow and I heard some crying and a door slam down the hall… Just so you know. Do you—wanna talk about it?”, Glimmer asked quietly and carefully, as to not earn a visceral reaction from the shaking girl in front of her. She was already worried that she had crossed some boundaries here…

But to her surprise—after a moment of hesitant silence, a small sniffle came from under Catra’s arms. Then it was followed by a tired groan, that sounded more like a whine at the end, bubbling up from her throat. She lifted her head up with a another sniffle, and tried to quickly wipe away tears. Not opening up her eyes quite yet, in hopes that the waterworks would stop, she nodded to Glimmer.

‘Well—this was a first’, Glimmer thought.

“Well—this was a first’, Glimmer thought.

“Okay… Do you wanna go for a walk to talk somewhere else—other than this hallway?”, she asked tentatively, seeing that Catra was being vulnerable around her.

Catra have her another, more vigorous, nod of her head.

Glimmer gently pried her hands off her knees and pulled her up slowly. Catra looked more tired than she’d been when Adora was even in the infirmary a while ago. She let go of Catra, and lead her down another hallway and out a glass door to the covered outlook over the gardens. The sun had already begun to tint the sky a purplish-blue, and a little strip of pink over the horizon. Glimmer walked out to lean her elbows on the railing, followed by Catra, who rested her back on the railing away from the world. She crossed her arms close to her chest—reserved and embarrassed.

“Soooo, do you want to start with what happened?”, Glimmer started off asking.
Catra huffed out a short breath before answering.

“We got into our first fight—in a while… And it was just about going to bed…”, she groaned.

“Oh… that’s not a great way to start the morning—is it?”, Glimmer confided, lifting her eyebrows.

“No—it’s really not,” Catra drawled back, annoyed not really at Glimmer, but by her own actions.

“I-I just wanted to come home and have her be there, you know? But she’s given ONE important task by your queen-mom, and she’s already completely obsessed over it. It feels like we’ve discussed the fact that she overworks herself because she thinks she’s not enough—but I just can’t figure out why… Why I am not enough to make her understand that she’s important. She’s always been more ‘important’ than me, and—and now we promised to treat each other that we were both important—because we protect each other…”, she gripped the sides of her head, taking in a shuddering breath.

Glimmer stayed quiet and listened, nodding in reassurance.

“I’ve been taking care of her since she was injured from the battle, and the moment she begins to have freedom again it feels like she’ll just not need me anymore? But she’s just—ugh, I’m just not good at any of this!”, she covered her face with with hands again, shaking. “Gods, how did we manage to fight for more than a whole year? I hate this so much! I just—I just, don’t want to go through all that again…”, she muffled through her hands.

Glimmer didn’t really know what to say, after all that. But she put on her game face, and tried anyway.

“You know—it’s really difficult to feel like you have to be there all the time for someone, and I can tell you like it—being able to be Adora’s caretaker. But you seem frustrated lately, and I am fully aware that you know, that this is just how Adora, well—is… And we just have to be patient with her. Whether we like it or not. And don’t be afraid to ask for help, Catra…”, she paused to look Catra in the eyes. “We trust you now, and you’ve done so much to help us. Remember that Bow and I are your friends too—if you’ll have us. And we will be there, if you have an issue with Adora. Sometimes, you just need a little outside push…”

“I know I can handle Adora though…”, Catra retorted.

“You’re starting to sound just like her, you know,” Glimmer smiled.

“Ugh… I hate this!”, she smashed a fist down onto the railing beside her.

Glimmer looked a little shocked for a minute, but then continued. “Just give her a moment to breathe—and I bet you more than anything, she’ll want to talk to you. I bet she feels the same way.”

“Okay—just talk… I can try to do that—I think…”, Catra stared hard at the ground.

“Haha, that’s the spirit!”, Glimmer nudged her, the gesture taking Catra by surprise.

“Careful princess…”, She hummed back. She smiled a bit without meaning to, and carefully looked back up at the girl she once kidnapped beside her. “Glimmer?”, she asked—using her real name.

“Haha—wasn’t sure you’d ever allow me the satisfaction of you saying my actual name! What is it?”, Glimmer smiled more.

“I meant it… When I said I don’t want us to fight anymore. I think things have really changed between us, and I feel warm, and safe around her. And she really makes me feel—legitimately good
when she lets me help her. Like I’m her special person, or something stupid like that…”, Catra looked away, blushing a bit.

“Catra, I’m going to tell you a little bit about what you’re feeling—and it’ll change your world…”, the princess snickered.

“And what exactly would that be…?”, she growled out of spite for the snicker.

“That warm and safe feeling you have? The one that makes you feel special—it’s called love, fur-brains,” she laughed, “And I can tell you, for sure, that Adora feels the same way you do! You should just tell her that that’s how you feel—and it’ll make your heart feel a little bit lighter probably.”

“E-excuse me?”, Catra looked a bit nervous.

“Let’s just say, I know the feeling, okay? I promise everything will be okay if you just be honest with Adora. I’ve seen you guys get better at it lately, I know you’ll work it out,” Glimmer patted her on the back. “And hey, let me just ask—do want some support? I mean, talking to Adora? It’s really okay to say yes,” she asked moving towards the doors leading inside.

Catra thought for a minute, and then looked up at Glimmer more sincere than she’d ever been with her rival. “If I’m being honest—I’m really nervous to talk to her after what I did, and I should talk to her alone. But—I’d feel better if you at least stayed with me a little bit… Glitter-Gun,” she smiled.

“Okay—”, Glimmer opened the doors and beamed back, “but only if you’ll take a nap in my room for a while—you look like you died and became a walking corpse…”, she snorted a bit.

“Yeah, thanks—I feel like it… I accept your nap.”

And with that, they walked back together to Glimmer’s room, where Catra flopped down on the window seat and instantly fell asleep from pure exhaustion—as the sun began to peek over the horizon.

Chapter End Notes

Glimmer and Catra interaction,,,we stan.
Kudos and comments and whatnot are always appreciated!
Talk It Out

Chapter Summary

Catra admits about how Adora makes her feel, and why she acts the way she does sometimes—while the two reconcile about current and past issues. A good step forward...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Catra was reluctant to wake up—she knew what she needed to do, but talking about it in front of Glimmer was an entirely different thing than actually doing it. The sun was fully up now, and shining through Glimmer's window and onto Catra, making her radiate heat. She pushed her hair that had fallen out of the bun Adora had twisted it into, out of her face. It was wild and hung below her shoulders now that it was free. She yawned—and twisted around to swing her legs onto the cold tile floor, and finally get up for the day.

"Hey, rise and shine!", Bow said as he walked into the room with Glimmer in tow.

"I will rise—but I refuse to shine…", Catra yawned again, rubbing the salt from her eyes that was left from her crying earlier.

"Alright then! That’s a go-getter attitude!", he joked back at her.

Glimmer gently nudged him in the ribcage.

"Hey! What was that for?", he asked the princess.

She didn’t respond to his question but then she smirked back at him and then looked back to Catra. "She’s awake already if you want to go see her now, or we can wait—but I think the sooner you talk to her, the better the results," she smiled reassuringly.

"Oh…", was all Bow said.

"I’ll never be ready, I think—so let’s just get it over with…", Catra sighed, standing up, and walking out of the safety of the room with Glimmer at her side.

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Adora was ready to punch something—hard. But she couldn’t, because she couldn’t find anything in her reach she could punch from the bed. And quite frankly—she was still too exhausted to move herself off the bed. Her wheelchair was still stuck in the library, and crawling didn’t seem like it would get her very far, if it didn’t take away her dignity.

So instead she resorted to throwing a book from her nightstand at the door Catra had slammed shut after leaving her. It’s pages scattered and fell out on impact. It felt very satisfying—but not quite enough.

Then she threw her hairbrush at the door, and it made a loud thudding sound when it hit and landed
to the floor. She wondered if that’s what it looked like when she fell in battle, with how the brush’s handle broke on the tile.

Then she threw her glass of water across the room. It shattered into razor sharp pieces with an even louder clash against the door, and its contents splashed in a pool of liquid by the door’s casing.

Throwing things still wasn’t enough, it just didn’t seem to help with how she felt…. Now she just felt worse for the pages of poetry that was soaking in her backwash on the floor.

Adora gathered up her legs with her arm and pulled them close to her chest in a sitting position. A familiar feeling she hadn’t been able to have for a while—being able to curl up into a ball of yucky feelings.

She reached for the dagger that she had stuck in the nightstand and forgotten about months ago, but just recently found again. She drew back with her one arm and launched it with a guttural sound and with all her pent up aggression towards the doors—only to find one creak open as the dagger lodged itself in the other.

“OH DEAR FIRST ONES,” she heard unmistakably Glimmer cry out in surprise, hands covering her mouth—who was behind a wildly shocked Catra, with wide eyes blinking.

“I probably deserve that…”, she breathed out heavily, looking down at the collateral damage caused by Adora not having anything better to do with her emotions.

“I swear she wasn’t like this earlier—are you okay?!”, the princess quietly asked Catra.

“I’m fine, I should have seen that coming…”, she whispered back to her.

Catra took a deep breath, before pushing onward despite her panic rising to limits unknown by man. “Will you not try to kill me if I e-come in—mayyybe? For like, a second?”, she pleaded.

Adora scowled at her, thoughts still jumbled like the mess she’d made by her door in her head, conflicted on what to say.

“I would never kill you—you know that. But—you’re lucky that that was my only throwing dagger,” she looked away from Catra and let her guard down a bit.

That was all she needed as an invitation to carefully side step around the mess of glass scattered across the tiled floor, and farther into the room. She looked back at Glimmer who gave her a cautious thumbs up and nodded to her from the doorway before closing the door she came through. Glimmer would be sitting outside just in case, she reminded herself.

“Hey, um—look I know you probably don’t want to listen to me right now, but if you’ll let me sit and talk to you for a minute or two—I’ll apologize…”, she started, fidgeting with her her tail in her hands.

“I don’t think I have much of a choice, now do I?”, she responded coldly. That set Catra back a few steps in her mental script of how this conversation was going to play out.

“I’ll leave if you tell me to—then you’ll have the choice,” Catra spoke up, stepping forward—hoping she didn’t really want her to leave.

“Well, you’re already here, so I guess we should talk—because I know Bow and Glimmer would kill me if I put this off,” she sighed heavily.
Catra took a few more steps forward, a bit more relieved when Adora didn’t make her have to relive opening the door a second time. She came into somewhat of Adora’s peripheral vision and stood there in hopes she might look at her at some point.

“Well first of all—I’m sorry for picking you up without your consent, since I know you trust me and all that, but I know that I-I, um—exploited your vulnerability and that was stupid of me,” she started.

“I told you I would have come with you, and when I told you to stop—that I could do it myself, you didn’t listen to me…”, the blonde said quietly in response.

“I know, I know—and I was afraid you wouldn’t listen to me like in the past—a-and I know that we are beyond that now and that I was just blowing you off—I’m sorry…”, Catra sniffed a little, she brought up her hand to pinch the bridge of her nose. “I was frustrated at you, because… You’ve always overworked yourself because you feel like you have to… But I’ve already tried to tell you that you don’t. Everyone has limits, Adora, and I need to work on that too. But—I worked so hard to make you feel—feel, um, validated after the incident, that it just hurt to see you go back to pushing your limits in an unhealthy way again.”

“But I told you it was important to me, and you just brushed over the fact that I was so close to figuring things out something—so, so, personal… Like it was nothing…”, Adora’s voice wavered.

“I understand that, maybe not completely, but you need to understand that YOU mean a lot to ME ——“, Catra inched even closer to Adora trying to get her point across. “And I want you to feel like that’s enough, because—Adora, I-I like the way I feel when you let me help you, or when you trust me to pick you up and wash your hair… And I feel safe to tell you these things. So sometimes, I get frustrated or hurt, when you don’t think about how I might feel about your wellbeing. And at the time I did what I did, I was both tired—and frustrated. I was just so scared that we were going to fight like we used to, and I couldn’t stand to do that again with you…”

Catra stopped there to take a shuddering breath, and she looked up at Adora—blushing while twisting her tail between her fingers. Adora finally looked back at her, conflicted.

“I—um, I’m sorry that you feel that way. I never thought about it like that… I guess I always just thought—no, I wasn’t being considerate of you. I understand that feeling though, because being with you and letting you help me makes me feel safe too,” she let go of her legs she was clutching to her chest and let them rest back down on the mattress, a small blush forming as well.

She sighed, and took a deep breath.

“You may have, broken my trust last, um, morning—but, I’m willing to be as forgiving as much as I can. I’m still angry, though, but I know you are too. And that’s because, I know that in the past, I haven’t been too thoughtful on how much you do things out of care… I also know that, sometimes, I can disappear because I get too focused on obsessing over a task. So—I want to be more considerate of you because now I understand why you felt hurt and did what you did, and I want you to feel like you matter to me—because even if I get distracted a lot of the time, you do mean the world to me! And I know how it feels to think that nothing you do will amount to anything…”, she swallowed back the rising tears forcing their way up and making her nose burn and eyes tingle. “I’m sorry too, Catra. I want to work this out, I really do. Thank you, for letting me know how I was making you feel… I know constantly looking after someone so much can be—difficult… But we protect each other—right?”

Catra quickly closed the distance, and hesitantly sat down on the bed to wrap her arms around Adora and hug her, tightly, burying her face into Adora’s shoulder. Almost knocking her over on the mattress.
“Right—and it’s definitely worth it,” she muffled back, face still smushed into Adora. “I’m still sorry though—it wasn’t fair, what I did, on your end. I will remember to let you set your own limits as long as they don’t end up killing you or something stupid like that…”

“And I’ll try to always keep you in mind and listen to you, before I push myself too hard again… Okay?”, Adora replied rubbing Catra’s shoulder.

“It’s a deal,” the other girl relaxed at the touch, relieved that she lived through that conversation. Catra and Adora had lived to see what might be the end of the war, but she hoped they wouldn’t have to do this again—but she also doubted they could manage to avoid ALL future conflicts. They’ll just have to take it slow from now on and work things out.

“Adora?”, Catra groaned.

“What now?”, she sighed again in return.

“I’m still exhausted—could we maybe…”

“Take a nap?”

“Yeah, please…”

“I’m all for it—IF, you bring me my wheelchair once we wake up—since you so kindly left it behind all the way back in the library…”, the blonde drawled.

“FIIIIIINE—okay, I’m sorry—of course I’ll go get it… Now can we sleep and talk more about this later? I’m all burnt out, dork,” Catra teased.

“Sounds good to me…flea-sack…”, Adora finally trailed off as she and Catra got comfortable laying down together on the bed, snuggled up in the warm, midday sun that came through the windows of their room.

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Little did they know, that just outside the door, Bow and Glimmer stood on the other side—eavesdropping on the two of them.

Both were silently screaming with joy and relief that they had slightly avoided another friendship crisis, and instead brought their two friends even closer together.

Chapter End Notes

I really liked this chapter—I also like to write angry Adora for some reason?
Anyways...
Kudos and comments are always appreciated!
Dinner With The Queen

Chapter Summary

Angella invites the squad to dinner to talk about diplomatic things.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was just about dinner time in the castle, and Adora and Catra still hadn’t woken up. Glimmer and Bow knew that they should walk into their room and force them to come eat with them—but they didn’t want to ruin their peaceful moment.

Although, Glimmer knew that her mom had asked if they could all eat together tonight to talk about some things, since they had just completed another aid mission—along with the fact that the queen just wanted to see her daughter and her friends, as well as to check in with Catra…

So they disgruntledly decided they should probably wake the two of them up.

“I’ll go sit with my mom in the dining room and keep her at bay, while you complete mission: ‘wake up furball and buff-for-brains’—how about that?”, she laughed as they walked out of her room and into the hallway.

“Although that doesn’t quite seem fair… Challenge accepted…”, Bow groaned.

“What? You wanna go sit and have an embarrassingly intimate conversation with my mom? I think that this deal is completely fair!”, she whined.

“Yes, I’d actually quite enjoy that—I like talking with your mom—unlike you!”, the boy shoved her shoulder playfully as he verbally jabbed at her.

“Uh, hey! You know how it is, Bow!”, she looked offended.

“And that, Glimmer, is why I said it!”, he grinned at her and she couldn’t help but blush at how goofy he was.

“HMMph—ugh, nevermind!”, Glimmer huffed before teleporting out of existence so she could avoid further teasing from her best friend.

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“Oh! Good—you came!”, Angella said with a small smile as she turned to face Glimmer when she walked through the doorway. “I had started to think that all of you were going to stand me up… Do you know if your friends will be joining us?”

“Yeah—Bow is just grabbing Adora and Catra… They might be a minute, so it’s just you and me for now…”, Glimmer glanced at the dining table and found a chair to sit down in. Might as well get comfortable if she and her mom were going to have some ‘quality’ bonding time.

“Oh, alright—lovely!”, her mother sat down at the table as well, and she sighed for a moment. “How
is Adora fairing? I mean with all that’s going on… I heard that there was a quarrel between she and Catra when you arrived home—is everything alright? Or do I need to—"

“They are okay now,” Glimmer answered quickly—defending their dignity, she wanted to make sure her mom knew to let them have their privacy, “it was neither of their faults, and both were acting irrationally, I think. It was just a misunderstanding… They managed to talk to each other though—so, I think they will work it out themselves.”

“Oh—well that’s quite the relief. That’s wonderful to hear…”, the queen smiled back at her daughter.

“Yeah, they both got pretty worked up about it—I’ve never seen Adora get angry like that before, and I never would’ve thought that by now, I would have had a conversation with a depressed Catra… But don’t tell her I said that, okay?”, Glimmer giggled a bit.

“Don’t worry—I won’t. I’m glad though that you are all learning to handle these situations yourselves… And as for how they acted, Glimmer, people can sometimes change when a situation puts them in a new position,” her mom smiled back at her.

For once, Glimmer was glad she had taken the time to talk to her mom… Instead of feeling talked at like normal, she felt more reassured by her words. She was glad that she made Bow wake up the other half of the squad, now that she realized a seemingly big weight had been lifted off of her shoulders.

After the two stopped talking for a moment, a familiar knock sounded at the double doors to the dining room.

“Come in!”, Angella called.

Bow cracked open the door and waved a friendly ‘hello’ to the queen and held open the door for Adora and Catra to come in through. Catra was slightly impressed that after the weeks she’s spent in the castle—she still hadn’t managed to see all the rooms within its walls.

Glimmer quietly asked Adora if she wanted to sit in a chair and she nodded yes, so, Glimmer helped her transfer into one next to where she was sitting next to her mom at the table. Catra decided that it was best to take the seat next to Bow on the other side so that she was facing the two of them.

It felt odd sitting at a table like this—all together. It’s what Catra almost imagined having family felt like… She knew that it wasn’t quite hers, but more so Adora’s found family—but she couldn’t help but feel a slight desire to belong among them.

The smell of food being set down in front of her suddenly snapped her out of her thoughts. She had been mostly asleep the whole day with Adora, so meals had been pushed to the back of her mind. But now, eating food was at the forefront of her mind—and her stomach wasn’t protesting. Before Catra could stuff two quail in her mouth, the queen cleared her throat to get their attention.

“Alright—so, I called you all to dinner here tonight, not just because I feel that after recent events that we should spend some time together, but more so that I could tell you all about an important event that we are planning for this week,” she admitted.

Everyone at the table gave her a slightly amused or confused face in reply.

“What kind of event are we speaking of, your majesty…?”, Bow began to grin.

“Well, I was working on the idea of a gala to celebrate and reunite the Rebellion forces and Horde troops that helped us win the battle in the end… How does that sound to you all?"
“Another ball! Really Mom!?”, Glimmer slammed her hands down on the table and jerked up with excitement.

“Well, yes—I think the kingdoms and the defected people deserve to come here and celebrate something we’ve worked so hard for…”, the queen explained.

“So, I’m getting the idea that you’re saying princesses like Scorpia and Entrapta will be allowed to attend if they want to—um, ah, your majesty?”, Catra implored with a determined look.

“Yes, I’d be honored to host any folk from the Horde if they’d like to attend, since they were the forces that turned the tide of the battle in all of our favors…”, she nodded.

“This sounds, like, so cool… So many people will be there!”, Bow murmured, leaning his elbows on the table staring off into the unknown, dreaming of all the party possibilities—no doubt.

“Yes Bow,” Angella laughed at the boy, “…That’s why I wish for all of you to attend, as well as the rest of the Princess Alliance—it would mean a lot to the soldiers and civilians to be able to have a night where they could meet all of you… Especially their She-Ra.”

Everyone glanced at Adora who had been suspiciously quiet for the entire conversation. She was picking at her hands, looking down at her lap. A slightly uncomfortable look shadowed her face. You could practically hear the gears nervously whirring in her head. Catra didn’t really like that look… and neither did Glimmer or Bow.

“What’s on your mind, Adora?”, Glimmer asked her.
Adora looked up and rested her shoulders back against the chair, releasing a small sigh.

“It’s just that—the last ball we were at didn’t really, go all that well with me around, did it?”, she blushed.

“Well—That’s all the more reason to have another! Like one big, All-Princess Ball do-over!”, Bow tried to reason.

“Um…I don’t know, maybe I just… I just don’t think people would really want to see me like this, and I don’t want their pity for what happened… But I just feel like the kingdoms would just get more anxious if they saw that the She-Ra wasn’t able to even dance—let alone walk…”, Adora gave out a small, hollow laugh that trailed off and she rubbed her arm self-consciously.

“Adora—I doubt that anyone would think that… People just want to talk to you and see that you’re okay! It would mean the world to everyone if you came—you’re like the face of the Rebellion, and you’re familiar to the people from the Horde! I know it would really make everyone happy if you just showed up for like—an hour,” Glimmer said as she turned to look at Adora, her face comforting and determined all the same.

“Are you sure? I feel like I’d just sit there, in a corner—or something awkward like that while you guys go off to talk to guests,” she looked to Bow, “Also I feel like it’d be really hard to get around so many people, and… Really overwhelming…”

Adora looked away again, sank down a little bit in her chair, and poked at the food on her plate. She didn’t really feel like going to sit and chat for hours with a bunch of strangers, or even most of her friends—just yet. A few at a time were fine, but… She didn’t know if she had it in her to explain ten thousand different times to everyone what had happened weeks and weeks ago.

“Then… we’ll go together,” Catra spoke up suddenly.
Adora looked up at her. Catra rested her folded arms against the table—meal forgotten, and her eyes
stared back.

"You don’t have to fe—“, Adora started, but Catra already knew what she had to say.

“No, Adora—I’ll go with you. We can stick together… I mean, I don’t really want to go but—we should, for the people. So, let’s go together.”

“You sure you want to do that?”, Adora asked her—she didn’t think after the last ball they’d been to that they’d want to ever go to another one.

“Yeah, would I joke with you about this?”, Catra asked more seriously.

Adora started to notice the tense silence that had built up around the at the table.

“No, I don’t think so…”, she answered.

“Then we’ll go together, Adora.”

“Okay—I’ll go… just for you…”, Adora cleared her throat, quickly adding, ”and maybe Bow, and Glimmer…”

She elbowed Glimmer beside her who had been raising her eyebrow at Adora while glaring at Bow who had been staring intently at both she and Catra the entire exchange.

“Then it’s settled… Ahahaha! The new Best Friend Squad is going to another ball!”, Bow interjected to cut the awkward feeling at the table—looking towards Queen Angella to say something.

“Oh—well, wonderful… I want you all to be ready for Saturday night when the guests arrive at five for dinner, and then a reception… and don’t forget to get plenty of rest—it will be a long night for you four!”

They all nodded at her in acknowledgment.

“And Catra—“, Angella surprised the girl a bit by singling her out, “If you’d like, as an offering for your recent compliance and service to the kingdoms—I’d like to offer you some formal wear for the event… anything you’d be comfortable with.”

Catra didn’t quite know what she should say back to the queen, but she didn’t really have many other good options other than to accept her offer—since she didn’t exactly have much of a wardrobe herself.

“I don’t really have any other options so… thanks—I’ll accept,” she decided to say.

“Your welcome—and Adora?”, the queen now caused the other girl’s attention to snap at hearing her name. “The offer extends to you as well, if you wish for something different.”

“Oh, um, thank you!”, Adora replied quickly.

The queen smiled back at them before telling them that they should begin to eat now that they’d finished discussing plans, and now that the food was getting cold.

Adora and Catra were just grateful that they were finally able to stuff their faces with food after a day a long day of not doing very much. Catra had managed to fit a whole quail carcass in her mouth and caused everyone—except Angella—to laugh unreasonably hard.
‘This must be what family feels like’, thought Catra for the second time that night.

Chapter End Notes

Eeeee I’m working on a big chapter so I’m just being really slow at posting the few I have saved up! Sorry.
Get excited,,,
Anyways, kudos are always appreciated!!!
Cut My Hair

Chapter Summary

Adora surprises her friends by going off an impulse for once. She realizes she needs a little change to move on.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was the day of the party—and yet again, Adora was clueless as to what she was going to wear. She wasn’t even entirely sure what her purpose was going to this ordeal, but since Catra insisted that they should go together to make it a bit less awkward, she couldn’t help but feel a bit restless beforehand.

Catra was having a difficult time waking up this morning and had rolled onto her stomach, face down in pillows—blatantly ignoring Adora’s pleas to get up and help her start her day. So, Adora simply crawled over the other girl, causing her to groan, and shifted herself by the edge of the bed. She pulled over her chair sitting close enough to the end of the bed that she could grab it and yank it over. With a deep breath and a stretch over her head, she managed push herself off the bedside and flop into the seat with a slight grunt.

Would’ve been easier with Catra—but she managed. Catra shifted her head towards the sound of Adora and peeked one of her brightly colored eyes open. Face still buried in the pillows on their bed.

“Nifty,” she mumbled into the sheets—she closed her eye, and shoved her face further into the fluff.

“No thanks to you...” Adora grumbled with a smirk.

She shifted herself in her chair and pushed forward to the vanity across the room. On the table top there was a wash basin and a washcloth, so that she could wash her face in the morning and look in the mirror; it was easier than in the bathroom sink because it wasn’t quite as at an accessible height for her anymore. She pulled up and wet the cloth with water, and scrubbed the sleep away from her face, even though when she looked up into the mirror she could still see slight, purple half-moons under her eyes.

She hadn’t really taken the time to look at herself in a while, she thought.

Normally, she didn’t really care too much about her appearance—other than looking proper for any fight that may come her way. But that was a while ago... Even when she first came to Brightmoon she saw all the different people with unique styles and traits, that made her admire their freedom to create their appearance apart from a uniform. She had yet to figure out another outfit herself, other than her signature red jacket. She knew what she liked, but she just hadn’t been able to figure out how to express herself like that way like Catra, or Glimmer, or Bow could. Maybe it was about time she figured that out.

Looking at herself now made her feel more self conscious than she had already been feeling in the past weeks. She had definitely lost some weight, and her eyes still looked tired. Her arms were still
toned, from having to use them to push herself around the long castle corridors. Her skin looked finer than it usually seemed, since she’d only been on a few outings lately, still a bit nervous to go outside without someone in fear of getting stuck and having to ask for help getting back inside. Lastly, her sandy blonde hair was tousled and much longer than she was used to letting it grow—it had escaped her ponytail in her sleep. It fell in her face, and she had to keep brushing it away. It made her frustrated to even have to clean it now—it was a lot of work for she and Catra to wash, and it weighed heavy on her back.

She looked away from the mirror for now, having observed herself enough, glancing down to the side of the vanity. Leaning against the side of the vanity, she gazed at the Sword of Protection. It was wrapped in a pink blanket by Glimmer a while ago when she placed it back in her room after the Battle to keep it safe and clean from dust—since she knew Adora wouldn’t be using it for a while.

Although now, Adora picked it up for the first time in almost a month. Gently she unwrapped it and held it by the pommel, looking into its polished, double-edged blade. It had a familiar weight in her hand that comforted her slightly.

She doesn’t know if she’ll ever be She-Ra again.

She looks at herself again in the reflection of the blade in her hands.

She sees Adora, but not quite the girl she knew before the war was finished so suddenly.

Adora knew she needed move on and change, in order to accept that this was how it was going to be from now on. She had been trying—but it still didn’t feel quite like it was enough.

She looked in the mirror one more time.

She never knew that she might take Light Hope’s words to heart again, since the first time she tried to manipulate her—but she needed to, “Let go.”

It was like a compulsive thought that would keep nagging at her mind if she didn’t make some small change sometime soon…

She looked at her long hair that hung long past her shoulders now, and thought that maybe it was time for her to decide to let it to go—hair always grows back, doesn’t it?

Adora took a shaky hand and pushed her hair back, grasping it, pulling it tightly up in her fingers. The other hand held her sword, and she brought the blade to the nape of her neck, behind her. She took a deep breath in thinking through what she was doing, and then abandoning all apprehensions.

Catra shifted in bed, facing the room, unburrowing her face from the pillows to open her eyes again. She managed to crack one, before she watched Adora bring the powerful blade of the Sword of Protection straight through her blonde hair—in one swift motion. The newly fresh cut ends of her locks fell freely just above her shoulders and brushed her neck.

Now, Catra was awake, and slightly panicked—basically flinging herself out of bed and crossing over to where Adora sat.

“Woah, WOAH, WOAH! Adora,” she sputtered, a little shaken, looking Adora over to make sure she hadn’t done anything else stupid with the sword.

Adora stared at herself almost in disbelief at what she had done—and then she turned her head from side to side, checking herself out. Her hair bounced as she she shook her head, and it almost looked more wavy than usual. She still held the long, tail end of her hair in her other hand, and she almost
forgot about it until she stared down at all of it sitting in her palm.

“What was THAT for?”, Catra asked her after a second of desperately trying to collect herself after waking up to another thick-headed Adora antic.

“I don’t know…”, she breathed out, “I-i’m sorry—it just felt good to take it all off, and I couldn’t take how long my hair was getting anymore.”

Catra sighed after another moment, “It’s fine, Adora—just give me a warning next time you decide to hack off all your hair with a sword in the morning…”

“It’s not like I really need it in a ponytail much anymore…”, Adora set down the sword to rest against the vanity’s side and threw her handful of hair in the rubbish bin under the table, trying to get rid of it before she could regret her decision.

“Yeah—but that doesn’t mean that your Princess Starlight didn’t enjoy playing with it,” Catra finally relaxed against the table top and smirked, “plus it’s nice to see your face.”

“I know, but—at least it’s easier for you to clean now that it’s not so long, right?”, Adora looked at her, a small embarrassed flush crossed her cheeks.

“Hmmm, yeah, you’re right,” Catra giggled a little bit at the thought. “And—it looks nice, Adora, really. I like how it frames your face better now,” she offered her with a slight smile, leaning down to look at them in the mirror with her arms folded on top of Adora’s head.

“Thanks—“, Adora leaned into Catra’s touch and looked up at her, and sighed out again, “we should probably get ready, now that I’ve so kindly woken you up…”

“Yeah…”, Catra glared at her through the mirror, “We have a hell of a good time in front us, don’t we…”

Adora laughed, “I still have no idea what to wear!”

“Neither do I princess, but at least you’ve got a new hair-do or whatever,” Catra jabbed back, giving her head of freshly cut hair a playful ruffle.

As they went through their routine for the morning, Catra couldn’t help but feel an unknown, slight anxious flutter in her chest that she was trying desperately to suppress—even though she wasn’t sure she wanted to, because Adora had just managed to chop off hair with a giant sword and she managed to only make herself more beautiful.

Did she really just think that?

Oh, yes she did.

Tonight was going to harder to keep up a facade than it was a year ago, now that she and Adora were on good terms, and possibly even closer than before.

This was going to be much harder, she thought—but she wasn’t sure why.

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Later in the day—Catra wished she could have taken a portrait of Glimmer and Bow’s faces from when they walked into the room, to then seeing Adora’s hair down and framing her face rather than being tightly pulled back. She would’ve hung it up on the wall of their room so that they could see
the look of raw surprise on the dorks’ faces every time they entered it.

“IT LOOKS SO GOOD, ADORA!” Bow squealed, as he came up to her as if he was observing some sort of marvel from a First One’s ruin.

“I never thought I’d see you do anything different with it—if I’m being honest,” Glimmer giggled, “And you managed to chop it all off... With your sword?”

“Like an idiot,” Catra added with a snarky sneer.

“UGh, I wish I could’ve seen that!”, the princess huffed.

Bow gestured at both Glimmer and Adora wildly, “What happened to SWORD SAFETY?!?”

“I know—I know, look, it was a stupid and impulsive move but I just needed to do it! Just before I go out tonight and have to put myself in front of everyone, you know?”

Bow and Glimmer looked at each other and the princess gave another laugh, “Can’t blame you there, I cut my hair only a little more than two years ago now! It always grows back anyways,” she offered her a smile.

“I guess so…”, Catra grumbled.

Something suddenly dawned on Bow’s face and he clapped his hands together with excitement, “Speaking of! We have your new looks,” he gestured to where two garment bags that he’d brought in lay on the bed, “to go with your new do!”

“Yeah! They look so good! We have to see you guys put them on before the party—I had them made by the best in Brightmoon just for this occasion!”, Glimmer looked like she was just about to explode with anticipation.

After a moment of skeptical glances, Catra apprehensively went over to the bed and unzipped the bag holding her new formal wear on a hanger. Upon peering inside, she saw that Glimmer and Bow had actually listened to her requests. At first peek, she could see a white, button-up blouse, and dark, ebony-red slacks. She smiled and turned to the two dorks standing in the middle of the room that were practically expelling nervous energy, as they waited with baited breath for Catra to give them a reaction.

“Hey—you two? Thanks,” she practically snorted after saying it—because the looks on Glow Stick and Bubble Boy’s faces was priceless as they almost practically screeched in relief that Catra actually liked what they had picked out for her.

“I KNEW YOU WOULD LIKE IT! SEE GLIMMER?”, Bow said as he shook Glimmer by the shoulders.

“HEY! I never said she wouldn’t, I was just afraid it was too different from her previous tastes!”, Glimmer grasped his hands and shook him back.

Adora was practically crying as she tried to hold back her snickers at the three of them uncharacteristically getting along together.

“Well... Maybe if you two leave and actually get ready for the party yourselves—then we can meet back up and see just how good this stuff makes me look for tonight? How about that,” Catra drawled in order to subdue the overwhelming energy in the room.
Bow and Glimmer looked at each other and laughed one last time before smiling.

“Sounds like a plan!”, the Princess said before grasping Bow around the ribcage. “See ya’ in a few hours!”

With a flash of sparkles in the air—the two of them had gone back to their respective places to get ready.

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“Hey—Catra? Could you come over here and help me straighten out my dress please?”, Adora called from where she was perched on the bed, on the other side of the room.

“Sure,” Catra obliged, taking a moment to finish tucking in her freshly ironed shirt into her new slacks, and pulling a belt through their loops at the waist.

Catra finished fixing herself in the mirror and walked over towards the bed, only to find Adora staring intensely at her as she came into view. The blonde swallowed and regained herself, blinking away whatever she was thinking about and dismissed it by clearing her throat.

“Thanks,” she chuckled out, blushing and lifting her arms for Catra to pull the dress down and fix it so it sat right on Adora’s body.

“What was that for?”, Catra snickered as she smoothed Adora’s skirt down, where it was hard for her to reach by her calves.

“What was what for?”, she asked.

“Oh—you know… That look,” Catra grinned maliciously.

“Um—haha, I don’t know, it’s just been a while since I’ve seen you dress up? It’s nice…”, she gave her a small, embarrassed smile.

Darn the First Ones, she’d been caught…

“I see,” the girl giggled some more as she seemed to stop messing with Adora’s dress—it must have met her standards, “well—princess, I think your new dress looks nice too.” Catra gave her a smirk in return.

Chapter End Notes

Eee sorry I got distracted writing another fic that I forgot to post this chapter—I really like this one too.
Maybe I’ll post the next one soon oops...
There’s more though, so don’t worry.
And possibly another fic...
Okay, well then... ENJOY SEASON TWO THIS FRIDAY! AND HAPPY NATIONAL LESBIAN DAY OF VISIBILITY!
Kudos and comments are always appreciated!!!
“I hope they get here soon—I want to see what they look like together, don’t you?”, Glimmer quietly talked to Bow and Perfuma in the castle corridor, waiting for the time to be introduced by her mom to the guests.

“Of course I do! I don’t know if they need help or anything, but I just hope they don’t miss being called out…”, the boy glanced around the hallway filled with their friends looking for them.

Glimmer felt a little worried—maybe she should’ve checked in on them before leaving to go wait, but Adora would probably want her to trust that they’d both be here on time. “You’re right, maybe I should go see if I can fi—”, she was cut off by Perfuma before she could even finish.

“Look—guys! They’re coming!”, she glanced down the hall, promptly followed by everyone else’s attention.

Catra and Adora both came down the corridor together, side by side—they looked stunning. Adora had figured out a lot more of what she could do to express herself over the past year through how she looks, despite her statements of saying she’s still not quite so good at it. She had asked for something similar to last year’s prom dress, and so Glimmer tried her best.

Adora had rolled out with a red, wrap dress that had wide shoulder straps, and it came around her waist until it could be tied by her side in a bow. The waist of the dress was a bit high, keeping in mind that she’d be sitting down while wearing it—and the back of the dress was an open ‘V’ shape that almost mirrored the front. Underneath the dress, she wore a white under-shirt, that had a high neckline like her previous dress, and had quarter sleeves. Adora had tied half of her newly cropped hair up into a top-knot on her head, not only keeping her hair out of her face, but also framing it. Instead of adorning the little hair pin Glimmer given her last year—give or take—she chose a small, round, gold pendant to go around her neck that rested on her collarbone. Glimmer had gifted her with it from her jewelry box the day prior. To complete the look—Adora wore her golden sandals.

Catra on the other hand, walking down the hall beside her, knew what she was looking for in an outfit—and owned it, having the confidence Adora had only begun to learn. She had requested something a bit different than her suit last year, in order to make a new statement to the people around her—including Adora. But that was a secret between she and Bow, who had put his life on the line for agreeing to pick out something for her that she’d actually like.

Catra had dressed herself in a white button up top, that was mostly done up until the top buttons by her collar. She paired it with skinny, dark, ebony-red slacks that didn’t have any holes this time, and were pressed for the occasion. In the loops of the pants she pulled through a black belt with a gold buckle. Over her shirt, she wore a red, oversized blazer, that rested upon her shoulders like a cape—and the collar was interconnected by a small gold chain that went across her chest and hooked on to
her coat. For one night only, Glimmer and Bow had managed to convince Catra to wear a simple pair of black strappy sandals that wrapped around her ankles. Catra cemented the whole look by wearing her wild hair up in a loose messy bun at the nape of her neck, and opted to not wear her mask on her face tonight—letting her bangs fall around her face.

Adora smiled as she came up to her group of friends, while Catra hung in back of her with a smirk—knowing full well how surprised they were to see the two of them wearing color-coordinating formal attire.

Perfuma was wearing another similar pink dress to princess prom, with flowers woven into her hair—which had been done half up in a crown braid. She practically ran out from beside Bow, who was her date for tonight, and greeted Adora with her typical energy.

She smiled gently and took Adora’s hands in hers, “Oh my goodness, Adora! It’s so good to see you! I’ve missed you so much, and I would’ve visited you—it’s just been very difficult with all the repairs and work being done around home to find the right time! I’m sooo sorry… But wow—you and your friend look amazing tonight!”, she rambled.

Adora squeezed her hands back, “I missed you too, and thanks… It means a lot to me, Perfuma…”, with that, Adora took the chance to reach up and pull her friend into a light hug.

“Hey, don’t I get like—a chance to say hi to my friend who I haven’t seen in like forever too? Or are you going to hog her…”, a sarcastic voice said off to the side.

“Oh, sorry Mermista!”, Perfuma carefully scooted out of the hug and moved back to let Mermista have her moment.

She crossed her arms and genuinely smiled at Adora, “Well—you look like you’re doing pretty well, but we miss you on the team—and Sea Hawk gets cocky when you’re not around to show him up all the time. So, I’m glad you were able to come tonight so he’s not so full of himself…”

Seahawk came up beside Mermista, throwing an arm around her shoulder and laughed, “Ohoho! M’lady, that was a bit touchy wasn’t it *ahem*—but of course, without you there Adora, things aren’t quite as adventurous anymore!”

Adora couldn’t help but smile and laugh at them, “Okay, okay, I’ll take that as a request to try to get out more!”, she giggled.

“HEY! ‘Ice’ of you to show up!”, Frosta snickered as she popped up from behind Adora, cutting off her laugh and nearly sent her into a fighting position she couldn’t even form anymore. The youngest of the princesses came up beside her and gave her a soft punch in the arm.

“Ow—hey, kiddo, watch it! It’s good to see you too!”, Adora reached to ruffle her hair and she whined.

“Not before the party, Adora!”, she anxiously tried to fix it and retreated to Glimmer’s side where she tried to smooth down Frosta’s short hair after the assault Adora had committed on her head.

Adora looked at the two of them, and remembered that Glimmer mentioned she’d be Frosta’s escort for the night—she had said because she didn’t want the twelve year-old to feel left out, but Adora saw it as a way for Glimmer to have her own date so she wouldn’t feel like a third wheel to Bow and Perfuma, or herself and Catra. Adora recognized it to be a sweet and mature gesture, and Frosta thought Glimmer was the absolute best friend she could possibly have… She had never seen Frosta act so childish and open up to anyone like she did with Glimmer.
“Does anyone know if anyone else is meeting up here?”, Catra suddenly asked as she looked behind herself to check and see if this was all of them.

“Yeah—I think everyone else who agreed to come tonight, like Nettie and Ella, said they’d meet up with us later inside the great hall,” Bow answered her.

“Is there someone you’re looking for?”, Adora turned to look at her and grab her hand.

“No—well, yeah actually…,” She sighed, “I was kind of hoping that Scorpia would come see us, I want her to be part of this because she’s a princess like you guys too. She should be here… I hope she decided to come, so that I’m not the only person who came to represent the ex-Horde people either.”

“I get it, also—I guess Entrapta isn’t really the most reliable to come to a party either is she…”, Adora rubbed her thumb over Catra’s knuckles.

“No—I don’t think so,” Catra shook her head.

“Well since everyone’s here for now,” Glimmer interjected, “let’s head in, so we can greet guests!”, everyone nodded in agreement.

Catra squeezed Adora’s hand one last time before she had to let go so that she could move forward.

“Let’s try to have a good time tonight, okay?”, Adora said to Catra before they started filling into the hall.

“As long as I have you around—I think I’ll be okay,” she gave Adora a reassuring look, as if to tell her not to worry about it.

“Same here.”

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Adora and Catra entered through the doors along with everyone else, into the grandiose ballroom of the castle—that Adora had only ventured into once before now. Despite its size, with the amount of people gathered around them, the concave room seemed almost suffocating to Adora. She had never felt claustrophobic before, but now she had a much shorter vantage point and felt like it was difficult to move without running into someone. She had feared this whole thing might be too overwhelming—and it turned out it was. Although, seeing the image of hundreds of Brightmoon rebels mingling amongst Horde refugees made her feel like she dreaming this whole situation up in her head. They were all smiling, or surprised, or their expressions were left unreadable—although each and everyone of them clapped and shouted respectfully. It was making Adora think that maybe all the curious and pitiful looks, or getting accidentally trampled on tonight, might be worth it just to watch everyone interact.

Adora felt a weight be lifted from her shoulders as her self consciousness melted away, because as she pushed forwards—she spotted a little boy hiding behind his mother’s legs. The mother must’ve had to drag him along tonight, as he couldn’t have been much older than maybe six, or maybe even seven—and the woman seemed to have come without a significant other. What really gave Adora the confidence to push onward though, was how the little boy gasped and jumped up and down excitedly grasping his mother’s pant leg.

She scooped him up and Adora could make out, “Mum! Look—She’s the She-Ra who saved our village!”, he spoke excitedly to her as if he might explode.
They caught each other’s stares as Adora was looking on at the two of them, infatuated, and the boy and his mother looked her way. Adora didn’t know what else to do to get out of the situation, so she raised one hand to wave at them in the crowd—the little boy nearly jumped out of his mother’s arms, and quickly raised his own arm to wave back with his mum.

Adora couldn’t help but smile.

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“I’d like to thank all of you—whether you be of Horde descent or were rebel born—for coming to conviene here in this great hall tonight,” Angella spoke out from the long table at the head of the room that the alliance was all sitting at.

Dinner so far had gone off without a hitch and the guests had seemed to be enjoying their night so far, although offering food and entertainment seemed to please just about any company. So, Angella chose to close off this portion of the gathering with a toast while everyone had high spirits.

“Without all your help, this lovely night may not have been possible,” she began with a tentative smile and took a moment to breathe before delving in.

“I’d like to thank the strong citizens that chose to unite and fight the copious odds against us in that final battle. I do not believe it is the end of our fighting—but it is the end of an era—we have finished the war, and in such a rapid amount of time,” Angella had to pause for a small bout of clapping before starting up again, “Along with your efforts, I’d love to give my regards to the young men and women who sit at my side.”, she gestured at the table, sweeping a hand across Adora, Catra, Glimmer, Bow, and the allotment of the Princess Alliance.

People around the room stood from their tables and cheered. Adora hadn’t earned a warm reception quite like this since she first presented herself to Angella, and Catra had never had any kind of recognition for her efforts like this before.

“First, I’d like to thank the Princess Alliance—headed by my daughter, Princess Glimmer,” Angella put a hand on Glimmer’s shoulder and she stood up beside her mom to acknowledge the other princesses at the other side of the queen. “Without the help of these sister kingdoms, willing to fight beside us as one, united force, we wouldn’t have ever made it this far. Thank you to our wonderful princesses and,” glancing at Sea Hawk, “daring, noble men…”

Sea Hawk sent the queen a toothy grin before turning to Mermista and shooting her the same look that made her want to slap his ridiculous face—although she would never—maybe.

Angella almost laughed at the sight, but she composed herself in the moment, and looked to her daughter to help her continue for the next part.

“Although—with the highest honor, tonight we would like to pay respect to two young woman and thank them for the sacrifices they made so that both the people of the Rebellion and the Horde alike can feel safe from the grasps of Lord Hordak and his compatriots.” Glimmer swallowed and smiled sweetly towards Adora and Catra who had suddenly paled at the special attention, but also nonetheless flushed a bright shade a red across their cheeks.

“Yes, both Princess Adora and Commander Catra have gone to great lengths to defend their people, and in the end—they both set aside their differences and worked towards a common goal that brought them together, and ultimately their fellow pupils as well,” the queen gave them a knowing smile along with Glimmer that only made the two of them blush harder in front of everyone. “In the final stand against Hordak, Catra risked her life with her soldiers to fight alongside the She-Ra and
deflected against their homeland, leaving all she had built behind to serve a greater cause to provide her people with a safe place to live without the threat of war,” Angella nodded to Catra and waited a beat.

Glimmer continued, “Adora has always fought with great valor for what she believes in, and no matter what—she always puts her friends first—she will always protect us,” she glanced towards the rest of the alliance to her side. “And so, in the effort to defeat Hordak—Adora made a grand sacrifice to protect who she loved.”

Catra shifted awkwardly in her seat and shot Glimmer a sideways glance but the princess just kept beaming in defiance. Adora looked like she was about to melt into a puddle of anxiety at the remark, and slide right out of her chair and down onto the floor under the table to escape.

“And for that—“, Angella turned to both Adora and Catra as she spoke, “we must show both of them our greatest gratitude for joining us here tonight. Thank you, everyone,” the queen ended her speech.

After a small second of silence—the crowd of people stood up from their chairs and applauded the queen and her daughter, along with Adora and Catra, and the rest of the alliance who stood to clap as well. Glimmer practically teleported on top of both Catra and Adora and squeezed them both tight, much to the displeasure of Catra who was still a bit shocked at the amount of people commending her.

“I love to embarrass you guys, sorry!”, she chuckled softly, close to their ears as the crowd still roared in the background.

Suddenly, Bow and Sea Hawk looked to each other with a spark in their eyes—and raised their beverage glasses into air at the crowd yelling, “TO THE ALLIANCE, THE REBELLION, AND THE DEFECTORS OF THE HORDE!”, the people around them gathered their own drinks in their hands and clinked them together as they hoisted them up, chanting their words back—until a few rouge guests started to add, “LONG LIVE THE SHE-RA! LONG LIVE THE COMMANDER CATRA!”, and it became overpowering.

What a way to start a night, Catra thought, as Adora grabbed her hand.

Chapter End Notes

I’m still... alive...

Kudos and comments are always appreciated as always :)
Escape With Me

Chapter Summary

Catra and Adora decide to talk things out with a dance, and it goes much better than it did at Princess Prom.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Adora knew that this was going to happen at some point tonight. This was how she was really going to die. Not by the hands of Lord Hordak or anything… But instead she was going to be trapped by people mingling around her, with no regards to someone at a shorter vantage point. Or someone who is bound to a single spot in the ballroom because, no one pays any mind to move out of her way! She was going to be crushed to death by party guests...

Adora has never been claustrophobic before, but now, not being able to move freely made her heart start to race and anxiety build in her stomach.

Where could have the rest of her friends even run off to?

The crowd kept shifting and moving around her as she tried desperately to look around, and inch her way through without going over someone’s toes.

Luckily, Catra had stayed with her after dinner, and slowly but surely she could help push through guests to make a small path. She too, was trying to spot Scorpia and Entrapta but it seemed they weren’t around the ballroom floor, or just on the opposite side of the crowd of guests.

Catra though, was pretty easy to find in a crowd—when she’s not trying to be stealthy—thanks to her ears and tail. She was the only one who looked like herself at the reception, and Adora was slightly disappointed not to find another in attendance.

Catra and she, had been pushing by a small crowd, somewhat in hopes of finding her friends or Catra’s, before she had been stopped suddenly.

“The She-Ra! It’s an honor to meet your acquaintance!” a small, rotund man with a white beard and moustache stopped right in front of her to greet her—seemingly with a small ontourage of wealthy folk behind him.

Adora fumbled a little at the stranger, “I um—it’s my pleasure as well,” she held up hand for a shake, and he took it gratefully albeit with a bit too much of a tight grasp.

Adora eyed him carefully and decided to take the attention off of herself, “This is Commander Catra, she fought by my side in the last battle,” she gestured to Catra who stood at her side passively—not quite interested in old geezers looking for war stories to trade.

There would be a lot more potential for Adora to meet more people like this throughout the night anyways, she reasoned.

The man looked her up and down, and Catra scowled a bit, “Ahhh yes—I am aware of the Force
General Catra…”

“Not anymore,” she stated matter-of-factly.

“Excuse me?” he seemed curious.

“I’m not with the Horde sir,” she announсiated “sir” with extra emphasis, “It doesn’t exist anymore—I am a Commander now, working to bring both armies together in an effort to merge.”

Adora gleamed at the chance to talk about Catra’s recent projects, “She’s been working quite hard to dismantle and reform the Horde into a new kingdom with compliance to ours for the refugees to live in,” she added, to supply Catra’s ego with a little more ammo.

Although, it seemed as though the man was slightly disinterested with Catra’s efforts, as he changed the subject.

“Yes, yes, that is quite the interesting mission you say,” the man twirled his moustache with his fingers, “but—where have you been off to Princess? Surely you’ve been busy yourself,” he brought his attention back to adora and his entourage listened attentively.

“Oh, I’ve been recovering from the last battle,” Adora replied simply, and she fidgeted with her hands in her lap.

A stern looking woman from the entourage came up to loop arms with the man beside him, “Doesn’t the She-Ra have healing properties?”

Adora pursed her lips as they began to feel dry, “She does usually—but they are hard to control and really finicky, but typically she can fix injuries on other people,” Adora glanced away from their attentive stares, “but she could only do so much for me, I suppose.”

“Ahhhhh, I see—do you know if you’ll be able to walk again, or is this injury you sustained,” he motioned to Adora’s wheelchair, “something permanent?”

Catra stiffened beside Adora and she could practically feel the tension radiating off of the blonde, and she watched her try to be as polite as possible to this aristocrat despite him getting on her nerves.

“I’m not sure—that’s something I won’t be able to know for a while sir, and this—this is permanent for now,” she motioned back to her own set of wheels, uncomfortably less confident than she’d started the night out.

“Oh—well, can you still turn into She-Ra at all?”, he eyed her again, more like a subject being interrogated, rather than observing the mighty Princess of Power. A few of the entourage exchanged a few whispers and comments...

“Well I’m not sure—“, Adora failed to finish her surprised thought out loud.

“Are you capable of defending the Kingdom at all?”, he asked a bit mockingly and Catra bristled at the comment.

“Hey, look bud—the world doesn’t rest on her shoulders alone,” Catra came up and slightly towered above the chubby man. He glared back up at Catra and his entourage watched, infatuated.

“The She-Ra is the one who brings balance to Etheria, is she not? If She-Ra cannot exist—let alone stand, then how can she possibly fulfill her job?”, he chided—and puffed out his chest of war medallions.
Catra looked back to Adora, who looked down at her lap, and was already stuck in her own head as she stayed quiet. Catra normally didn’t get the chance to see Adora back down from a fight so easily...

Luckily though—Catra was skilled at the art of improvising.

“Adora, as She-Ra,” Catra gestured to her date, “already did her part. She basically ended the war with the Horde… What about that isn’t bringing ‘balance’ to Etheria?”, she emphasized her last sentence and then added, “Defending the kingdoms is still your job, is it not? Or do you need all the Princesses to come save their own guards, even though they still have responsibilities to their people? You types all just expect the Princesses to take care of everything—but I hope you know that they can’t.”

He gave her an undignified look, “And what makes you think that Horde scum like you can come here and say—”, he began to rant.

Although, his attempt to keep Catra’s attention had faded five minutes ago.

For once she didn’t feel like continuing the argument and didn’t feel the battle was worth the victory—especially when she came here to spend the night with Adora… And definitely not them.

So she did the next best thing she could think of, which is to not let them have the final jab.

“Oh! Sorry sir—“, Catra exclaimed suddenly, she peeked out behind his shoulder, and if Catra was lucky tonight—her timing should work out just right…

The musicians for the dance portion of the night had walked onto stage, and begun to tune and set up for the first dance. Catra noticed that at Princess Prom, that the first dance is one of the more important parts of the night and everyone usually rushed to the center of the dance floor. So when she saw that they were getting ready, all she had to do was make her point and stall with this old geezer until she could help Adora make her getaway.

Just as she hoped, the musicians warned everyone that the first dance was about to commence—and Catra took it as an out.

“It looks like the first dance is about to start! My date and I should probably get going now—but thank you for the lovely chat! Oh and Sir—before I go,” she moved back from the man and stepped towards an anxious Adora as people had begun to move around them to the dance floor, “Lord Hordak has been dead to me long before we killed him buddy… Have a great night!”

Catra swiveled around suddenly, her jacket on her shoulders just about whipping him in the face as it twirled around. Before he could say anything more to the two of them, and Catra let the crowd of people submerge them, to create a rift between she and he and his entourage. She took a moment to breathe as she watched folks head to the floor before checking on Adora.

“Are you okay?”, she asked quietly.

“I’ll be fine,” she pinched the bridge of her nose to clear her head.

“It’s okay if you’re not—because I know I’m not okay with him thinking he can just waltz up and say something sooo… Insensitive?”, Catra growled.

“Not everyone in Brightmoon is the most compassionate, Catra—some are jerk aristocrats. I’ve already dealt with them before, and they never change, but tonight—I just froze up, I’m really sorry,” Adora moved her hands to press against her face to block out all the people around them.
Catra scoffed, “Don’t be sorry—this is why I said I’d come with you tonight anyways, plus I promised you a good time didn’t I?”

Adora sighed, “Maybe not those exact words, but I had a suspicion that you’d make tonight interesting...”

Catra looked around at the people surrounding them, and realized that this might not be the best place for Adora to sit. She knelt down for a second and placed her hand on her knee, “Hey Adora, do you want to talk somewhere quieter?”

Adora let her hands down from her face, “That’d be nice.”

“Kay, hold on...”, Catra stood up and turned behind her to find a large staircase that led to a balcony outside, that stretched behind the front of the ballroom and out into the Brightmoon air.

It looked quiet, and Catra didn’t really feel like socializing anymore than she already had—she mostly just wanted to be with Adora.

The thought of getting Adora up there was tempting.

Catra saw the open pocket to the side of the room, where most of the older folk or those who didn’t like to dance, stayed off to the wings. Catra slowly made her way to allow Adora to follow her to the edge of the crowd until they were finally free. Music started to fill the room as the band began to play for the first dance, and Catra made her way towards the stairs.

“Where are you taking me?”, Adora asked with good reason.

“I think we should go up there,” Catra pointed, and shot her a playful smirk.

“Catra—I don’t think that’s such a good idea tonight,” Adora looked up the flight of stairs—and the quiet balcony did look a lot more appealing to the dance floor, but she didn’t feel like trying to find the most accessible route to get up there.

“Why not?”, Catra retorted.

She fidgeted uncomfortably, “I just... Getting up there is a lot of work.”

“I know... But—do you trust me?”, Catra have her a hopeful look that she normally doesn’t receive on any normal occasion.

“Do I trust you?”, Adora looked at her, confused.

“Yeah—Adora, do you trust me?”, Catra was slightly worried that the last spat they had might mess up her impromptu plan to redeem the night.

Adora looked at her for a second, thinking over what she was about to say next, and then sighed, “Yeah, I do.”

Catra released a breath she didn’t realize she was holding and came close to her, “Cool—is it okay with you if I carry you up?”

Adora drew her lips in a straight line to delegate her options, but she trusted her best friend and she nodded, lifting her arms up.

“I promise I’ll put you down if you tell me to,” Catra gave Adora a small, very personal smile, and slipped her arms behind her back and knees while Adora looped her arms around Catra’s neck. She
hoisted her up and into her grasp with small grunt—careful to gather up all of Adora’s dress.

Adora was already wondering if this was a smart idea—but before she could say anything to Catra, she had already moved her chair with her foot to the base of the stairs to sit, and she had begun to step up the staircase. Adora held on and let Catra do her thing because she looked intensely determined to get to the top and kept a tight hold on Adora as she climbed upwards.

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Finally, they reached the last step made of stone—and Catra stopped at the top for a moment to readjust her grip on Adora and catch her breath. Adora looked around as some of the moons had begun to set across the horizon towards the back of the castle.

It was really beautiful out here—and it’s been a while since Adora got to stop and actually relish in the scenery of where she lived.

The quiet balcony had open arches that peered inside the ballroom and the lights radiating from within the party, as well as a few strings of lanterns hung around, casting a golden glow into the night. Otherwise—the starless sky was a dark blue with contrasting stripes of color cast by the setting moons.

Peering down to where the ballroom was inside, Adora and Catra could pick out a certain pink pixie-cut princess pulling Frosta onto the dance floor playfully. Both of the princesses had huge grins on their faces and they seemed to be laughing as Glimmer rugged the younger girl. Soon after, they could find Bow grabbing Perfuma’s hand and the two of them pushing their way through the crowd to find the other two. Catra had finally spotted Scorpia and Entrapta hanging around the buffet table—happily chatting as Scorpia practically stuffed her face with food. In the corner, they found Mermista begrudgingly agreeing to dance with a giddy Sea Hawk. Adora and Catra’s eyes wandered some more before they smiled as they found Netossa and Spinnerella with arms clutched to each other’s sides as they walked to the dance floor.

Feeling content from quietly spotting their friends, Catra straightened the both of them up and made her way to the center of the tiled floor. She peered behind where she was facing, to see that the music that had begun to play when the two of them escaped the chaos of the ballroom, was already beginning to crescendo and build while the entire alliance amidst dozens upon dozens of people were dancing their first dance of the night.

The feline cleared her throat as she looked back to Adora, “Excuse me, miss princess—“, she smirked, “but, will you share this dance with me?”

Adora laughed at the taunting chivalry, “And how do I know that this just isn’t a repeat of what happened at Princess Prom?”, she joked—only slightly.

“I’ll make this one special, I promise—we’ll have a Prom do-over, right now,” she sounded sincerely hopeful that Adora might just indulge her.

“Oh, you promise?”, Adora mocked just to torture her a little.

“I promise—can we dance now? It’s just you and me up here,” Catra whined playfully.

Adora smiled back with a slight blush blossoming across her cheeks, “It’d be my pleasure to have this dance with you.”

“And mine as well,” Catra replaced her smirk with a more meaningful smile that rivaled Adora’s, and brought Adora to sit closer to her face in her hold. The blonde’s fingers interlocked around
Catra’s neck while she began to move to the music coming from inside.

“I guess you’re going to lead from now on—lucky,” Adora realized as they began to waltz around, that Catra was the only one of the pair that could actually dance on their feet. Giving her the slight advantage on the dance floor from now on.

“I guess you’re just going to have to learn to like following my steps then, Adora,” Catra twirled them around, and they both snorted as Adora’s short hair whipped her in the face, before slowing down again.

It was quiet, and peaceful out here—with just the two of them.

Without much thought, Adora slowly leaned in and closed her eyes to the sound of the distant strings, her cool forehead against Catra’s. She pressed closer to Catra’s chest for warmth as a chilly breeze from the night came over the railing. She could practically feel both their heartbeats slow in their pulses as they relaxed, and the music overtook them. They swayed back and forth, and spun around a few times. Adora’s wavy locks, now short and free of their ponytail, bounced as they moved. While Catra’s tail flicked side to side with them, and kept curling up at the end.

She was gentle with Adora in her arms—supporting her back and cradling her knees, and it truly felt like she was dancing with her best friend.

Adora didn’t like the idea of being picked up by just anybody, because she didn’t need or want to be handled—but this, was a special moment.

She wanted to be with Catra tonight, and let her hold her close this time. Despite how their recent fight ended, she’d make an exception for Catra, because to Adora—she was always an exception.

She and Catra had come so far to be alone on this balcony, at a gala for all people—who were either Horde refugees, or Rebellion citizens. They still had a long way to go before completely understanding how each of them really feels, but they had already made huge steps forward in the past months.

They finally started to talk about how they felt, and fought without ending up as mortal enemies. Adora made a new promise to Catra to stick together, and Catra was back in Adora’s bed at night to comfort her. She does trust Catra, despite everything, and she hoped Catra trusted her back.

The best thing though—was that she had her best friend back.

And now the two of them were closer because of what they’d been through…

Everything was getting better, wasn’t it?

Then what is the aching feeling she’s had this whole time?

Did she not want her best friend back?

No she definitely did—but something felt off.

Were they still best friends—or had they changed so much lately that they had become something entirely different?

Did she want different?

Maybe.
Actually—yes…

She wanted more, because—they were more than that now.

Adora breathed in and sighed out, and she could smell the sharp but sweet scent of a perfume that was almost like a spice—maybe cinnamon—coming from Catra. She could feel her breathing against her chest, as they danced back and forth on the stone beneath Catra’s feet. And, she could feel Catra’s bangs tickle her forehead, and she loved the fact that they were down and not tucked away.

With a hand, she tucked a rogue tuft of Catra’s hair behind her ear, and watched it flick a little. Adora had given her a tiny giggle when she watched it happen, which interrupted their silence, although it was welcome.

Catra hummed, “I’m glad you came up here with me,” she said in just above a whisper, as she reopened her eyes to look into Adora’s ocean-blue one’s.

Adora sighed, “Yeah, me too. I think I like how calm it is up here…”, breaking Catra’s glance, she craned her neck around to look back at the view of Brightmoon they had on the balcony. The sky had changed into a deep hue of blue and three moons glowed far off in the distance.

Adora took it all in again, and said what she’d been thinking.

“I’m really just glad you’re here with me,” she held tighter around Catra’s neck, and turned back to rest her chin in the crook of Catra’s neck.

Catra kept swaying, and nuzzled her face into Adora’s soft hair. She breathed it in, and it smelt like what sunshine would—warm and pleasant.

“Your welcome, princess,” she snickered lightly and Adora gave her a snort in return.

They relapsed into silence again and Catra racked her brain for anything she could say to make this moment last as long as time could possibly allow. She loved being able to hold Adora close—like they were each other’s special person… Well, they’d always been each other’s special person.

But this moment felt like the cultivation of all the time they’d spent building their friendship as small children, and the time they’d spent apart to fight combined. It all had resulted in this—just them being able to have the ability to be together and figure it out.

Catra had a lot more things than she’d originally thought that she felt she needed to figure out with Adora.

And she could start here…

“Hey, Adora—“, Catra breathed out.

Adora shifted her face up to look at her in the eyes, “Hmm?”, is all she replied.

“How do you feel about us, I mean like now?”, Catra sounded hesitant to ask.

Adora giggled, “Well, that’s certainly a silly question…”

“Why’s that?”, she gave her a confused look and her head tilted while her ears pinned down a little.

“Because—I feel a lot of things when I’m with you,” Adora readjusted herself in Catra’s hold to face her better.
She looked slightly surprised, “You do?"

“Yeah, a lot of the time. Do you, too?” Adora asked her back.

Catra nodded, “Yeah—what do you feel?” she asked.

Adora looked up to the sky and went quiet for a minute. “What do I feel…”, Adora thought aloud. “I feel hopeful, and relieved, sometimes frustrated, a little nostalgic, I feel happy—and like, I could be with you forever and still be just as happy,” she listed.

“Me too I guess, but—I feel like we’ve changed,” Catra admitted hesitantly.

“How so?”, it was Adora’s turn to look at her quizzically.

“I think that we—I mean I… I feel like we aren’t just friends anymore—after everything we’ve been through,” she looked away from Adora’s gaze.

“That we aren’t friends anymore?”, the said girl panicked slightly in confusion.

Catra was already flustered but she tried to explain herself, “Not really—that’s not what I mean… but do you feel like—do you ever just want more? Or feel more when you’re with me than you realized?”

Adora had begun to play with the loose hairs behind Catra’s neck in her fingers nervously, “Sometimes I get this feeling that’s different from when I’m with Bow and Glimmer—I mean I love them more than anything on Etheria but, sometimes Catra… when I think about it—you’ve always meant everything to me.”

“That’s just it,” Catra grew a smile at the corner of her lips.

“What is?”, the girl in her arms questioned.

Catra didn’t know how else to ask, especially with the two of them being so oblivious—so she asked bluntly, “Sparkles told me that what I’ve been feeling lately, is love… Do you feel that way?”

“Of course I do, I’ve always loved you, Catra. Since we were little…”, Adora didn’t hesitate to respond.

Catra snickered at how plainly compassionate Adora could be sometimes, “I know that now, but that’s not what I think I’m getting at… Do you feel like, a different kind of love than when we were just stupid little kids?”

“Yes,” Adora pursed her lips.

“I do too… a lot of the time,” Catra tightened her grip on Adora, and she swallowed.

“Me too…”, Adora breathed out.

Catra’s bright eyes caught a spark in the moonlight.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah!”

“I just think we’ve changed, and I just can’t stop thinking about it… because it feels good but—kinda scary, and unfamiliar… And I really wanted to tell you,” Catra’s ears dropped as she chose her
words carefully as to not mess up the moment.

“I’m happy you did, because it feels a bit better knowing you feel the same way… And a bit less awkward between you and I,” Adora assured her.

“Hmmm, yeah—but you’re a dork, so… I don’t know if you’ll ever be a bit less awkward than you are now.” Catra was teasing her, so she must feel pretty good about how things have gone up to this moment...

“Hey! It’s not like you make it easy for me!” Adora whined back.

“Very true, but I like it that way.”

“Hey—do you trust me?”

“I just asked you the same question…”

“I know—but do you trust me too?

“Yeah, if you trust me I guess by now I should probably trust you too, Adora.”

“Take this seriously, Catra!”

“Okay, okay—what are you trying to get at?”

“This—this is something I learned after a while of living here, and I want to show it too you,” Adora breathed in and leant upwards to brush her cheek against Catra’s and she slowly lingered there as there faces grew hot, to make sure she should go through with this—but the curious feline made no move to back away.

So, Adora pulled her in and apprehensively pressed her lips to Catra’s and softly breathed out through her nose, as she felt her world suddenly drift away. It was as if it was suddenly blown away by a soft breeze. Suddenly she was only hyper-aware of the two of them, despite both their eyes being closed. But she focused on how their bodies were pressed so close together, or how gentle Catra’s hands were as they carried her in comparison to how she used to grasp her wrist. Catra was still absentmindedly swaying to the distant music from earlier, and even though the moment seemed to drift on for forever—the song hadn’t even ended yet.

Slowly yet painfully, Catra pulled away from Adora’s mouth so that they could both breathe. She felt light-headed with a sudden burst of adrenaline—she needed to sit down before her knees buckled and brought the two of them down to the ground. Catra opened her eyes and found a stone bench behind them and backed up to plop the two of them down on it.

She breathed heavily, and without thinking—wrapped her tail around Adora’s leg while she sat on her lap. Adora was suddenly taller than she was again, from where she was perched. Adora gave her a small smile, and it gently grew into a grin as she watched Catra’s slightly shocked, blushed, and breathless face. She giggled, and Catra could help but laugh a little too, and slowly her mouth turned upwards into a big smile as well. Adora brought her hands up to cup Catra’s face, with her palms holding her warm cheeks, and she studied her mismatched eyes. Catra didn’t even flinch at the familiar touch, like she normally would.

“That,” Adora laughed again, “now that’s called a kiss… and they can happen in all sorts of different ways—but the one we just shared is usually saved for special occasions.”

“A kiss, huh,” Catra snorted, looking up at those big, dumbstruck, ocean-blue eyes that were
practically gleaming in the moonlight.

“Yeah, giving someone a kiss on the lips can be a sign you love them,” Adora practically recited the words as if they came from Glimmer or Bow’s mouth. She brushed back Catra’s bangs from her face with her fingertips, “And this one was important, because you just gave me my first kiss—and no one else can do that now,” she was practically glowing now, and she talked with sincerity as she kept smiling like a fool.

“Well,” Catra’s voice caught in her throat for a second, “I loved it—can we do it again?”

Adora laughed even harder this time and her face was bright pink as the butterflies from the night that were trapped in her stomach seemingly disappeared, “Of course we can! If that’s what’d you like?”

Catra rolled her eyes at Adora practically losing her cool over Catra’s slight obliviousness to the concept, but kept smiling nonetheless, “Yes Princess, I’d like that very much.”

Catra pulled Adora in and gave her a surprise peck on the lips that caught her off guard, and she let out a small squeak. Although this time, neither of them could stop smiling and Catra started to laugh again after hearing Adora’s surprised reaction—overall it ended quickly with them breaking apart into stupid giggles.

“Hey, woah, no fair! You got to have your nice kiss—what about me?”, she batted at Adora’s arm.

“Watch it!”, she yelped, “And we’ll get better, I promise!”

“Promise?”, Catra eyed her curiously.

“I swear—that I promise, on the honour of love,” Adora mimicked with all the confidence of her She-Ra form.

Catra raises and eyebrow, “Okay, okay, enough sappiness, I can practically feel us dripping gross emotion all over the balcony! Soon our friends down there, getting dirty on the dance floor or whatever—their going to find us thanks to it overflowing.”

“Fine! But I just want you to know—I’m glad we talked about this, because we have changed—and I’m happy that after everything, we got here.”

“Thanks for coming with me tonight—just you and me, like old times. I needed this.”

“Me too.”

“Hey—And Adora?”, Catra took another deep breath, think through what she was going to say next, practically rolling the words around her tongue and she forced them to spill from her lips despite her conscious telling her it was a dumb idea.

Adora gave her a calm smile and a, “Hmm?”, in response.

“I love you Adora.”

Adora was a little surprised at all the emotion those words seemed to carry.

Before she could even think twice about it, she reciprocated the affection by letting it slip from her own mouth as well.

“I love you too, Catra.”
I’ve been holding this one off for a while because I could never get it to the level I had it in my head, but I thought that now is probably the right time to let this ship sail (literally)!

Here’s some Catradora to get you through some of this hiatus.

I know it seems like a fantasy that someone who is actually wheelchair bound would let someone pick them up and dance with them, especially since the friends I know are pretty chill but still have their pet peeves about being handicapped and touched. But I tried to handle that issue a few chapters ago and so I hope this chapter makes sense, because I think Adora would probably make an exception here for Catra.

(I love my differently abled friends and I will do them justice I swear!)

I kinda wanted it to show the fact that she doesn’t need her chair to be a part of all her adventures—they can be impromptu as well. Plus, I just wanted an excuse for them to dance romantically.

Anyhow,
Kudos and comments are always appreciated!!!
More chapters soon.

This is my first fic! (So please go easy on me!) I have multiple chapters planned out, and I hope to not keep anyone waiting if people actually like this fic. (I hate waiting for new chapters haha) Each chapter is kinda long too. Also, the babies will be fine, the future has fluff ahead! But we've got to have angst first! I'm also still trying to learn how to format the best for this site, so I'm sorry if it's hard to read at first.
Kudos are appreciated! Let me know if you guys like it!
Comments are welcome as well!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!